

Précis Plus: A Collaborative Approach to Teaching Information Literacy

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Overview

- Context
- *Précis Plus*
- Library Workshop
- Assessment
- Discussion

Context is everything!

McGill University and the Library



Information literacy training in *Environmental Hydrology*

- Liaison librarian model
- Information literacy training
- *Environmental Hydrology* & the previous term assignment

Research paper:

A critical review of literature on a selected topic

Question

Is the research paper an appropriate assignment for students in *Environmental Hydrology*?

Instructor's concerns

- Amount of reading and writing
- Quality of students' assignments

- Understand the legacy of a research work
- Understand the continuum of research papers
- Ask meaningful research questions

Scaffolding is needed in the process!

Librarian's concerns

- Teach students information literacy beyond database searching
- Integrate ACRL's Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

ACRL's Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

- ❖ Authority is constructed and contextual
- ❖ Information creation as a process
- ❖ Information has value
- ❖ Research as inquiry
- ❖ Scholarship as conversation
- ❖ Searching as strategic exploration

Précis Plus

What Précis Plus is

- Select one of the papers provided with this assignment and read and understand the paper in detail
- Write a 400 word **précis** of the selected paper
- Use a bibliographic search engine to find recent papers (last decade) that cite the selected paper. Select **four** that you think are the most interesting and relevant and provide a **proper citation** for each paper. With each citation, write a 100 word **annotation** explaining **how original cited paper was relevant and/or useful to the paper**

Learning objectives of *Précis Plus*

- How to write a concise, coherent, critical summary of a scientific paper
- Learn to use bibliographic search engine to assess the legacy of a scientific paper
- Select examples from the contemporary literature to demonstrate how that legacy has manifested itself and still relevant to research questions today

Learning objective mapping

- How to write a concise, coherent, critical summary of a scientific paper
- Learn to use bibliographic search engine to assess the legacy of a scientific paper
- Select examples from the contemporary literature to demonstrate how that legacy has manifested itself and still relevant to research questions today

ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

- *Research as inquiry*
- *Scholarship as conversation*
- *Searching as strategic exploration*

Library workshop

A 80-minute in-class workshop consists of:

Part A	10 mins	Instructor's explanation of the assignment
Part B	20 mins	Use library resources to locate the full text for a known reference
	5 mins	Activity #1: Find the full text of a journal article
	10 mins	Trace articles that cite a given paper
	5 mins	Activity #2: Compare the number of cites to an article between SCOPUS, Web of Science, and Google Scholar
	20 mins	Organize references using EndNote
	10 mins	Activity #3: Add a reference into EndNote

