Summary of Findings: Ithaka Faculty Survey: Undergraduate Instruction

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Kristina DeVoe, Lauri Fennell, Annie Johnson, Rebecca Lloyd, Fred Rowland, Nancy Turner

Editorial and Analytics Assistance provided by Grisselle Rivera

Overview

The Temple University implementation of the Ithaka S+R Faculty Survey[1] was launched on October 18, 2016 and ran through November 15, 2016. This survey is also conducted nationally by Ithaka every three years since 2000, providing the higher education community with trend data on changing attitudes and behaviors of faculty towards libraries, scholarship and teaching.

At Temple, the survey was deployed to 3,678 faculty members with a response rate of 15% (548 responses). This response rate varied by question, as the survey was long and quite detailed.

We asked faculty about their work in several areas, from discovery and access to library materials for research to the role of the library in supporting faculty members' needs as teachers. This summary report focuses on undergraduate instruction practices and describes responses to two survey components:

- The Core Survey contained questions related to undergraduate teaching and use of library when planning for course content, the perceived skills of undergraduates in conducting research and evaluating information, and expectations for their research.
- 13 additional questions contained in the Undergraduate Instruction Module address course format, resources used, use of digital technologies and the adoption of new pedagogies, particularly those that employ technology.

Of the 293 responses on teaching/research responsibilities, 31% think of themselves "about equally as a researcher and a teacher" and 28% as "much more a teacher than a researcher"[2].

While 320 (96%) respondents teach as part of their professional responsibility, in the last two years 191 (36%) report teaching a lower division undergraduate class, and 216 (41%) an upper division. [3]

Survey responders are very equally distributed by broad discipline. 31% are in the humanities; 33% in social sciences, and 36% are in STEM (including medical and health sciences).

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[1] http://www.sr.ithaka.org/blog/tracking-trends-in-faculty-research-publishing-and-teaching/
[2] Researcher Teacher (D3)
[3] Teaching Level (CNQ30)

We asked faculty about several aspects of their teaching, including the pedagogies, technologies, and resources used. We also asked about their perceptions of student skills in conducting research and in evaluating information. Highlighted here is feedback that has most potential for building on the already strong regard teaching faculty have for the value of librarians in supporting student success, as well as implications for collections and service enhancement to support changing pedagogies. [4]
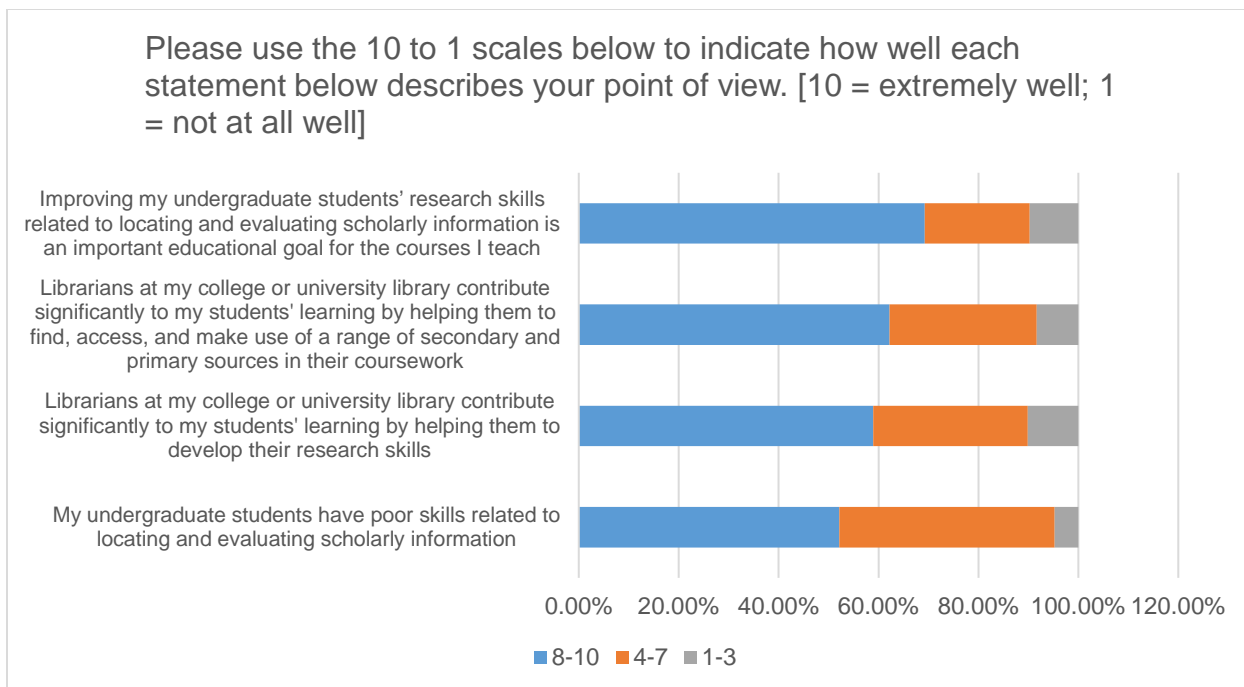
Key Findings

