Improving Library Services to Satellite Campuses: A Follow-Up Study at the University of Lethbridge

The University of Lethbridge (U of L) is a medium-sized research institution with a total student enrolment of approximately 8,200 (University of Lethbridge, 2014), including undergraduate and graduate students. The main campus is located in Lethbridge, a small city in southern Alberta, Canada. It also has two satellite campus locations in the two major cities in Alberta: Calgary, located approximately 250 km north of Lethbridge, and Edmonton, located approximately 500 km north of Lethbridge. These campuses have much smaller student populations (727 on the Calgary campus, and 220 on the Edmonton campus), who are mainly enrolled in the Faculty of Management but also taking a variety of courses, including academic writing.

In an effort to provide better service to the University of Lethbridge satellite campus locations, a survey was done of instructors on the northern campuses regarding their knowledge and use of the University of Lethbridge Library services available to them. It was hoped this would serve a dual purpose: not only to inform the author of instructors' wants and needs in terms of library services, but to raise awareness of services they may not know about. Anecdotally, through various interactions with instructors on the northern campuses, it became clear that they were not always aware of the various services available to them and their students. This is especially true regarding information literacy instruction but also for services such as document delivery and The Alberta Library card. (The Alberta Library Card allows users reciprocal borrowing privileges at other participating academic and public libraries in the province.) When discussing potential collaboration for academic writing instruction instructors also said that students at these distance campuses feel very disconnected from the main campus, including the Library. This sense of detachment from the main campus and library is has been echoed in the literature (see Pastula, 2010; or Dalal & Lackie, 2014). Dalal & Lackie found that awareness of library resources was particularly low for distance students, and their use especially frustrating.

For a number of years it has been in the author's assignment of duties to liaise with the northern campuses and to that end, inspired by a similar survey done in the United States (Kvenild & Bowles-Terry, 2011), a survey was conducted in the fall of 2011 (Eva, 2012). Good responses and insightful comments were received from that survey which would suggest that indeed the anecdotal evidence and assumptions were correct. Several connections were made with instructors who were previously unaware of library services and who were eager to learn more. Unfortunately the author's subsequent leaves (totaling 2 ½ years) pre-empted most of the follow-up with these issues. Most of the northern campus instructors are sessional lecturers. Aware of their transient nature, it is likely many of them are different than they were three years ago when the previous survey was conducted. It was desirable to recreate the survey in order to familiarize instructors with the services offered by the U of L Library and determine if awareness had increased over the past three years.

The key questions to be investigated were:

What library services are northern campus instructors aware of?

What library services and resources are being used by northern campus instructors?

What library services and resources are desired by northern campus instructors?

What initiatives and practices will support the development and awareness of library services and collections for northern campuses?

Literature Review

The study here was based on the 2011 survey conducted by Eva (2012), at which point a literature review was conducted. The 2011 survey was itself modeled on a survey conducted by librarians at the University of Wyoming (Kvenild & Bowles-Terry, 2011). In 2011 it was discovered that while many studies have been conducted investigating distance learning methods, assessments, outcomes, and student perspectives, very few have focused on instructors and their needs. In the time since, not much more has been written on this topic. A literature review was done by Jon Ritterbush (2013) regarding the perspectives of librarians, students and faculty on distance services provided by libraries. This review found that generally, instructors assumed students already came into their classes equipped with the information literacy skills required. However, most also indicated that they would welcome library instruction in their classes. The majority also felt their own awareness of library services were low. Ping Li (2013) also conducted a literature review on how distance learning is changing and challenging academic libraries and librarians' instructional efforts. One of the challenges noted by several studies was that of collaborating with distance faculty. Building personal relationships are often key in obtaining access to instructors' classrooms, and this relationship building is difficult when face to face meetings are few. Li speaks to the importance of collaborating with faculty in successful information literacy initiatives, and highlights a few success stories. Overall, however, not much more has been written from the faculty perspective on information literacy since the author's 2011 survey.

Methodology

The survey was taken from the 2011 survey (Eva, 2012) but was slightly modified for clarity based on responses to the earlier survey. Once again, a web-based survey was deemed most logical and efficient for these instructors who for the most part were located in other cities than the author. This time LimeSurvey was used. LimeSurvey is an open source online survey instrument which the U of L Library has customized and supports. It also has more advanced features than SurveyMonkey, which the author used on the previous survey. As required by the University of Lethbridge for any research involving people, a Human Subject Research Ethical Review was completed. The link to the survey was sent out to all instructors on the Calgary and Edmonton instructor email lists by those campus managers on December 1, 2014 and a follow-up reminder email on December 8, 2014. The survey closed on December 15, 2014. The 2011 survey may be found in Appendix A, and the 2014 survey in Appendix B.

Results

Response Rate

The response rate for the survey was not as good as when conducted in 2011, which received an overall response rate of 35% (Eva, 2012). There was a 31% response rate from the Calgary campus (18 of a possible 58), but just an 8% response rate from the Edmonton campus (four of a possible 48). (See Figures 1 & 2). One reason may be that a large percentage of those teaching at the Edmonton campus are sessional instructors (see Figure 4) who are not as engaged with the institution. Because the number

of students at that campus is very small (220; see University of Lethbridge, 2014) there were likely many instructors not currently teaching, even though they were 'on the books' as instructors and received the survey invitation through the instructor's email list. In at least one case, an instructor (physically located in Lethbridge) conducts a blended learning course on both the Calgary and Edmonton campus, so there may be more instructors with this type of overlap. For this one case, she was counted in each site. Overall, when averaged together, there were 19 completed, valid responses of a possible 106 – an 18% response rate. However, it is possible that some of the 'possible' numbers could be duplicated between campuses (i.e. an instructor could be counted as teaching at both Calgary and Edmonton) so in fact the discrete numbers of possible respondents could be much lower, which would increase the response rate.

