

Case Study 3

THE LIBRAT PROGRAM AT CAL POLY: Full Partners in Peer Learning

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OVERVIEW

The LibRAT Program at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo was first piloted in 2010. Although the program has expanded in scope and depth, the key to its continued success has been a commitment to core principles discovered during its initial launch. To this day, the LibRATs (Library Reference Assistance Technicians) form a small cadre of intensively trained students who are treated with respect as adults and as undergraduates. Communication, learning, and responsibility are multidirectional, and the LibRATs are full partners in the success of the program.

The original design of the program was to post students in residence halls to provide research assistance, but this model failed to generate research questions. However, we discovered the LibRATs to be an untapped resource and we were determined to find ways to repurpose them. In 2011, unforeseen librarian leaves created a staffing shortfall, and we found a solution ready at hand: LibRATs. Within one year, the LibRATs were full partners in providing research assistance and in leading lower-division information literacy sessions. As research assistants, LibRATs now staff all Research Help Desk and local chat hours at the Robert E.



Kennedy Library. The LibRATs also now lead more than one hundred instructional sessions per year. The rapid and sustained growth of our instruction program made possible by the LibRATs' participation resoundingly justified the hiring of a foundational experiences librarian, who now coordinates the instructional component of the LibRAT program.

ADMINISTRATION

Our program may be unique in getting unqualified support from major stakeholders. The Kennedy Library administration nurtured the pilot and has provided continuous support through generous allocations of librarian time and payroll funds for the LibRATs. The administration also bolsters the program through the creation of high-quality videos promoting LibRAT services. These videos serve as outreach on many levels—to students, to the campus, and to potential donors. The LibRAT program has been recognized on our campus as an excellent example of “earn-by-doing,” and a LibRAT became the first employee with wages supplied from a Library Student Assistant Endowment. The librarians at Cal Poly have been just as enthusiastic. They were the first to understand how LibRATs freed them up for providing more complex initiatives, instruction, and consultations. They have welcomed the LibRATs from day one as a key asset in helping our library fulfill its mission.

Two librarians hired and trained students for the original pilot, but for many years afterward, LibRAT research help and LibRAT instruction activities were coordinated by a single librarian. With the arrival of the foundational experiences librarian in 2014, two primary hemispheres of responsibility were established, one for reference and the other for instruction. Needless to say, the program remains intrinsically unified, and the two coordinators work closely together to ensure seamless execution. The benefits of this model of supervision are tremendous. It enables the two supervisors to coach the LibRATs with concentrated emphasis on either reference or instruction. The reference coordinator has the bandwidth to further LibRAT interviewing skills and information-seeking techniques, while the foundational experiences librarian can enrich LibRAT teaching competencies and collaborate with them on the design and delivery of new instructional modules.

HIRING

Whether you are just starting a program or replenishing your cohort of peer consultants, one of the most important considerations to keep in mind is devising a hiring timeline that allows peer consultants a sufficient window for training. If you are starting a new program, identify a target date for deployment and work backward through training, hiring, and interviewing in order to advertise the position at the right time. If you are replenishing your staff, scan the horizon to anticipate your attrition due to graduation, and again work backward to identify the number of necessary hires and to establish a complete timeline.

Cal Poly is on the quarter system, and we look at our needs approximately nine months in advance. We typically hire in early winter so new LibRATs can train throughout the winter quarter and receive more training and gain the full range of on-the-job experience through spring quarter. This way, by the fall of the next year, when reference and teaching are in high demand, they are fully equipped for both.

It's really great to have this skill set and be able to teach others how to do what they need to do for a class. I also enjoy being able to look up something that I otherwise wouldn't know about. Why else would I ever look up articles on Chechnyan soil science?

First Generation LibRAT, Cal Poly SLO

Below is a schematic of our hiring and training timeline:

- November: Determine the number of LibRATs needed by next September.
- December: Advertise the position on the campus job site.
- January: Interview and hire.
- Winter quarter: Begin intensive initial training.
- Spring quarter: Continue training.
- Fall quarter: Launch fully prepared LibRATs.