- 80% of faculty strongly agree in the importance of the library as it helps undergraduates develop research, critical analysis and information literacy skills. This figure is 10% higher than other research institutions responding to the national survey.
- 52% strongly agree that undergraduate students have poor skills related to locating and evaluating scholarly information, and improving those research skills is very important to 69%.
- Materials that are openly available on the web are of interest for course content. 79% of faculty often or occasionally "give preference to assigning course text or materials that are freely available".
- A high percentage of faculty (72%) show video and their classroom and almost half (47%) assign the creation audiovisual or digital media projects.

Improving Student Research Skills

52% of faculty believe their undergraduate students have "poor skills related to locating and evaluating scholarly information" and improving this skill is important to 69% of them. Librarians contribute to improving student learning, by helping them to "find, access, and make use of a range of secondary and primary sources in their coursework" (62%) and "helping them to develop their research skills (59%).[5]

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[4] The full dataset with all responses to all questions is available upon request.
[5] UG Students (CNQ32)

Please use the 10 to 1 scales below to indicate how well each statement below describes your point of view. [10 = extremely well; 1 = not at all well]

Librarians are valued for their ability to help improve student skills with information. And just over half of Temple faculty (54%) believe that students in their courses "often" or "occasionally" interact with Temple librarians. This is slightly more than what was reported in the national survey response of 51%. [6]

Course Formats

The vast majority of teaching at Temple is conducted in person, with 91% of faculty respondents describing their courses as taught "face-to-face"; the remainder teach both in person and at a distance.[7]

Faculty who report teaching a lower division undergraduate course tend to use lecture formats (88%) or seminar/discussion sections (74%), rather than laboratories (23%). Course formats are similar in the upper divisions, with reliance on the lecture (85 %) and to a lesser degree seminar/discussion sections (77%) or labs (25%). [8]

Course Materials

Textbooks and primary source materials are the most frequently used course material for lower division classes, while textbooks and scholarly articles are often or occasionally used in the

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[6] Librarian Interaction (CNQ35)