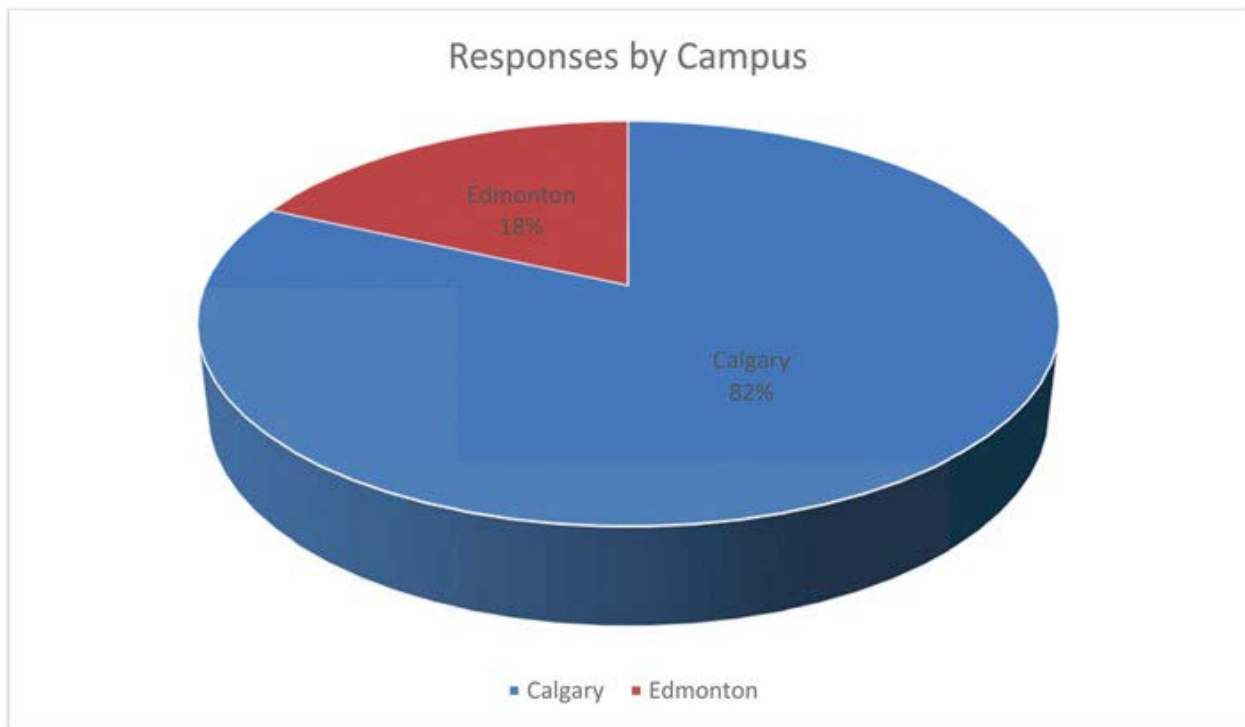Due to rounding and selective responses, percentages may not add up to 100.
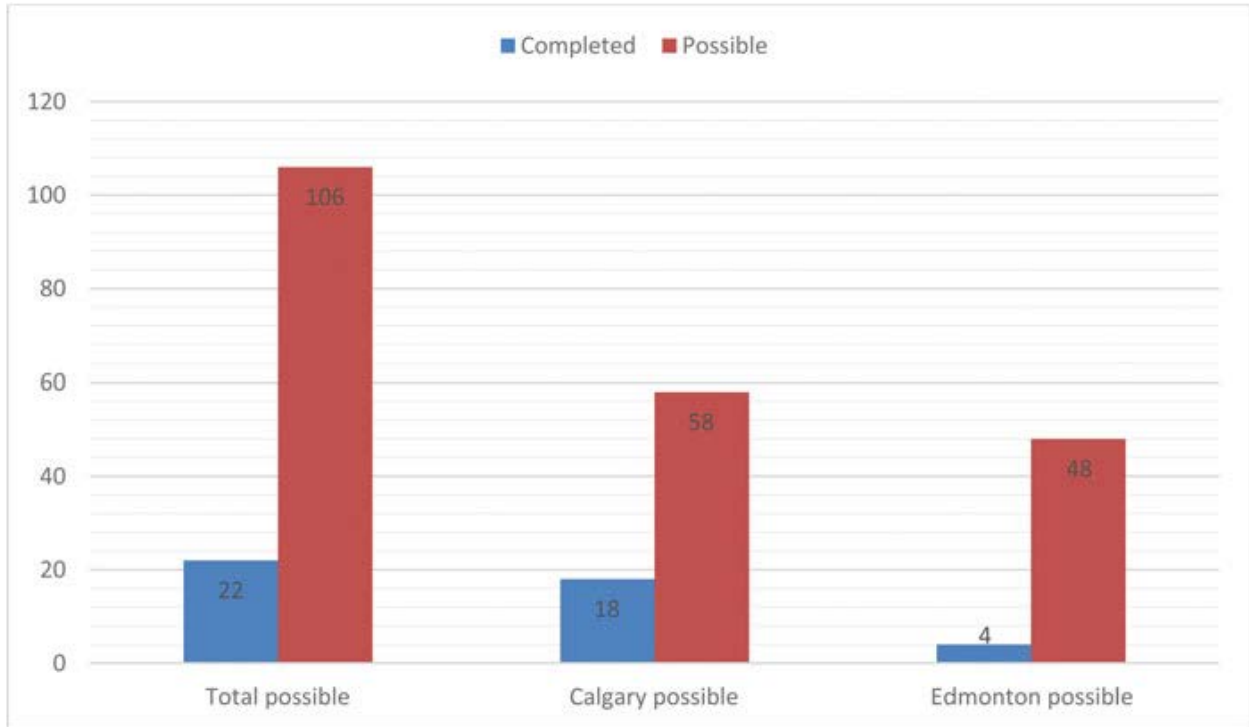

Figure 1 – Response by campus

Figure 2 – Response by campus of total possible

Respondent Profile

Of the 20 people who answered the question, 'For which faculty do you teach?' 16 (73%) of them were from the Faculty of Management (see Figure 3). This is not surprising, as the campuses were established by that faculty and the majority of the classes taught at those locations are Management courses. The remaining courses are offered to help those obtaining a Management degree to complete their elective requirements; two respondents teach for the Faculty of Arts & Science, and two from the Faculty of Fine Arts (9%). A further two respondents (9%) did not answer the question.
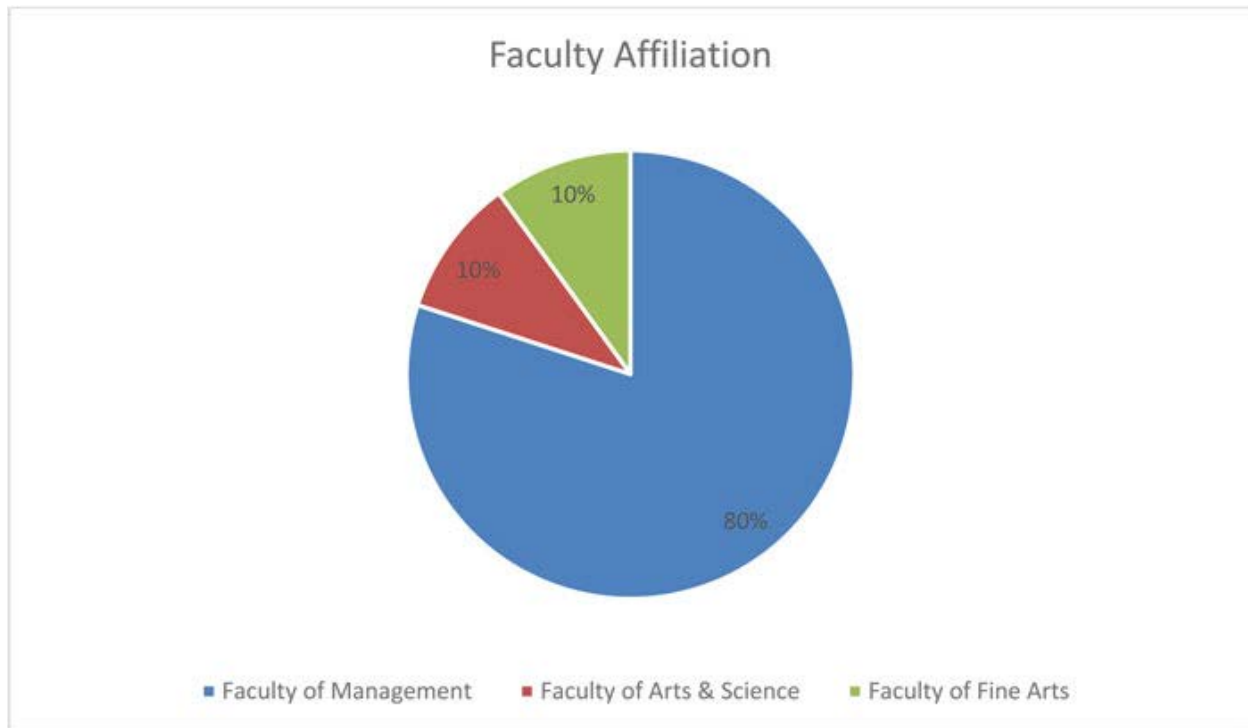
Figure 3 – Faculty affiliation of respondents

Note: Question was optional in the event respondents wanted to maintain complete anonymity.