As you can see from the above timeline, each student represents a huge investment so it is crucial to get the right students. One way to do this is to advertise widely and attractively to the target audience. Our target audience consists of lower-division students, preferably first-years. The logic of hiring first-years is that they prove a better return on training investment if they stay until graduation. (As an aside, the fact that only three LibRATs have ever left before graduation is a sign of their thorough engagement!) For the first two generations, we used stanchions in the library and the Cal Poly student job website. Later, we limited advertising to the campus job website and to word of mouth via faculty, who have brought their classes to our lower-division instruction sessions. The job website allows us to specify that the position is open to first- and second-year students, and we make the job attractive to the kind of candidates we seek by “selling” the job for all the skill benefits it will bring—improved interpersonal skills, presentation skills, and research skills. (See Appendix A. Job Posting for LibRAT Position.)

We require applicants to post three items to the online job site: résumé, cover letter, and standard application. This demand for three components performs some initial weeding: if an applicant can't follow directions well enough to provide all three, there is no point in

pursuing an interview. Cover letters speak (for better and worse) about communication skills, and résumés provide information relevant to the qualities we seek. We particularly look for work in the service industry on the reasoning that we can gauge their attitude toward service. We also look for traces of volunteer work as a clear indication of a helpful disposition. Out of a student population of nineteen thousand, we have received as many as sixty applications and as few as thirty. Even in years when we are filling only one or two anticipated vacancies, we still invite twelve to fifteen applicants to interview. The interviews last ten minutes, conducted either by a single librarian or, more optimally, by two librarians in tandem. Hiring is one facet of the program where we do *not* invite the LibRATs to participate. It could prove extremely awkward in cases when friends apply, but worse, if we failed to genuinely embrace their input on an equal basis, we would risk the social breach of devaluing their contribution. This is something in all aspects of this program that we strive to minimize.

TRAINING

Training Philosophy

While the content of training is, of course, important, it is not our first focus when we think about training. Our abiding focus is instead on the social dynamics and mutual learning experienced by all parties through personal contact *during* training. Our training deliberately involves librarians, seasoned LibRATs, and new LibRATs. The content is only the tip of the iceberg. *What* we learn is important, but *how* we learn, how we learn *together*, and what we learn *about each other* is crucial to the success of our program. Even as librarians share what we know (or think we know), we model and shape an environment in which the students freely share what they know (or think they know.) Librarians know librarian life far better than students, and students know student life far better than librarians, so we both have a great deal to gain by listening and sharing. Our training process establishes an open community of practice by setting expectations for responsibility, communicating authentically, and listening well. This social foundation supports our program by welcoming and helping our newest members and by sustaining the desire of all parties to continually learn. Not unsurprisingly, it contributes to the evolution of training itself.

Research Assistance

Anyone proposing to build a research consultant program from scratch should count on putting intensive time and work into the training of the initial cohort. Once the first cohort has been created, however, the students can share in the training of the next generations. You may also encounter a steep learning curve. With our first cohort, for example, we had a poor situational understanding and indulged in the librarian habit of being *too* thorough. Our concern to equip the first peer assistants for success was genuine and

laudable, but in retrospect it was overkill. While our essential training content has not significantly changed (e.g., service attitude, the reference interview, search skills, procedures, and safety) we have deliberately dialed back our multiple and extended explorations of database after database. We have shifted our focus instead toward providing assistance for known local needs, questions, and assignments. An example of this shift is the LibRAT-devised proficiency test for trainees. This is based on frequently asked questions and is updated for each training cycle.

After establishing the first cohort of peer assistants, training becomes much easier. This is largely because seasoned mentors can actively participate in training. In contrast to our “launch” model of instruction, in which two librarians spent two hours per week for nine weeks training the first cohort, new students now train for ninety minutes per week with a librarian for nine weeks but also shadow at the desk two hours per week with either a seasoned LibRAT or a librarian. This hybrid model provides the program with the trifecta of pivotal social benefits, conceptual knowledge, and real-life experience in reference techniques.

The small network of my co-workers at the Research Help Desk are something quite special. Each has a heart for working with other students, a passion for solving difficult problems, and a genuine desire to learn something new every day. This program is a quintessential element in what makes Cal Poly, Cal Poly—learn by doing.