[7] Teaching Medium (D3)
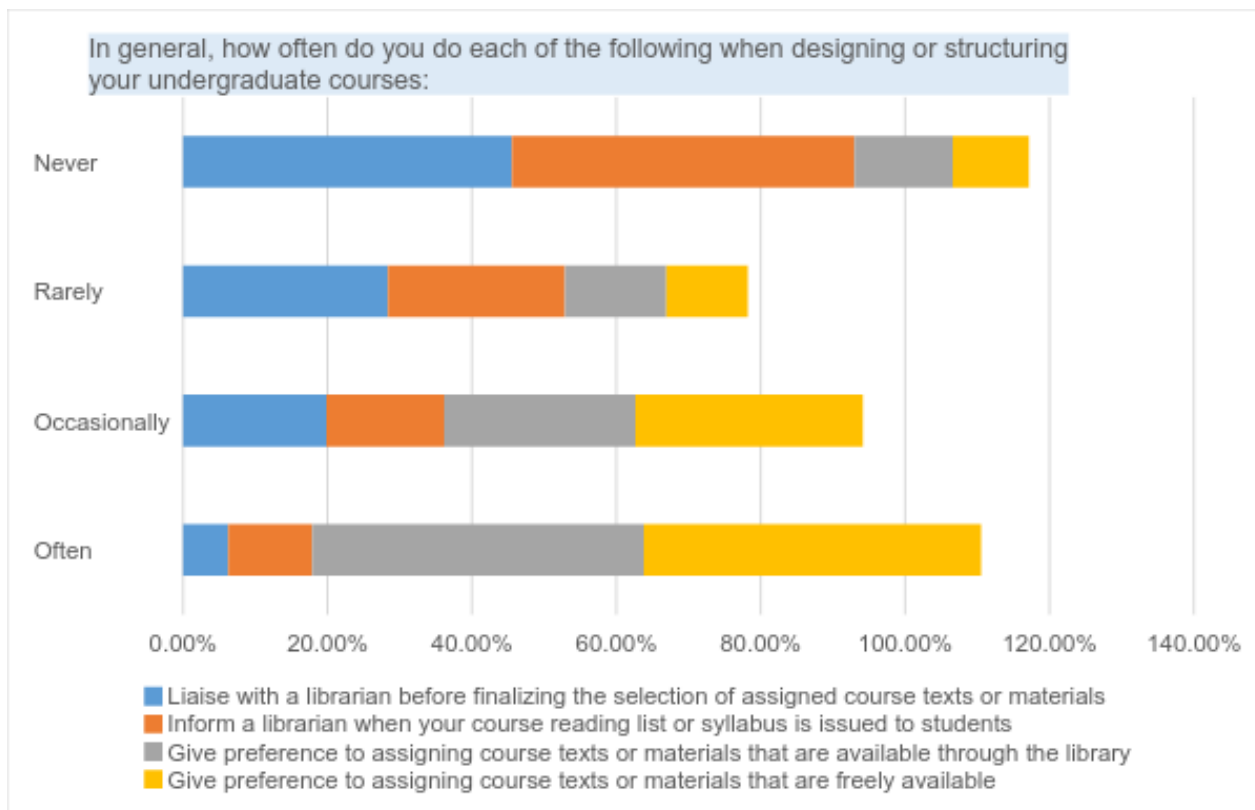
[8] Course Format (UI2, UI8)

upper divisions.[9] When compared to other disciplines, faculty who identified as being from humanities-related disciplines reported using primary source materials the most often.

How often do you assign your students in a undergraduate course to read or otherwise engage with each of the following types of materials in preparation for a class?	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Lower Division				
Textbooks or textbook chapters	57.79%	22.73%	12.34%	7.14%
Primary source materials	46.10%	32.47%	11.69%	9.74%
Films, audio, artwork, or other non-textual media	42.58%	35.48%	12.26%	9.68%
Scholarly articles	41.94%	39.35%	11.61%	7.10%
Scholarly monographs or monograph chapters	30.97%	35.48%	16.13%	17.42%
Non-scholarly books	17.42%	37.42%	25.81%	19.35%
Upper Division				
Textbooks or textbook chapters	61.27%	23.12%	8.09%	7.51%
Scholarly articles	58.05%	27.01%	9.20%	5.75%
Primary source materials	49.43%	32.76%	10.92%	6.90%
Scholarly monographs or monograph chapters	43.10%	29.31%	16.09%	11.49%
Films, audio, artwork, or other non-textual media	36.99%	29.48%	17.92%	15.61%
Non-scholarly books	15.12%	30.81%	28.49%	25.58%

Nearly half of respondents "often" give preference to course texts and materials that are freely available or available through the library, and adding in those who "occasionally" do so, more than 70% of faculty are considering how to make course materials most readily available to their students. A much smaller percentage of faculty often or occasionally liaise with a librarian on the

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[9] Undergraduate Reading (UI1, UI7)

selection of assigned course texts (21%) or upon finalizing a course reading list or syllabus (35%).[10]

In general, how often do you do each of the following when designing or structuring your undergraduate courses:

Never
Rarely
Occasionally
Often

0.00% 20.00% 40.00% 60.00% 80.00% 100.00% 120.00% 140.00%

■ Liaise with a librarian before finalizing the selection of assigned course texts or materials
■ Inform a librarian when your course reading list or syllabus is issued to students
■ Give preference to assigning course texts or materials that are available through the library
■ Give preference to assigning course texts or materials that are freely available