Of the 20 people who answered the question on status/rank, 14 (64%) of them were sessional lecturers and six were faculty members. Again these results are to be expected, as a large proportion of those teaching at the Calgary and Edmonton locations are not permanent faculty members (see Figure 4). A further two respondents (9%) did not answer the question.
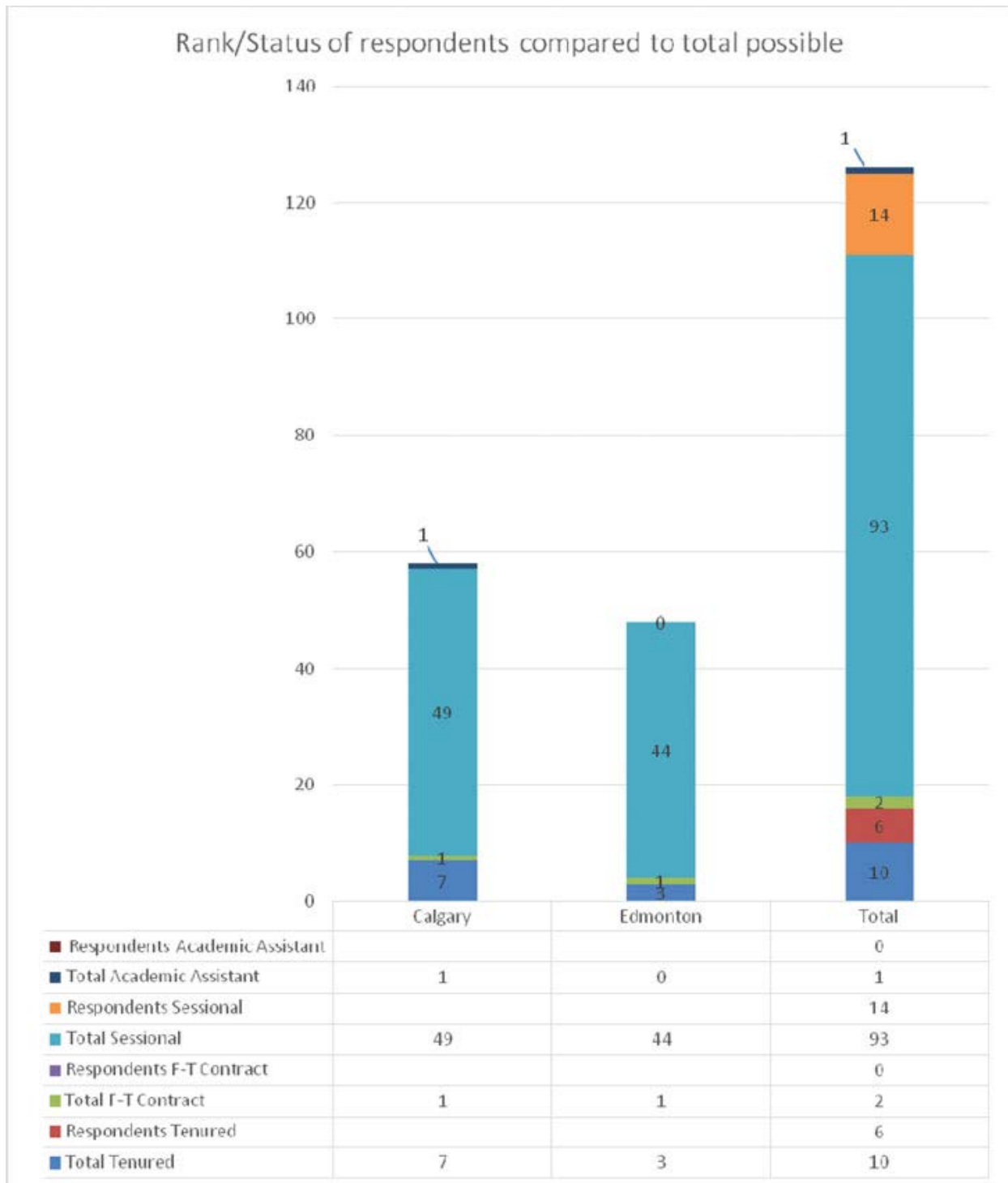
Rank/Status of respondents compared to total possible

	Calgary	Edmonton	Total
■ Respondents Academic Assistant			0
■ Total Academic Assistant	1	0	1
■ Respondents Sessional			14
■ Total Sessional	49	44	93
■ Respondents F-T Contract			0
■ Total F-T Contract	1	1	2
■ Respondents Tenured			6
■ Total Tenured	7	3	10

Figure 4 – Rank/Status of Respondents

Note: Question was optional in the event respondents wanted to maintain complete anonymity.