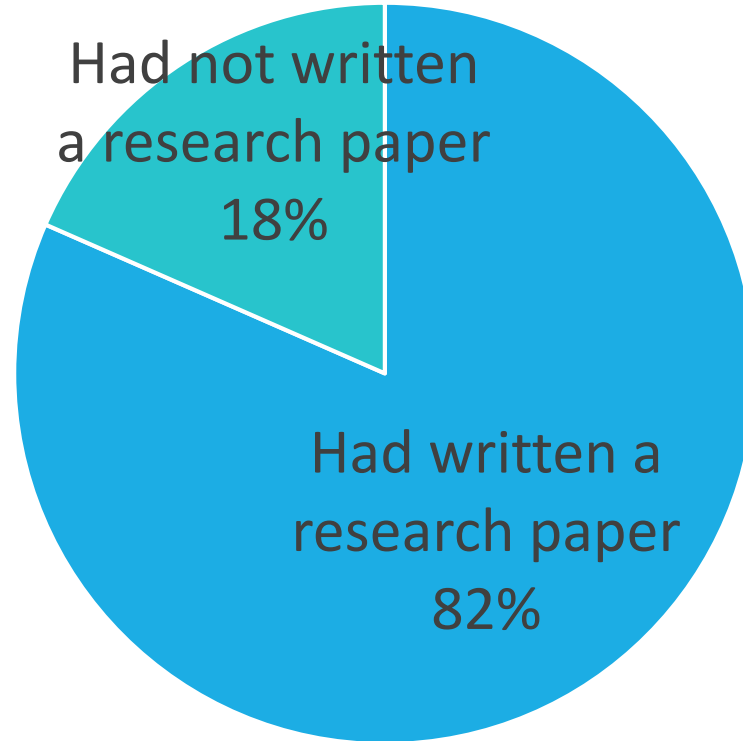
Assessment

Assessment question categories

- 1) Students' perceptions on a research paper assignment
- 2) Techniques that they had used in searching for scholarly articles prior to this assignment
- 3) Students' evaluation of the efficacy of the library workshop
- 4) Students' evaluation of the efficacy of the *Précis Plus* assignment
- 5) Suggestions on the library workshop and the *Précis Plus* assignment

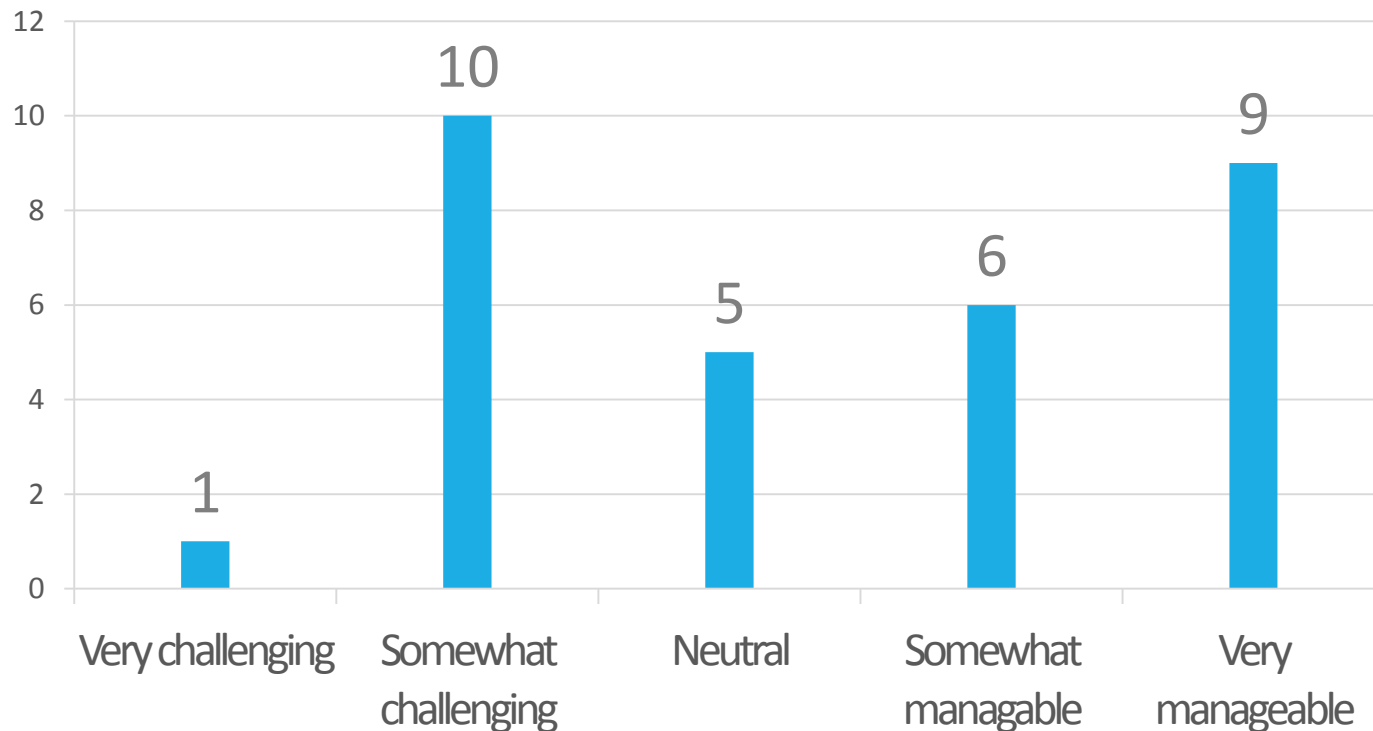
1) Students' perceptions on a research paper assignment

- Had you previously written a research paper of at least 4 pages in length?