Third Generation LibRAT, Cal Poly SLO

Instruction

Our library instruction program for lower-division English and communication studies courses has evolved into a robust face-to-face delivery in which LibRATs lead over half of the 200 library research workshops each academic year. Perhaps even more so than for reference, we use an on-the-job training model for LibRAT instruction that befits Cal Poly’s “learn-by-doing” ethos. Instructional training begins indirectly via their research help training, where general knowledge of library resources and services, searching skills, and conducting a reference interview are first taught and honed. This provides them with foundational knowledge and customer service dispositions to build on as instructional leaders. Our first experiments with LibRATs as session leaders took place in 2011. Originally, we were curious to see if they could do it and how they would respond to doing it, wondering if this might be one way to repurpose their talents after the crash and burn in the residence halls. Two LibRATs agreed to try, and the rest soon followed. To forestall anxiety, we made it clear that they should be genuinely themselves and allow ample space

for their personalities, their status as students, and senses of humor. We pared the sessions to essentials, and for two years, while incorporating both assessment and LibRAT input, we introduced incremental changes to the instructional design.

Since the arrival of the foundational experiences librarian, the curriculum has been redesigned to incorporate more active learning methods into a new series of three fifty-minute workshops: Orientation, Research Workshop A, and Research Workshop B. Each workshop offers collaborative activities addressing one of the following learning outcomes: (1) searching the library’s databases strategically; (2) identifying the best sources to use for research assignments; and (3) practicing the process of evaluating information sources for credibility and relevance. (See Appendix B. Library Research Workshops—LibRAT Lesson Plans.) Each quarter, faculty can select any combination of workshops they wish. While the new curriculum menu requires more training and practice for the LibRATs, it is designed to leverage their role as peer guides who “mentor in the center.”

I’d like to add that my experience as a LibRAT wasn’t limited to just work; incredibly close relationships were built within our small team at Kennedy Library. We all helped each other, sharing encounters, tough questions to be resolved, better solutions for problems we were met with.

Third Generation LibRAT, Cal Poly SLO

Aside from short training sessions at the start of each quarter to go over the workshop lesson plans, activities, and handouts, instruction training happens primarily in the classroom. We schedule as many “live” opportunities as possible for newly hired LibRATs to observe and co-teach workshops before they are ready to teach on their own. Instruction training follows the hiring and reference training timeline mentioned earlier:

- Winter quarter: newly hired LibRATs observe several workshops and attend weekly instruction training sessions with the lead librarian.
- Spring quarter: newly hired LibRATs co-teach at least two workshops with librarians and more experienced LibRATs before teaching one workshop on their own.
- Fall quarter: all LibRATs are prepared to teach workshops on their own.

Once everyone is up and running, the lead librarian observes each LibRAT facilitating a workshop and provides constructive feedback. LibRATs also are paired to co-teach workshops every quarter to continually learn from each other in the classroom. At present, we use a Moodle site to house our teaching materials, course syllabi, student participant evaluations, and communications about the workshop schedule.

Our foremost instructional training goal is for LibRATs to skillfully facilitate workshops from start to finish while relating to participants as authentic and trusted peers. We coach them on both content and pedagogical technique for each of the four different classroom activities. For example, one activity prompts participants to compare scholarly and popular sources. LibRATs must learn how to introduce the activity and learning goals, guide student participants through the activity, and provide explanations as groups report out their answers. With the change to an active learning curriculum, it is vitally important for LibRATs to engage student participants by asking questions. The librarian works with LibRATs individually on effective questioning strategies as part of classroom observation feedback. As we train students on the mechanics of the activities, we still pay keen attention to affective components, encouraging them to develop their personal style, humor, and confidence as peer guides. Although LibRATs are not librarians with a deep knowledge of information science, they are in a unique position to explain concepts from a student's point of view and connect with students who are at a novice level of understanding.

As LibRATs become more experienced, we have varied ways to challenge them. They can serve as peer-trainers and role models for the new and less-experienced consultants, lead library workshops that rely on discipline-specific knowledge or other skill sets, and create instructional content. LibRATs in STEM majors lead research workshops for technical writing classes, such as Writing for Engineers, which require some familiarity with the discipline. When LibRATs reveal their status as engineering majors to a class of other engineering students, instant rapport is established. LibRATs also assist librarians with three library workshops every summer for Cal Poly's Summer Institute, a program for first-generation and historically disadvantaged students. With the luxury of three sessions with each contingent of students, this program offers an annual chance to experiment with new activities and games. More than once we have collaborated with LibRATs on new activities for Summer Institute that have then been incorporated into the following year's lower-division instruction. One summer, a LibRAT created a new scavenger hunt using a web application, which we then used for the general orientation workshop in the fall. The LibRAT who made the game became the lead trainer for the other LibRATs in using it. To assist with the creation of instructional materials, including screencasts and videos, we have a dedicated budget enabling LibRATs to work on such projects if they have available hours in their schedule.