Use of Library Services

The majority of respondents indicated that they had not used library services or had no need for them in the class they taught (41%). Of the services used, 23% (five respondents) had requested items via inter-campus delivery, three respondents had used online resources provided by the library (ie electronic journal access), three encouraged students to contact the Information and Research Assistance Desk through a distance method (phone, chat, or email), and three had utilized the services provided by the U of L Library's copyright advisor. Two had used handouts provided by a librarian, two had used the U of L Library to obtain an inter-library loan, and two had encouraged students to get a library card which allows them reciprocal borrowing privileges at other libraries. Only one instructor had utilized the online tutorials provided by the library on conducting library research. These tutorials were designed specifically for the first-year academic writing class, which is provided by the Faculty of Arts and Science. The very low response rate may not be indicative of actual usage of these modules[1]. One instructor indicated they had hosted a librarian in their class, an option no longer provided to distance campuses but which was offered in the past. Another indicated they had hosted a video visit by a librarian and one respondent indicated demonstrating online searches for his/her class themselves. See Figure 5 for an illustration of the library services used by respondents.
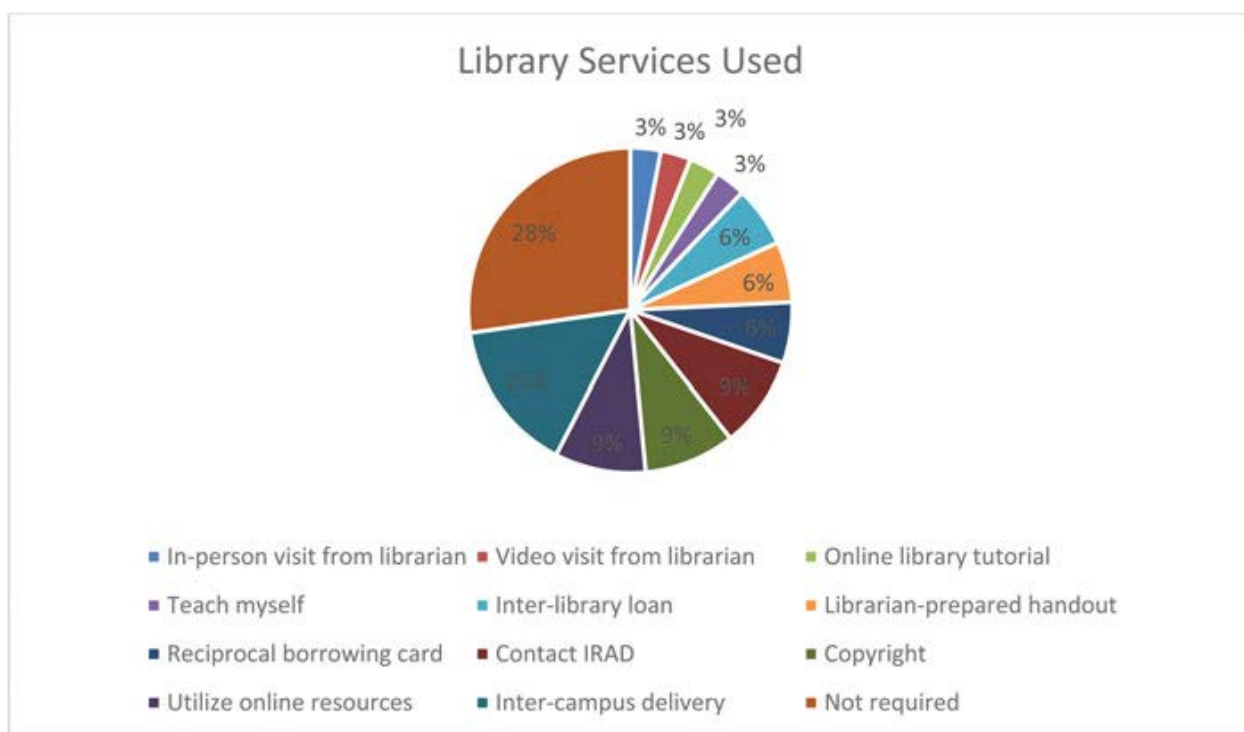

Figure 5 – Library Services Used

Note: answers which received no responses were omitted from graph. Respondents could choose more than one answer.

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[1] In fact, the author knows that the modules are used by more than one instructor. In Fall 2014, four of a possible five instructors on the Calgary and Edmonton campuses registered their classes to use these modules within Moodle.

When asked if instructors required students to use library services or resources, nine who answered the question (41%) indicated they did, while ten (45%) did not. Three did not answer the question.
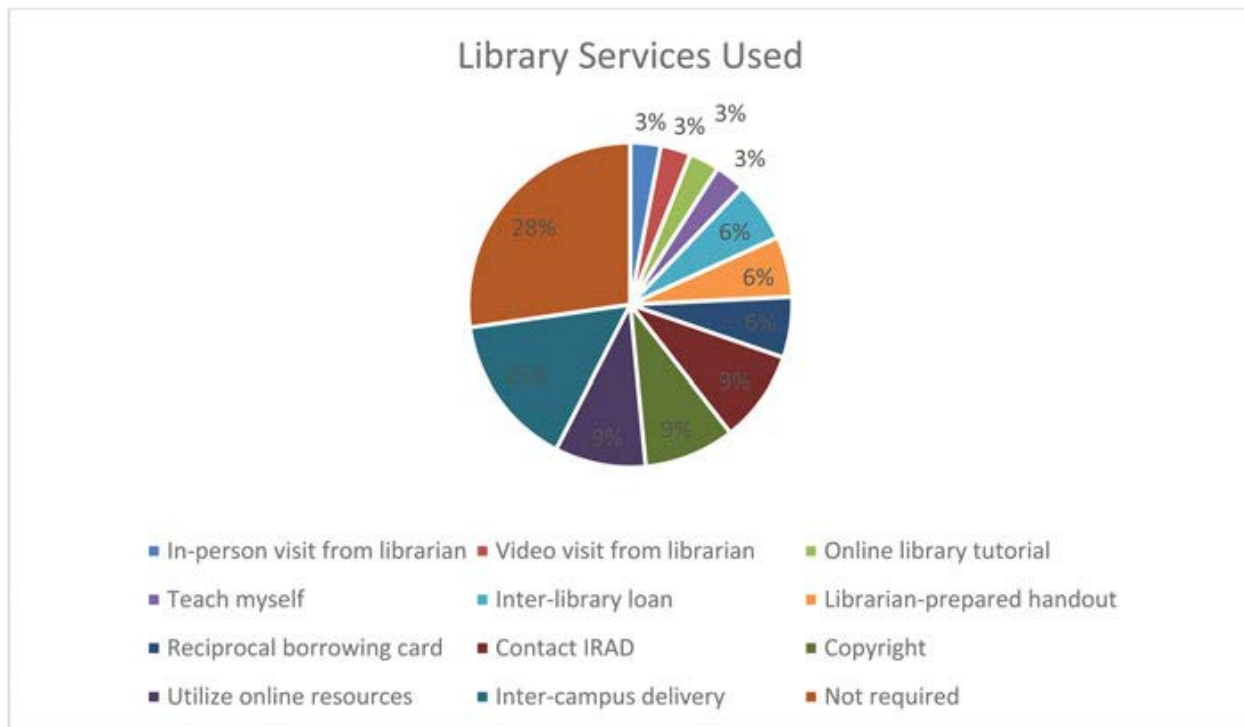