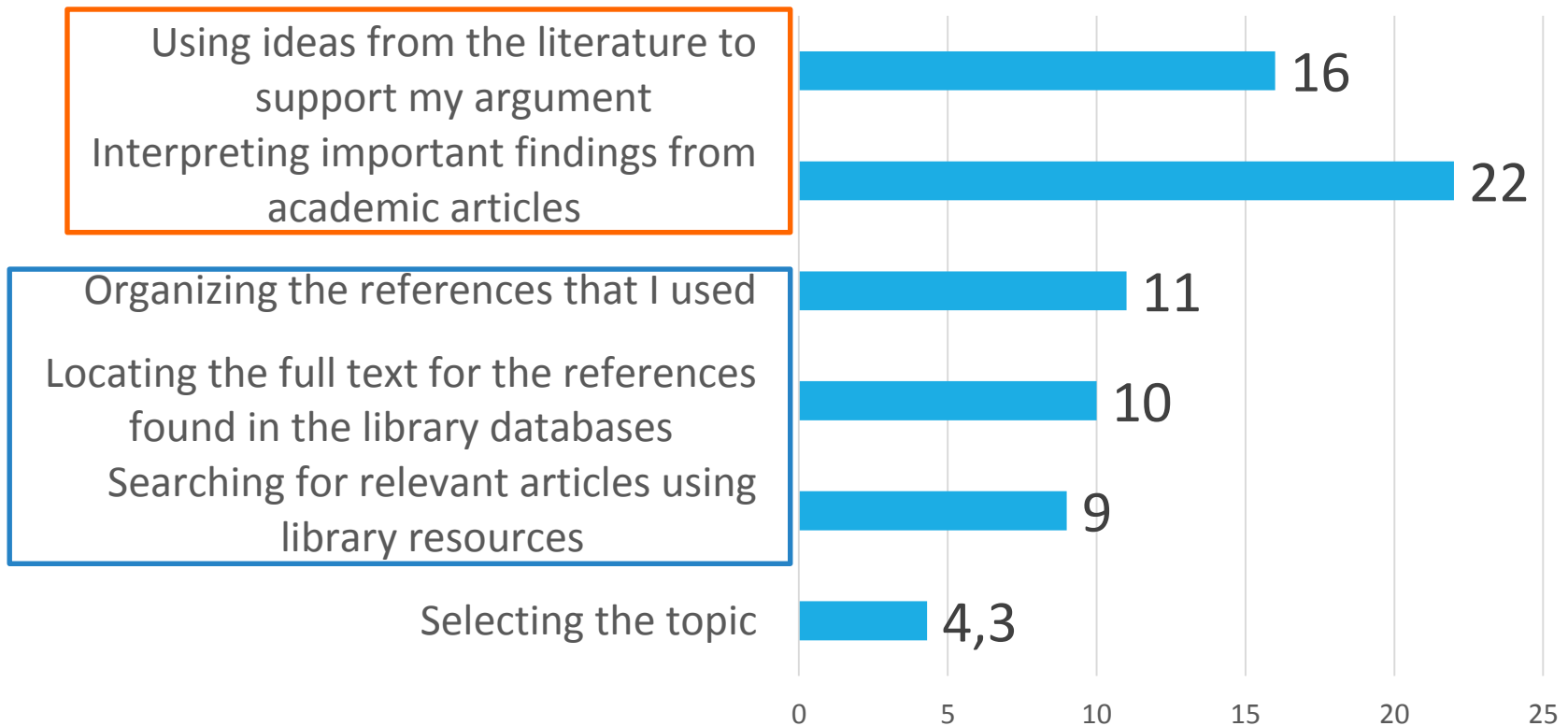
1) Students' perceptions on a research paper assignment (cont'd)

- How challenging was it for you to complete that research paper?



1) Students' perceptions on a research paper assignment (cont'd)

- What were the challenges?