With an on-the-job peer teaching training model, you should expect to spend a considerable amount of time on scheduling. It is essential for a librarian to schedule student consultants in advance and proactively manage changes and additions week by week. The lead librarian assigns student consultants the workshops and peer observations based on their shared schedule with the Research Help Desk. This ensures that teaching duties are divided more or less equally each week and maximizes the hands-on practice our student consultants need to become more confident and successful instructional leaders. It is the responsibility of the LibRATs to trade hours with each other through their own preferred channels, which have included both a Facebook Group and Groupme text, and then enter changes to the shared calendar. We find that Google Calendar currently offers the best

means to mutually share schedules with consultants. One issue that arises for us is not being able to cover both the Research Help Desk and all the workshops, many of which are requested for early evening or night hours. When necessary, LibRATs assigned to cover the Research Help Desk during these times will lead workshops instead of staffing their desk shift, on the view that it is preferable to help twenty-five students with a known and impending research assignment than to answer a handful of itinerant questions at the desk. Such repurposing of “desk” hours also helps to keep the budget within bounds.

ASSESSMENT

Research Assistance

To assess the LibRAT performance at the Research Help Desk in 2011, we implemented an online survey form to record all transactions. A single required prompt in this form remains simultaneously our most important assessment and ongoing training tool. Amazingly simple, it allows us to continually “close the loop” and improve our services. The prompt is an open text field for entering brief descriptions of all questions and answers provided at the Research Help Desk. Originally, we printed the entries and assigned seasoned LibRATs to “rank” the answers on a scale of 1 to 3 (poor, satisfactory, good) but quickly realized that the most important information was not this somewhat problematic ranking of the questions but the actual content of the questions and answers themselves. We now print, read, and annotate these weekly. We similarly review chat transcripts on a weekly basis. These procedures allow us to identify weaknesses, share knowledge, and devise improvements in service—and not solely for the LibRAT team. Often we suggest website and other improvements based on what we learn. For instance, drawing on raw data and LibRAT input, we created a “Top Twenty FAQ” web page. After placing prominent links to it on the library homepage, our directional and technical questions dropped by nearly 400 the following academic year. And this was not simply part of a general drop; the volume of basic and in-depth research questions remained comparable to the previous year. This deliberate recording, review, and repurposing of data is a great way to disperse knowledge across our entire team. To expand LibRAT exposure to more discipline-specific and complex answers, librarians also record questions and answers in the same online form and we include a variety of these in the weekly desk printouts. Both ongoing and elegantly simple, this formative assessment serves us well in identifying actionable areas for improvement.

Instruction

Formal online assessment of LibRAT instruction began immediately after the first experimental outings with teaching. It would be wonderful to say that this was done solely because it is a best practice, but that would be less than truthful. In fact, there were two other mitigating reasons. The first was that nobody actually had time to observe them teach, and the online form filled out by student participants at least provided some sense of

what was happening. Of equal importance was the fact that it was the simplest way to get immediate feedback to the LibRATs for improvement and/or for building their confidence. The survey mirrored one used by a librarian and included five Likert-scale prompts and several open-text responses. As soon as possible after any LibRAT-led session, the coordinator emailed a report to the LibRAT, often with praise but now and again with a needful suggestion or two. As we learned in subsequent quarters, because the reports offered quantitative averages for the Likert-scale prompts, the students were often extremely eager to see the results. (In any program of this sort, one should never underestimate the allure of competition to students this age—not even competition against themselves!) We also began administering an annual online survey at the end of fall quarter to faculty who had brought their classes. This allowed us a glimpse into their perceptions and provided us opportunities to tweak session content and design.