Figure 6 – Library resources required for course

The author was interested to see what potential barriers were preventing instructors from using the library's resources or services. Six respondents (27%) indicated that they hadn't encountered any such barriers. Five answered that they were unaware of the services available to them; five stated that they had not considered using it. Four instructors indicated that their students used local libraries instead of the U of L library. One instructor indicated that while distance help (via phone, chat or email) is available to their students, they tend to want in-person help instead. One respondent indicated that the U of L library does not provide the necessary materials to use in their course; one felt there was a lack of online materials for their students to use; and one felt copyright clearance was a barrier. No one felt the procedures for students to use the library were too complicated; however, one instructor indicated that the procedures were too complicated for the instructor him/herself to effectively use the library, and three indicated that students lack the technological skills to effectively use the library at a distance. One respondent stated that students weren't required to use library materials for their class. Figure 7 illustrates the reasons library services and resources were not being used.
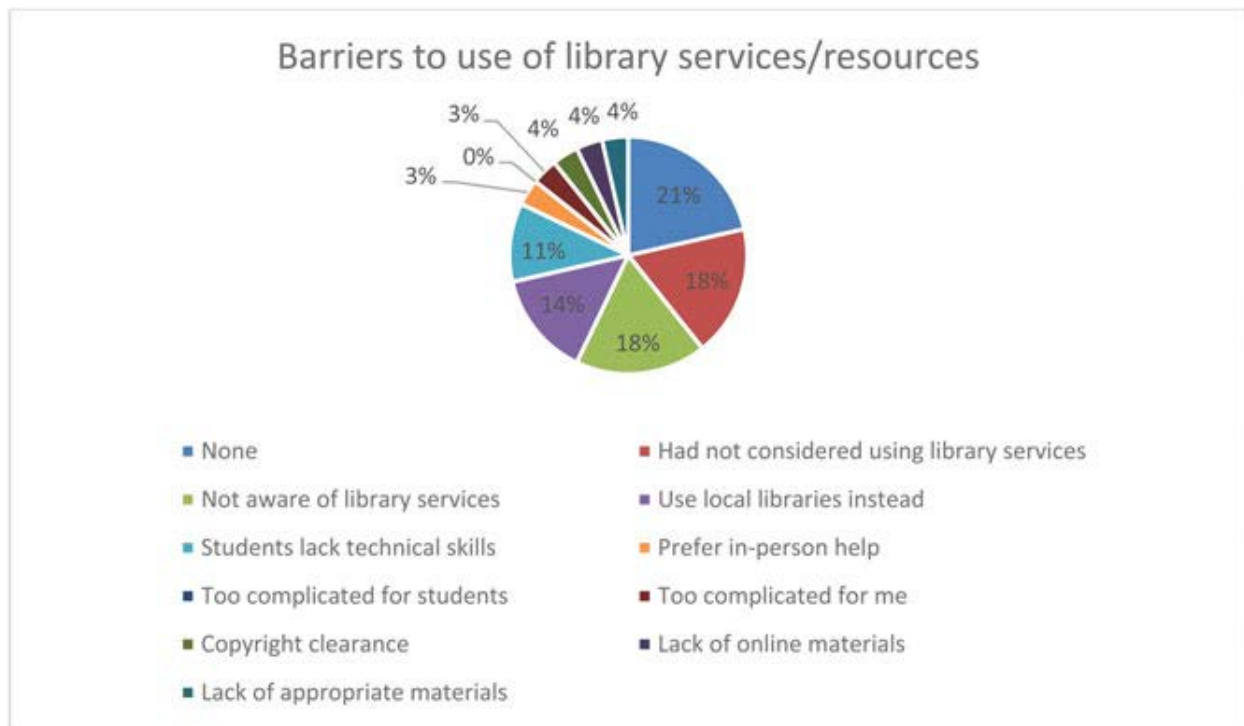
Figure 7 – Barriers to use of library services/resources

Note: Respondents could choose more than one answer.

Acquisition of Information Literacy Skills

Instructors were split on whether students come equipped with library skills and their self-efficacy in obtaining these skills. Eight respondents indicated that they taught students library skills themselves, while nine indicated that students already had the skills they need. Fourteen instructors felt that students would ask for help of a librarian if needed; seven of these explicitly directed students to a librarian. One respondent was split, indicating that students should have some skills, but still require direction (counted in both categories). This is consistent with library literature which states that instructors often overestimate the abilities of students when it comes to library and information seeking skills (Leckie, 1996; McGuinness, 2006). One instructor believed students got their library instruction from a local library, one preferred an in-person visit from a librarian, and one stated that library skills weren't necessary for his / her class. See figure eight for an illustration of the ways instructors expected students to get their information literacy skills.
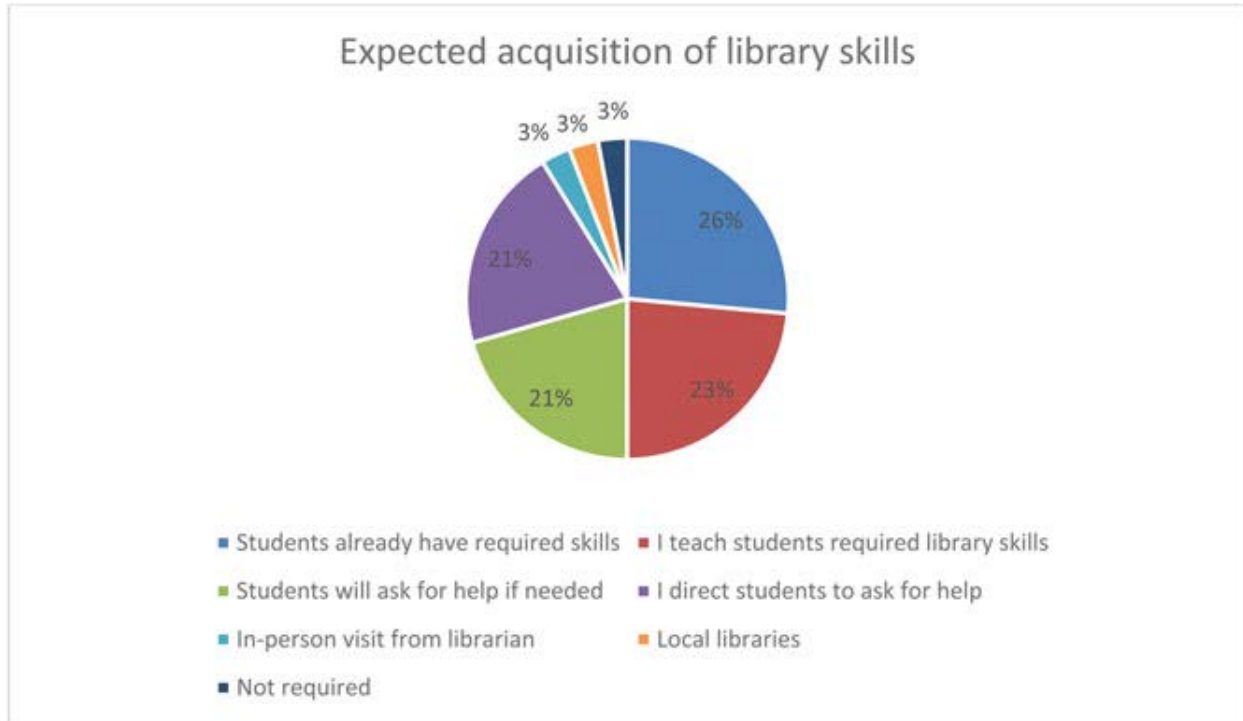
Figure 8 – Expected acquisition of library skills

Note: answers which received no responses were omitted from graph. Respondents could choose more than one answer.

