

Graduate Student Library Research Skills Workshop Series: A Needs Assessment

Fred Antwi-Nsiah Vivian Feng
Kristin Hoffmann Meagan Stanley
The University of Western Ontario

WILU 36, York University, 17 May 2007



Why focus on graduate students?

- Western Libraries Strategic Plan
 - “Expand and enrich the graduate student experience”
- Previous work with graduate students
 - Orientations
 - Some course-based instruction
 - Other instruction provided when faculty requested it



Why focus on graduate students?

- Taylor librarians’ interest in comprehensive graduate students’ library research skills instruction
- Taylor Library management gave the mandate to develop programming for graduate students
- The project team decided **how** to develop that programming



Why do a needs assessment?

- Can one workshop series meet the needs of students in all four faculties?
- What do students need to know?
- What will encourage them to attend?



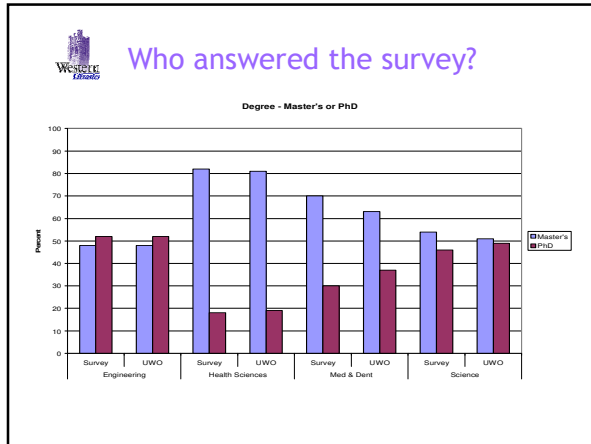
How did we do the needs assessment?

- One focus group with faculty
 - 8 participants
- Three focus groups with grad students
 - 33 participants
- An online survey
 - 274 respondents



What did we find out?

- Who answered the survey?
- What have they learned about library research?
- What are the challenges they have with finding information?
- Which workshops will be most useful?
- How should the workshops be delivered?



- ### Who answered the survey?
- Where did you obtain previous degree(s)?
 - Engineering 69% from outside Canada
 - Science 37% from outside Canada
 - Medicine & Dentistry 51% from Canada
 - Health Sciences 49% from Western
 - Most international students are from China, India & Iran

- ### What have they learned about library research?
- Search online article databases
 - Use the library catalogue
 - Format citations in a bibliography
 - Do a literature review

- ### What are students' challenges?
- Keywords & search terms
 - Too much information
 - Where to search
 - Online access issues
 - Comprehensive searches
 - Reliable information
 - Materials not in collection
 - Other types of material
 - Finding things in the library
 - Older material
 - Current awareness
 - Time

Challenges	Engineering	Health Sciences	Medicine & Dentistry	Science
Keywords & search terms	Major	Major	Major	Major
Too much information	Major	Major	Major	Major
Online access issues	Major	Major	Major	Major
Materials we don't have	Major	Major	Major	Major
Time	Major	Major	Major	Major
Where to search	Major	Major	Major	Major
Finding things in the library	Major	Major	Major	Major
Current awareness	Major	Major	Major	Major
Older materials	Major	Major	Major	Major
Other types of material	Major	Major	Major	Major
Reliable information	Major	Major	Major	Major
Comprehensive searches	Major	Major	Major	Major

From Table 1 of the Report. Challenges identified by survey respondents in finding information needed for their work. Major challenges are those which were named by proportionately more students in a given faculty, minor challenges were identified by fewer students.

Legend

Major challenges
Minor challenges
Challenges not mentioned

- ### Which workshops will be most useful?
- Search Strategies
 - Search Strategies
 - Selecting Subject Databases
 - Identifying Key Research
 - Keeping Current with Scholarly Literature
 - Introduction to RefWorks
 - Introduction to Western Libraries



How should workshops be delivered?

- Online!
- And in person too
- Must be relevant to students' needs
 - Subject-specific
 - Basic and advanced



What a needs assessment can't tell you...

- How to plan the schedule of workshops
 - When during the term
 - What time of day
- What an "online tutorial" should look like
- How to coordinate workshop registration



Workshops being offered

1. Introduction to Library Research at Western
 - Ethical Use of Information
2. Basic Searching Skills for...
 - Health & Medical Sciences
 - Science & Engineering
3. Advanced Searching Skills for...
4. Keeping Current with Scholarly Literature
5. Introduction to RefWorks
6. PubMed, Intro to SciFinder Scholar



Where are we now?

- First workshops delivered in winter term
- Summer series begins next week
- Assessment phase begins this summer



Thank you!

Questions?

Summary document available online

<http://www.lib.uwo.ca/taylor/grad/needsassessment.shtml>

Workshops website

<http://www.lib.uwo.ca/taylor/grad/>