For both these assessments, we shared results with the instructional faculty, as part of an effort to sustain their interest in the program and to demonstrate our seriousness about striving to meet their needs. And this was not merely lip service. In 2012, in response to input from the faculty survey, we tweaked our instructional design to focus more on the concept of “peer review” and that same year implemented a pre-test and post-test to look for improved understanding. While this assessment effort showed an impact on student learning in the aggregate, it remained “statistically” weak precisely because it was aggregate data and not individually tracked. Nonetheless, we shared the results with the instructors, it resonated well, and requests for sessions grew even stronger. (For full details of instruments and data, see Bodemer.)¹

The Holy Grail, of course, was to implement an authentic assessment providing statistically solid evidence of student learning. In 2012, we designed a rigorous study and implemented it in 2013. The study established intervention groups who received instruction and control groups who did not, and at the end of the quarter, rubrics were applied to each source in each paper after viewing not only the citation but the source itself. The results did show a small statistical effect. Unfortunately, counter to our original design, and in order to reduce variables, the study necessitated that the same session leader deliver all the sessions, and the only individual available for all the sessions was one librarian, not a LibRAT. So, even for the small effect shown, it proved nothing in regard to LibRAT impact on student learning. Speaking from our experience, this study was labor-intensive, time-intensive, and although it was rewarding to collaborate with a statistician, the opportunity costs were huge. The time might have been better spent working with the LibRATs to further enhance their teaching or reference skills. The big takeaway from the small effect resulting from this rigorous study is that library instruction is just *one* epicycle in a number of epicycles that constitute information literacy and that there are doubtless more effective and meaningful ways to both improve delivery and demonstrate library impact.

With this in mind, we have again focused on providing LibRATs with immediate feedback, but with our added librarian resources, are now devoting more direct support for individualized training. Using a Google Form, our online survey responses now populate a live

spreadsheet where LibRATs can access responses to questions on their own, including ones pertaining to the effectiveness of the workshop leader. We ask participants to respond to two prompts about the workshop leader:

- The workshop leader presented information in a way that I could understand.
- The workshop leader encouraged and responded to questions.

Perhaps not surprisingly, students respond positively to instruction from their peers, with LibRAT instruction receiving higher percentages than librarians for the evaluation question, “The workshop leader presented information in a way that I could understand.” However, we would again need to design and implement a rigorous study to see whether—and to what extent—peer-led learning has an impact on student learning.

Classroom observations are also used as a means to evaluate and refine the skills of the LibRATs as instructional leaders. As noted previously, the lead librarian observes each LibRAT many times throughout the year, and LibRATs co-observe each other as teaching partners. Observations receive structure through a checklist designed for constructive evaluation of expected outcomes. The checklist is specific and organized by workshop and learning activity. (See Appendix C. LibRAT Teaching Observation Checklist.) The overall goal is to build an infrastructure of reflective practice. The LibRATs are praised for their strengths and encouraged to improve with each intervention. Yet, it is also important to note that the LibRATs are not simply passive objects of observation but are also enlisted as participant-observers. And, as with so many other aspects of our program, their input is solicited, taken seriously, and implemented when possible.

REFLECTION

Lessons Learned

At the start of our chapter, we mentioned that our program’s sustained success stemmed from adherence to core principles discovered very early in the running. The most important of these principles is that our program is as much about relationships as it is about information, and not just peer to peer but LibRAT to librarian. We made this discovery when the pilot in the residence halls floundered. Shortly before our end-of-quarter debriefing and pizza meeting, we sent an email to the LibRATs prompting them to reply to several questions for discussion at the meeting. We asked them both specific and general questions. Specifically, we asked them for any theories they might have about why they had received so few questions. In response, they pointed out something that was obvious to them but not to us: we had stationed them in residence halls for first- and second-year students, but the curriculum for such students required very few research papers that would drive them to ask such questions. We also solicited responses about what they did and did not like about the program. On the negative side, they confessed to feeling like “creepers” sitting in the residence halls waiting for questions that did not come. On the

positive side, they were nonetheless extremely excited by the potential of the program and were thrilled with all the skills they had gained through the training. In fact, they were the ones who first suggested the idea of spending time shadowing librarians at the Research Help Desk to gain more experience. When we took them up on this suggestion, it set the stage for their eventual migration to the desk. With this first generation, we learned that we were all rowing together and that they wanted the program to succeed as much as we did. The *esprit de corps* derived from the mutual respect of treating them as full partners from the very outset is something we have maintained through each succeeding generation. Current LibRATs may not even be aware of it, but the tenor and means of the program's continued success have been nurtured by predecessors they have never met.

