BACKGROUND

The University of Toronto Mississauga Library's instruction program delivers information literacy (IL) sessions to both undergraduate and graduate students. During IL sessions, Liaison Librarians promote the Library and its services by encouraging students to visit the Reference & Research desk. In order to assess the impact of our promotional efforts, the Library explored the relationship between course-related instruction and visits to the reference desk. This poster reports the methods and results of our study.

METHODS

The data was collected between September 2016 and April 2018 using two methods:

1) An in-house database that records course codes, course enrollment, and the total number of course-related sessions taught by each librarian.

2) A reference desk tracker that captures course codes when visits to the desk are related to a course or an assignment.

Course codes common to both the reference and instruction datasets were identified and organized according to the University's academic terms.

Exploring the Relationship Between Instruction and the Reference Desk

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RESULTS
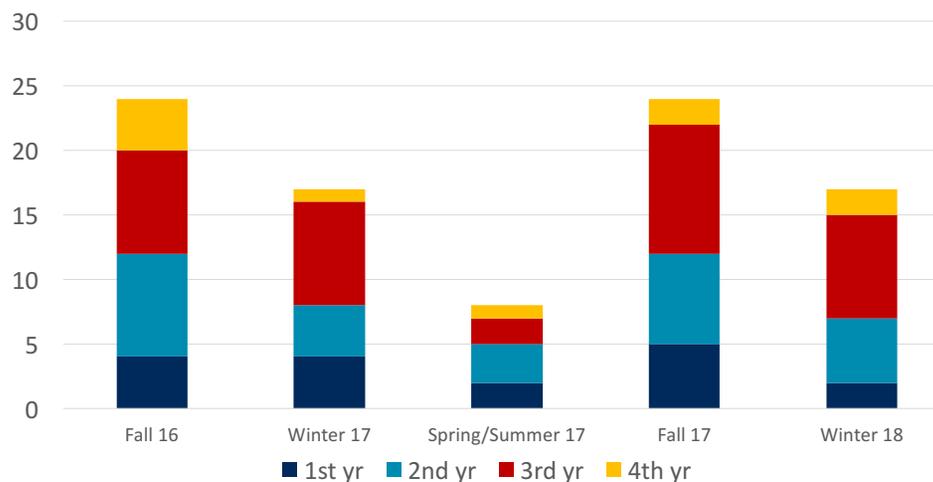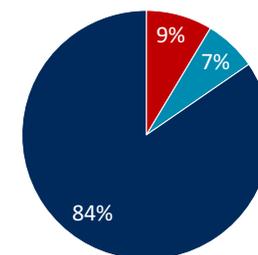

Common Course Codes

Fig. 1: Course codes common to instruction and reference organized by year, semester, and year of study.

- In total, 1045 course codes were identified (see Fig. 2):
  - 90 codes were common to both the instruction and reference datasets.
  - 71 codes from the instruction dataset did not match codes recorded at the reference desk.
  - 884 codes recorded at the reference desk did not match an instruction code.

- The Reference & Research desk received more visits from students in courses that did not have an instruction session, than those that did.

- Of the total visits to the reference desk, only 9% were the result of course-related instruction.

- However, 56% of courses that received instruction resulted in at least one visit to the reference desk during the semester.

- Together, these results suggest that promotional activities outside of our instruction program play a significant role in marketing the reference desk

Total Codes

Fig. 2: Course codes common and unique to instruction and reference.

NEXT STEPS

1) Continue to collect and analyze data in future semesters.

2) Continue to promote the Reference & Research desk in and out of instruction sessions.

3) Implement a user survey at the Reference & Research desk to capture referral sources.