An incredibly positive response was received to the question, "Are you willing to give class time for a librarian to teach your students library skills?". Overwhelmingly, the answer was yes – with 18 of 19 respondents answering affirmatively. This further lends credence to the idea that instructors were unaware of the availability of a librarian to provide a 'virtual visit' to their class, and would utilize this service more if they were made aware of it.
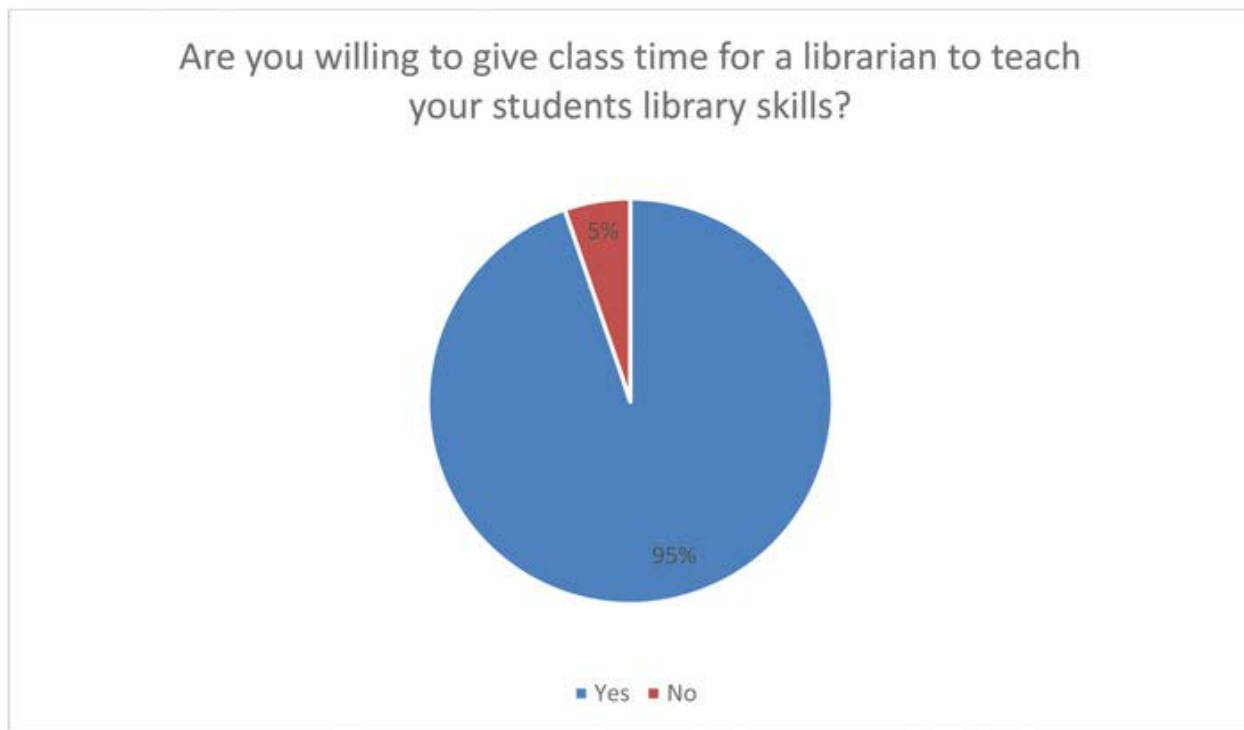
Figure 9 – Willingness to give class time for librarian

Access to Class Materials

The majority (16) expected their students to access required readings for the course through textbooks. Twelve respondents expected students to access materials freely available online; nine uploaded required materials to Moodle; seven provided students with course packs; and five copied the articles and provided them directly to students. Thus, the vast majority of materials required by these students were not accessed through the library. This is not especially surprising, since most of the respondents and courses being taught on these campuses are in the Faculty of Management. Such courses were not likely to be as research-intensive as other courses could be. Seven respondents indicated that they expected students to access readings via the electronic journals available through the library. One respondent, who did not answer 'yes' to this question, replied that while they believed students SHOULD access the readings themselves through the library, the students didn't know how to access them. It was much more work for the instructors to answer all the questions about how to obtain the articles than to simply post the articles to the course management site. This too would indicate that an information literacy session would be welcomed. Three instructors indicated that students accessed readings through local libraries[2], one required students to borrow materials via interlibrary loan, and one said that there were no required readings. Figure ten illustrates the ways that instructors expected students to access class readings.

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[2] Local libraries include university, college, and public libraries in the satellite campus cities.
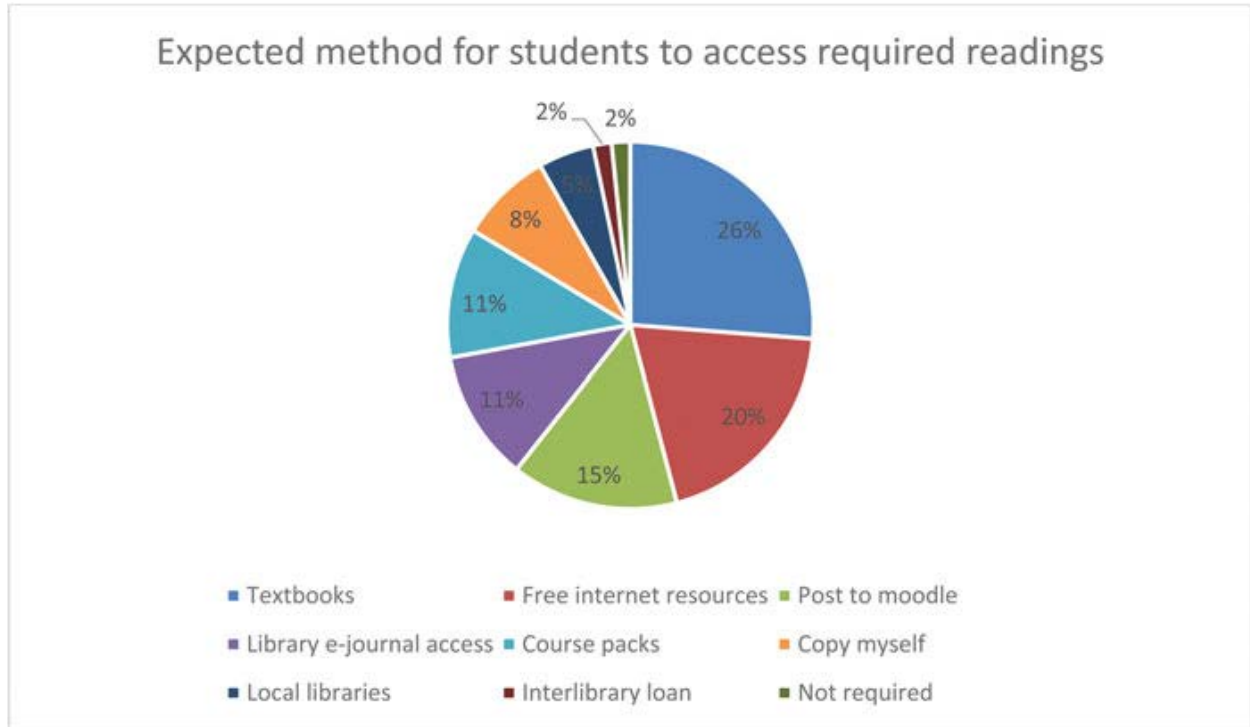
Figure 10 – Expected method for students to access required readings

Note: answers which received no responses were omitted from graph. Respondents could choose more than one answer.