Teaching Techniques and Coursework

In the lower division classroom, faculty utilize these techniques "often" or "occasionally":

- Show videos in the classroom, instead or as one component of a lecture or discussion (72%)
- Assign students to create audiovisual or digital media projects (47%)
- Assign students to share reading responses on a course discussion board or a blog (47%)
- Supplement in-person class time with additional audio or video modules (43%)

These techniques are the same as those used in upper division undergraduate courses, although to a lesser degree. For example, videos are shown often or occasionally" by 66% of faculty, and assignments for the creation of media projects is 43%.[11]

In a related question, faculty were asked about the kinds of assignments given to students.

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[10] UG Courses (CNQ31)
[11] Undergraduate Teaching Techniques (UI3, UI10)

Almost 80% of faculty "occasionally" or "often" assign responses to assigned readings in the lower division undergraduate courses they teach. Assigning presentations/multimedia projects (74%) is also a commonly utilized method, somewhat closely followed by research papers (70%) and problem sets (57%). Less than half of faculty (48%) assign experiments/experiential learning types of coursework. To further specify, 42% percent of faculty "often" assign research papers in the lower division undergraduate courses they teach; almost half of those faculty are in humanities disciplines. [12]

A high percentage (50%) of faculty are strongly positive about the adoption of "new pedagogies or instructional approaches that take advantage of opportunities offered by digital technology." For instructional support when introducing these new pedagogies, they rely most on their own ideas 72%, then on scholars in their personal network (52%), and then on the library (40%).[13] Faculty building on past practice, and like the ethnographic research revealed, rely on tacit knowledge about what content and instruction works best for their students' needs.

Please use the scale below to rate from 10 to 1 how much you rely on each of the following possible sources of instructional support when introducing new pedagogies or approaches that take advantage of the opportunities offered by digital technology,
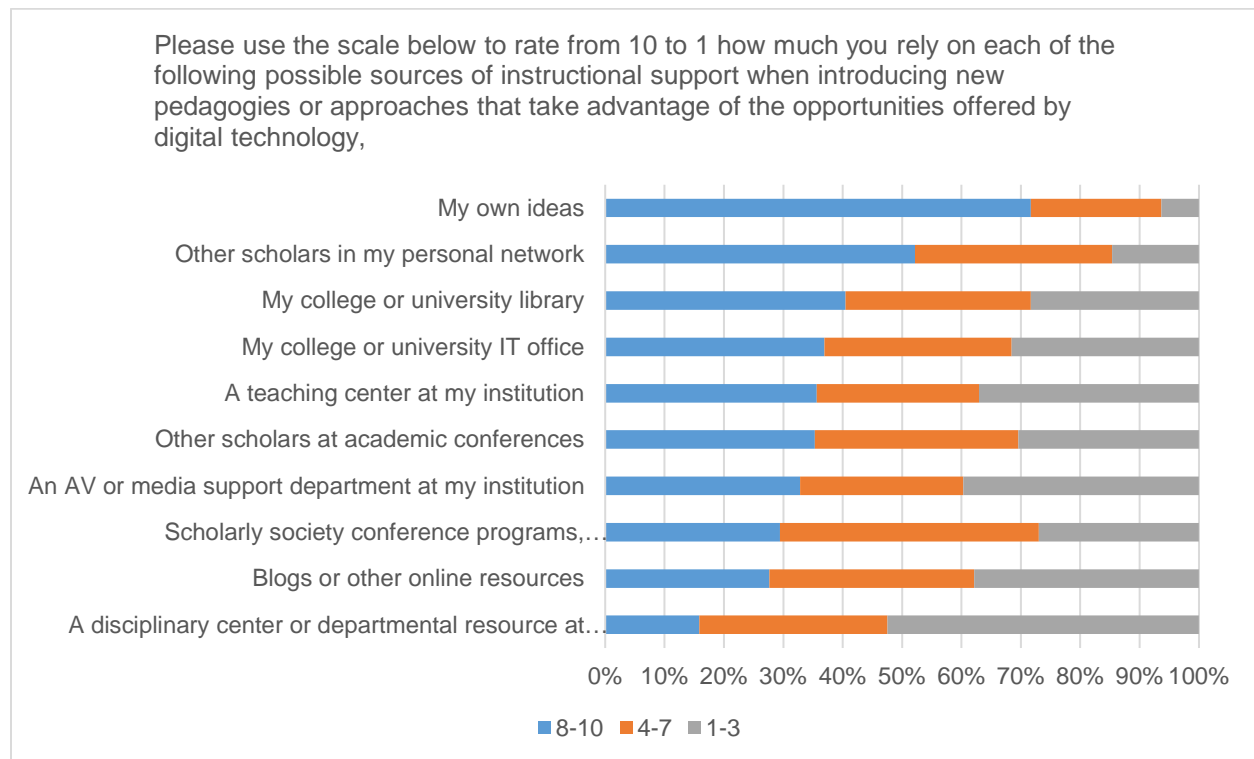
Undergraduate Instruction: Implications for the Libraries