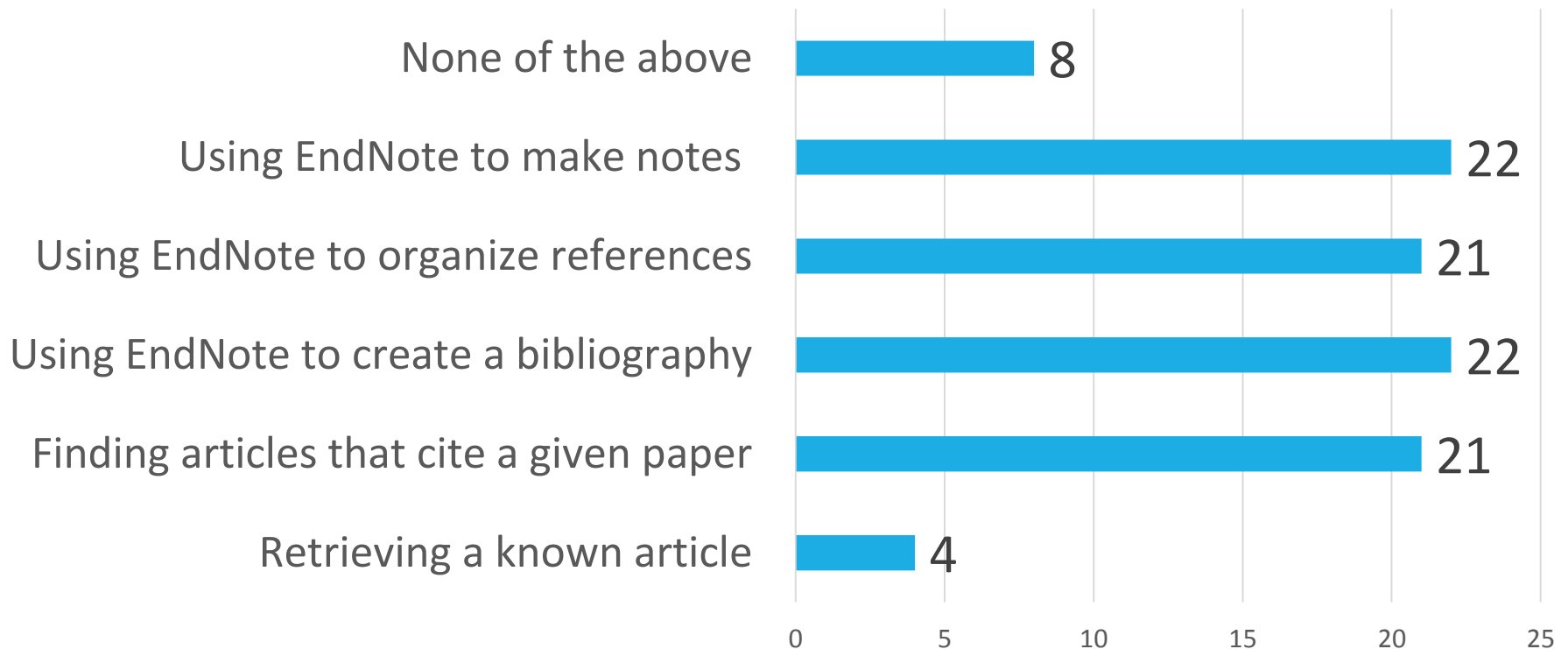
2) Techniques that they had used in searching for scholarly articles

- What techniques had you used to search for scholarly articles prior to this assignment ?