We provide excellent service to the students of Cal Poly. Students may find it hard to confront the unknown face of a librarian of any faculty. Students can relate with another student who has been in their shoes. We may not have the expert level of knowledge of a true librarian, but we do have the resources and training to help all types of patrons.

Fourth Generation LibRAT, Cal Poly SLO

Challenges

One of the greatest challenges in coordinating a student team is identifying times when everyone can meet. Because such opportunities are so rare, in order to increase focus on instructional coaching during the annual “fall refresher” meeting, we migrated much of desk and reference content to asynchronous online formats. One LibRAT and a librarian created a lightweight JING screencast showing important changes on the library homepage as well as an online Jeopardy game which provided a review of that information along with other procedural and database changes. These tools were highly popular with the LibRATs, so we will make more of these kinds of learning objects for future training.

Another challenge for such a program is right-sizing the student team. If you have too few consultants, it is hard to provide full coverage for desk hours and teaching assignments. On the other hand, if you have too many students, you run the risk of offering too few hours for the LibRATs. This dilutes their economic interest and psychological engagement and even diminishes their skills through lack of steady practice. From the LibRAT point of view, the sweet spot is six or seven consultants, which provides enough hours for everyone. From the librarian point of view, however, eight or nine LibRATs is preferable. This creates more flexibility in scheduling both the desk and instruction.

Long-Term Benefits to Consultants

Although lasting qualitative benefits are hard to gauge, we can certainly attest to significant career impacts for graduating LibRATs. A first-generation LibRAT successfully applied for a position at a law library in her first year of pursuing a JD degree, worked during her remaining time in law school as a research assistant for a professor, and obtained a position as a deputy city attorney. Another LibRAT pursued a PhD in animal science and included her online LibRAT teaching evaluations as part of her application. One LibRAT landed his first job working at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, working on the Mars Rover, and credits the presentation skills he developed as a LibRAT with giving him an edge over other applicants. Three other LibRATs have even obtained degrees in librarianship. Of these three, one has a tenure-track faculty position, another works as an information architect in the private sector, and the third recently graduated from UCLA.

Future Plans

In tandem with developing more asynchronous, online learning objects for reference training, we also plan to increase group sessions for enhancing instruction skills. This will include a professional training workshop at the beginning of the academic year, with mini-workshops offered at the start of winter and spring quarters. The ever-increasing demand for instructional sessions requires the librarians to collaborate with LibRATs on producing online learning solutions to complement face-to-face delivery.

In the last three years, the LibRAT repertoire has expanded to include visual and quantitative literacies. We are currently training the LibRATs to teach workshops about finding and using images and data in the research process. This is in response to shifts in campus curriculum and our emphasis on a metaliteracy model of information literacy within the polytechnic and "learn-by-doing" ethos of our campus. While this may sound difficult, this expansion will, in fact, reinforce what our consultants are experiencing in the classroom. We know they will be eager, as always, for the challenge of learning and expanding their skills, especially when they see its relevance to their lives outside the library. As the LibRAT program evolves, we expect it to continue flourishing. The key, no matter what the future holds, is to remain true to the principle of including the students as full partners.

APPENDIX A

JOB POSTING FOR LIBRAT POSITION

Job Title: LibRAT (Library Research Assistance Technician)

Location: Kennedy Library

Hours: Weekdays and some weekend hours. 8–15 hours per week. Will accommodate class schedule. Minimum commitment of one quarter

When: Hiring early winter quarter; paid training starts mid-winter quarter

Job Description

The Library Research Assistance Technician (LibRAT), after receiving initial training in Kennedy Library resources, will provide research assistance at the Research Help Desk and via online chat help. The LibRAT will receive ongoing training and will also lead lab sessions for GE courses. This service-oriented position offers the opportunity to develop advanced information, interpersonal, and presentation skills. The LibRAT will be responsible for a variety of tasks, including, but not limited to

- representing Kennedy Library and providing help with assignments and research tools and strategies at the Research Help Desk and via online chat;
- providing basic Kennedy Library information to patrons;
- performing searches for materials via catalogs and databases;
- providing informal tutorials on use of library resources;
- acquiring further expertise in research assistance skills;
- leading instruction sessions for GE courses;
- assisting in the design and delivery of training to future LibRATs;
- maintaining Research Help Desk documentation; and
- working with supervisors to maintain selected resources and support smooth functioning of the Research Help Desk.