Awareness of Library Services

The responses to the question asking "Are there any library services available to you and your students that you were previously unaware of that you were made aware of by this survey?" seemed contradictory. Only three answered 'yes', and yet answers to other questions would indicate otherwise. While all but one respondent indicated that they were willing to have a librarian visit their class in a previous question, none requested this service. Three elaborated in the comments that a librarian visit was the service of which they were previously unaware. Clearly, more work needs to be done indicating the librarians' willingness to visit via video and promote the service more heavily.
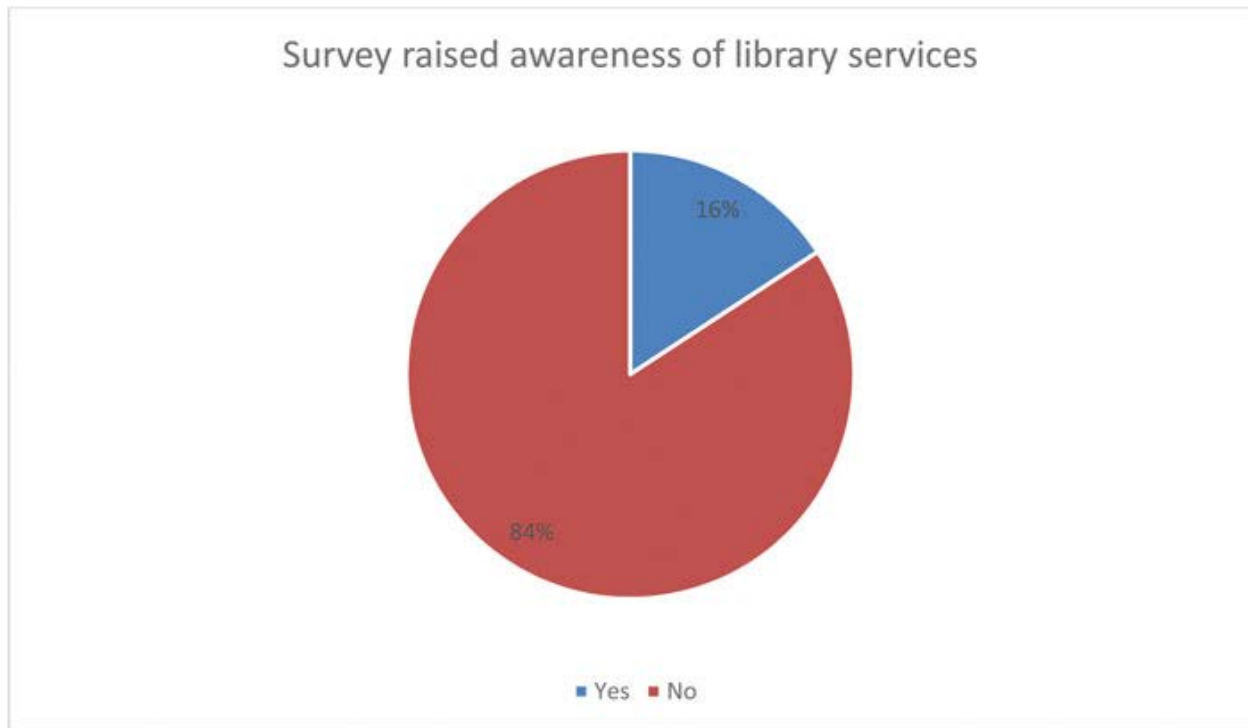
Figure 11 – Survey raised awareness of library services

Comments

Two open-ended questions invited comments. One asked for student feedback regarding the ease or difficulty of accessing library resources. Twelve of seventeen responded that they haven't heard anything regarding library use from their students. Two responded that they weren't certain that students knew what they were missing and that they were satisfied with their usual method of 'Googling'. Three instructors explicitly stated the skills they felt the students were lacking:

> "The class I teach is often part of their very first year at <city> Campus. It is so important in [academic writing] to include Library skills as the courses they take in the future will require these skills. I have found the tutorials to be very helpful. I develop my own exercises to guide them through the tutorials as they just need an overview of how to find information and how information is categorized in the Library."

> "A common comment is that they didn't even know the databases for journal articles even existed. Also, a large number of students coming from [other institutions] have [a] truly dreadful understanding of citation and avoiding plagiarism."

> "They don't know where to look for books or journal articles, they don't know how to log on, they don't understand the different between popular press and peer reviewed sources, they don't understand search terms or how they can be used, they don't understand the different databases, interlibrary loans, etc."

> "I find that very few of my students that are based in <city> are familiar with how to use the library and library resources effectively."

> "I would gladly provide class time if a librarian would be willing to teach some of these skills to my students!"

The other open-ended question asked for other services the Library could offer, as well as any other suggestions. Several answers were simply, "no/none/I don't know". One said, "I don't know what services you may offer". This seemed to contradict to the low number of responses that indicated new information on library services was illuminated by the survey. It supported the fact that as the last question on the survey, the respondent would have been exposed to available services as he/she completed the survey. One suggestion for a specific resource was received, and the following comments showed that while much of what the Library is doing is appreciated, there is still much more that can be done to serve satellite locations:

> "I had a librarian up to <city> a few times in the past, and I did find that contact with the students was very important. The video conferencing had too many technical glitches to be effective and was rather alienating. If we could return to in-person tutorials that would be great. My students already feel like they are not a part of the "true" campus."

> "I am not clear on my role relative to teaching proper referencing ie APA. If I am expected to teach and/or reinforce this, than <sic> partnering with a Librarian would be helpful."

> "I just started teaching on <city> Campus in Fall 2014. I ordered couple books from the library and they came really fast which I find an outstanding service. I also asked students to read couple article available online via library <sic>. However I am not familiar with services that are available (except those I mentioned) and I would appreciate an email explaining what is offered to instructors."

> "None that I can think of. But I could probably try to take advantage of more of the services. I get excellent support on shipping videos. I would be interested in having a librarian "visit" to teach some classes about plagiarism and searching databases if that could be arranged over video conference during a term when I have a project that involves research."

> "I love the library, as you know, and often order books to be sent here. And I certainly encourage my students to use the library, but if you have ideas about how to do that better and more actively, I'd be delighted to work with you. <initials removed>"

> "I would gladly provide class time to provide an opportunity for a librarian to teach students how to use online resources for their classes. Currently I am going through it with my students but feel it would be better with a librarian."

Discussion & Conclusion

It is heartening to know that efforts at further integration of information literacy into instructors' classes will be appreciated. In the time since the author offered distance classes via Skype, the webinar technology has improved a great deal. Skype was somewhat unstable, as mentioned by one of the

instructors, and did not provide the intimate experience hoped for (for more information on the teaching experience with Skype, see Eva & Nicholson, 2011). As a result of this most recent survey, the author contacted the instructor who identified herself and expressed interest in having a class. A webinar information literacy session was conducted using GoToMeeting, which worked very well. This service will be promoted heavily for fall 2015 to all new and returning instructors. General promotional material has also been sent to inform instructors and students of all the services they can take advantage of, even though they are not located on the physical campus. A brochure was sent at the culmination of the survey to highlight these services; it will be updated and sent again in the fall term. Education for instructors is another component which will need to be considered. It is essential to let them know how best to use library resources as a part of their classes, and to ensure they are aware that not all students come equipped with the skills to access library resources.