Learn about how faculty select resources for use in the classroom

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[12] Undergraduate Assignments (UI4)
[13] Instructional Support (UI13)

The interest in freely available resources for use in courses is notable. Faculty may desire to save students from high textbook costs, or believe that free web resources are most accessible and likely to be used by their students. Librarians could play a role in helping faculty locate high quality open access materials for student use. To this end, our outreach conversations with faculty might include questions about how faculty currently select course materials. The ethnographic research[14] conducted by Jenifer Baldwin, Rick Lenzeby and Anne Harlow, provides an excellent model for this type of research.

Provide more opportunities for faculty to learn about open educational resources and the library programs established to support these

The survey suggests that faculty are aware of the high costs of textbooks and other learning materials, and that they are interested in lowering those costs for students. However, faculty may not know how to find high quality open educational resources. They may also be unaware of the Libraries' Textbook Affordability Project. TAP provides funding to faculty to help them transition from a commercial textbook to an alt-textbook or open textbook. The Libraries can also help faculty edit existing open textbooks to make them more appropriate for their classes. More outreach around these services is crucial for getting faculty to actually make the switch.

Increase visibility within the course management system

We need to make it easier for students to access course materials available at the library (reserves, books and media) as well as research guides provided expressly for their courses. We recommend continuing work with Computer Services to more systematically link from the Course Management System to the library's research guides, Library Search, and other recommended library resources. In addition to a course template with a link to the library's home page, there is potential for more targeted links to library developed Course Guides as well.

Enhance multi-media collections

The survey also makes clear the value of the Libraries' continued building of a relevant and usable media collection across multiple formats (e.g. streaming services, DVDs). Faculty and students may not be aware of the richness of media available for their use in the classroom. An analysis of circulation patterns, or survey of faculty about the media they are showing in the classroom, would help us to gain greater awareness of format and subject preferences.

In selecting multimedia databases to add to the collection, we must consider more than content, but also the kinds of functionality provided by the platform. For instance, faculty may require their students manipulate video, creating and annotating clips. Is this technically and legally feasible using the databases we license for their use? Understanding the legal and technical potential and constraints using multi-media is an area of potential educational growth for librarians. We may be aware of the content provided by our media databases, but not as familiar with the functionality for copying, editing and utilizing those objects.

There may be software and hardware for media creation that should be made available to students for their use. The Libraries should consider instructional opportunities involving

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[14] Profiled at: https://sites.temple.edu/assessment/2015/01/07/faculty-seeking-course-content-a-qualitative-research-project/

presentation best practices, designing spaces for presentation practice and delivery; and, inquiring with faculty about the kinds of multimedia they encourage students to use.

Provide support for the long term storage and preservation of multimedia

Providing for storage and curation of class-produced multi-media objects is another opportunity for the Libraries to support undergraduate instruction. While we current provide space for the text-based products of the Livingstone Undergraduate Research Award, we are not currently archiving media production. Faculty should be made aware of this program, and our provision for their long-term access would provide additional opportunities for showcasing the best works of our students.

The Ithaka Survey provides us with several interesting paths for enhanced services to faculty in their roles as teachers of undergraduates. Next steps include education of ourselves as library staff in learning more about their practice and needs, developing our own skills to support the work of students in new areas, and continuing to education students and faculty about our rich offerings to support student success.