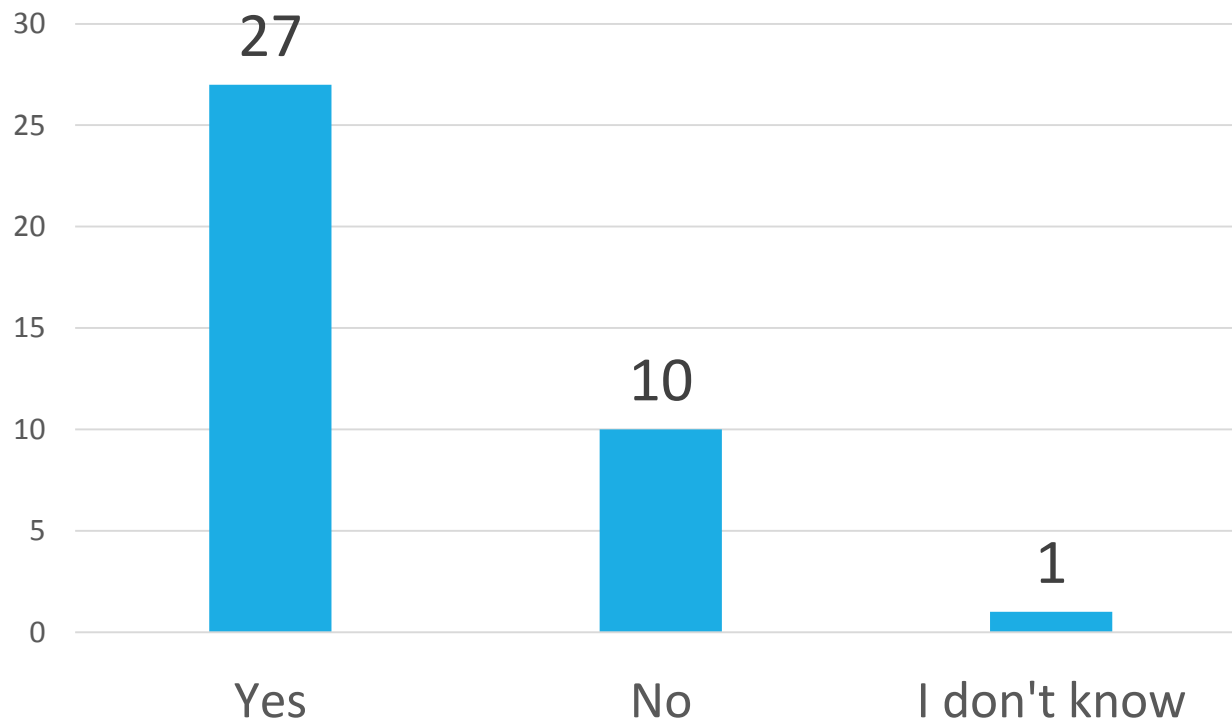
3) Student evaluation of library workshop

- What did you learn from the in-class library workshop that you had not known before?



3) Student evaluation of library workshop (cont'd)

- Would you consider using EndNote in your future assignments?



4) Student evaluation of *Précis Plus*

- What was the most valuable thing you learned from the completion of this *Precis* assignment?

5) Suggestions

➤ Library workshop

- “No, it was of good quality”
- “Double instruction period – spend much more time teaching EndNote.”
- “More workshops”

➤ Précis Plus

- “Have a discussion [...] on the links between the papers”
- “[...] peer review component [...] could learn a bit more on some of the other covered topics completed by other students in their assignments. ”

Discussion

Success of *Précis Plus*

- Very hard to do but also very rewarding.
- Very useful in reinforcing ideas from lectures.
- They learned how to read research articles on a topic and understand the legacy being developed.
- An improvement of the quality of completed assignments.

Success of library workshop

- Students learned new knowledge
 - Finding articles that cite a given paper
 - Using EndNote
- An exploration of implementing the ACRL's information literacy concepts:
 - Searching as strategic exploration
 - Research as inquiry
 - Scholarship as conversation

Challenges: *Précis Plus*

- Make sure students understand the value of reading primary literature
- Make sure students understand what *Précis Plus* is and how to compete it
- Make sure students understand why it is important to write concisely and how to do so

Challenges: library workshop

- Work closely with the instructors
- Make the assignment a target for the library workshop
- Considerations for the future practice:
 - Lengthening the instruction of EndNote
 - Creating additional learning materials, e.g. videos, online guides, and handouts
 - Continuing to offer research assistance

Thank you!

Acknowledgements

The presenters wish to thank David Greene for his contributions in co-teaching the library workshop in 2016 and in preparing the student evaluation questionnaire. They are also grateful for the travel grant provided by the International Association of University Libraries (IATUL) to present this paper at the 38th Annual IATUL Conference in Bolzano, Italy.

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