As an aside, news was received after the completion of the survey that the Edmonton campus will be closing within two years. As a result, it may be more feasible to travel only to the Calgary location for information literacy sessions, especially if they can be scheduled together to allow for a single trip. This action should help instructors and students on that campus feel even more 'included' in the main campus activities.

Overall, it was a valuable exercise to conduct a follow-up survey. While most of the responses were similar to those received in 2011, it was good to make a personal connection with instructors at satellite campuses and to highlight the services which they might not have been aware of or had forgotten. The biggest take-away of this current study was that instructors were unaware of the ability to hold information literacy sessions in their classes via technology, and are happy to have a librarian visit their classes. Currently, very few library resources or services are used by these distance courses. As a result of this study, the author will ensure to promote Library services more vigorously to northern campus instructors by including them more specifically in emails, increasing the number of communication emails sent, and sending brochures to both student advisors and instructors in the fall. It is clear that there is interest in having more information literacy sessions and by targeting these instructors specifically to remind them that this service is available, it is very likely that more invitations to their classes will follow. In addition, targeting education of library resources and services to the instructors themselves will likely pay off as the instructors can pass on that knowledge to the students.

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Appendix A – 2011 survey

1. For which faculty/department do you teach? (open-ended responses)

2. Which of the following library services have you used for your course? (Mark all that apply):
   a. Class visit from a librarian via video
   b. Utilizing a librarian in an online discussion board
   c. Interlibrary loan
   d. Electronic course reserves
   e. Online library tutorials
   f. Handout prepared by a librarian
   g. Encouraged students to get a TAL* card
      author's note: TAL stands for The Alberta Library, a card which allows users to borrow materials from other institutions in the province
   h. Other

3. What are some barriers that limit your use of the library's services / resources in your courses? (Mark all that apply):
   a. Copyright clearance
   b. Lack of online materials
   c. Library does not provide materials my students need
   d. I had not considered using the library for support
   e. Procedures to use the library are too complicated for students
   f. Procedures to use the library are too complicated for me
   g. I am not aware of library services to support Calgary or Edmonton campuses
   h. My students lack the technological skills or equipment to use the library effectively from a distance
   i. My students use local libraries (ie college, university, public) instead of the U of L Library
   j. Other

4. Do you require your students to use library services or resources?
   a. Yes
   b. No

5. Where do you expect your students to get their library skills? (Mark all that apply):
   a. In-class visit from a librarian
   b. Video visit from a librarian
   c. I teach library skills to my students
   d. I believe students at this level already have the skills they need
   e. I believe students will ask a librarian for help if needed
   f. I direct students to contact a librarian for help
   g. Students don't need library skills for my class

      h. Other

6. Are you willing to give class time for a librarian to teach your students library skills?
      a. Yes
      b. No

7. How do you expect your students to access their required readings? (Mark all that apply):
      a. Textbooks
      b. Course packs
      c. Electronic reserves
      d. Electronic journal access through the library (not e-reserves)
      e. Interlibrary loan
      f. Electronic articles I upload myself to the course site
      g. Articles I copy myself and provide to students
      h. Figuring out how to get the materials is part of the student's self-education
      i. Freely available internet resources (not through the library)
      j. There are no required readings for my class(es)
      k. Other

8. What do you hear from your students about the ease or difficulty of accessing library resources? (open-ended responses)

9. Are there any library services available to you and your students that you were previously unaware of that you were made aware of by this survey?
      a. Yes
      b. No

10. Are there services not currently offered by the U of L library that could facilitate your teaching? Please elaborate, along with any other comments. (open-ended responses)

Appendix B – 2014 survey

1. At which campus location do you teach? Choose one of the following answers:
   a. Calgary
   b. Edmonton
   c. No answer

   Please enter your comment here:

2. For which faculty do you teach? Check any that apply:
   a. Faculty of Management
   b. Faculty of Arts & Science
   c. Faculty of Fine Arts
   d. Other:

3. What is your status/rank at the U of L? Choose one of the following answers:
   a. Faculty Member
   b. Academic Assistant
   c. Sessional
   d. Other:

4. Which of the following library services have you used for your courses? Check any that apply:
   a. Class visit from a librarian (in person) (note: this is no longer offered, but you may have utilized in the past)
   b. Class visit from a librarian (via video)
   c. Utilizing a librarian in an online discussion board (i.e. in Moodle)
   d. Requesting an item from the U of L library via inter-campus delivery
   e. Inter-library loan (i.e. from a separate library)
   f. Electronic course reserves
   g. Online library tutorials
   h. Using a handout prepared by a librarian
   i. Encouraging students to get a TAL, COPPUL, or other library card with reciprocal borrowing privileges
   j. Encouraging students to contact the Information and Research Services Desk via email, chat, or 1-800 number
   k. Utilizing the U of L copyright advisor's services
   l. None/not required for my class
   m. Other:

5. Do you require your students to use library services or resources?
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. What are some barriers that limit your use of the library's services or resources in your courses? Check any that apply:
    a. Copyright clearance
    b. Lack of online materials
    c. Library does not provide materials my students need
    d. I had not considered using the library for support
    e. Procedures to use the library are too complicated for students
    f. Procedures to use the library are too complicated for me
    g. I am not aware of library services to support Calgary or Edmonton campuses
    h. My students lack the technological skills or equipment to use the library effectively from a distance
    i. My students use local libraries (i.e. college, university, public) instead of the U of L Library
    j. My students don't require library materials for this class
    k. I haven't encountered any barriers
    l. Other:

7. Where do you expect your students to acquire their library skills? Check any that apply:
    a. In-class visit from a librarian
    b. Video visit from a librarian
    c. I teach library skills to my students
    d. I believe students at this level already have the skills they need
    e. I believe students will ask a librarian for help if needed
    f. I direct students to contact a librarian for help
    g. Students don't need library skills for my class
    h. Other:

8. Are you willing to give class time for a librarian to teach your students library skills?
    a. Yes
    b. No

9. How do you expect your students to access their required readings? Check any that apply:
    a. Textbooks
    b. Course packs
    c. Electronic reserves
    d. Electronic journal access through the library (not e-reserves)
    e. Electronic articles I upload/link to myself through the course site/Moodle
    f. Articles I copy myself and provide to students
    g. Interlibrary loan (via U of L)
    h. Borrow from local libraries (not U of L)
    i. Freely available internet resources (not through the library)
    j. There are no required readings for my class(es)

      k.   Figuring out how to get the materials is part of the students' self-education

      l.   Other:

10. What do you hear from your students about the ease or difficulty of finding and using library resources? (open-ended responses)

11. Are there any library services available to you and your students that you were previously unaware of that you were made aware of by this survey? If so, please elaborate.

    Choose one of the following answers

        a.   Yes
        b.   No

    Please enter your comment here: (open-ended responses)

12. Are there services not currently offered by the U of L Library that could facilitate your teaching? Please elaborate, along with any other comments on the Library that you would like to make. (open-ended responses)