Minimum Qualifications

- Superior interpersonal communication skills
- Team player
- Ability to work independently

Preferred Qualifications

- Previous employment in service-oriented positions
- First- and second-year class standing
- Knowledge of library catalogs and databases

APPENDIX B

LIBRARY RESEARCH WORKSHOPS— LIBRAT LESSON PLANS

Orientation Workshop: Kennedy Library Scavenger Hunt (OR)

- Students learn about Kennedy Library's books, technology, services, and study spaces using a fun team scavenger hunt game. Recommended for the Fall Quarter.
- **Activity 1: GooseChase Scavenger Hunt**

Research Workshop A: Searching Library Databases (RWA)

- Students learn how to search Kennedy Library's databases strategically and identify the best sources to use for their research assignments.
- **Activity 1: Name That Source**
- **Activity 2: Database Search Challenge**

Research Workshop B: Evaluating Information Sources (RWB)

- Students practice the process of evaluating the relevance and credibility of information sources with individual "lab" research time.
- **Activity 1: Evaluating an Information Source for Credibility**

APPENDIX C

LIBRAT TEACHING OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

LibRAT teacher: _____

Observer: _____

Date: _____

Type of Workshop: [RWA] [RWB]

Course: _____

Introduction

- Begins on time
- Introduces self and role as a LibRAT
- States the goals of the workshop and the “learning checklist”
- Leads class to the library website and the “Research 101” guide
- Explains the Research Help services

Feedback:

Please elaborate on what went well and what could be better with your ideas for improvement.

Research Workshop A, Activity 1: Name That Source

record start time: _____ end time: _____

- Introduces the “Types of Sources” handout
- Gives clear directions about the activity
- Encourages participation from students during the class debrief
- Explains the key characteristics of each type of source
- Answers questions clearly and checks to see answers are understood by the class
- Paces the activity well from beginning to end

Feedback:

Please elaborate on what went well and what could be better with your ideas for improvement.

Research Workshop A, Activity 2: Database Search Challenge

record start time: _____ end time: _____

- Demonstrates where to locate Library Research Databases
- Explains the purpose of “Search Everything” and “Academic Search Premier”
- Gives clear directions about the activity
- Encourages participation from students during the class debrief
- Answers questions clearly and checks to see answers are understood by the class
- Summarizes database search strategies:
 - How to use keywords; refine results; get citations; save articles; use Find It.
- Paces the activity well from beginning to end

Feedback:

Please elaborate on what went well and what could be better with your ideas for improvement.

Research Workshop B, Activity 1: Evaluating an Information Source for Credibility

record start time: _____ end time: _____

- Directs class to read the list of evaluation criteria
- Gives clear directions about the activity
- Encourages participation from students during the class debrief
- Answers questions clearly and checks to see answers are understood by the class
- Guides class through their evaluation of the example source
- Paces the activity well from beginning to end

Feedback:

Please elaborate on what went well and what could be better with your ideas for improvement.

Closing and Evaluation

- Ends class on time
- Directs class to the Evaluation
- Reiterates that Research Help is available

Feedback:

Please elaborate on what went well and what could be better with your ideas for improvement.

Overall

- Is welcoming and friendly
- Speaks clearly and loudly
- Speaks: about right | too slow | too fast
- Has good eye contact
- Listens well
- Encourages participation and questions
- Walks around the room to help students during the activities
- Uses the classroom technology effectively (e.g., uses the dual screens; navigates the guide, website, and online worksheets)

What was successful?

What could be improved and how?

NOTES

1. Brett Bodemer, "They CAN and They Should: Undergraduates Providing Peer Reference and Instruction," *College & Research Libraries*, 75, no. 2 (2014): 162–78; see also Bodemer, "They Not Only CAN But They SHOULD: Why Undergraduates Should Provide Peer Reference and Instruction," *ACRL 2013 Conference Proceedings* (2013), available online at http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org/acrl/files/content/conferences/confsandpreconfs/2013/papers/Bodemer_BasicILInstruction.pdf.

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