

# Assessing an Academic Library's Marketing Strategies to Promote Subject Specialists: A Mixed Methods Approach

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## Abstract

### Purpose of study

- Analyze the effectiveness of an academic library's public relations (PR) and marketing strategies, designed to promote library subject specialists to undergraduate students.
- Address the core issue that many students do not know what a librarian does or how they can help.
- Remedy the issue through the collaboration of UF Librarians and students from a UF PR class to devise specific marketing strategies.
- Target marketing to better reach undergraduates and promote the Libraries' subject specialists.
- Implement student-recommended strategies.
- Assess changes in undergraduate students' perceptions of librarians.
- Apply mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for purpose of breadth and depth of understanding a corroboration.

Link to Poster: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/IRO00010630/00001>

## Overview of Assessment Methods

### Quantitative

More than 300 students completed surveys, answering questions regarding their perceptions and use of subject specialists before and after the implementation of various marketing strategies.

### Qualitative

Project team convened three focus groups ranging from 3 to 8 participants each. Students were shown three two-minute videos, featuring profile interviews with some of the Humanities and Social Sciences librarians. Team members coded transcripts and evaluated content for trends and themes.

## 2017 Survey Data

Prior to Phase I of marketing campaign: 167 student participants were surveyed about awareness of subject librarians

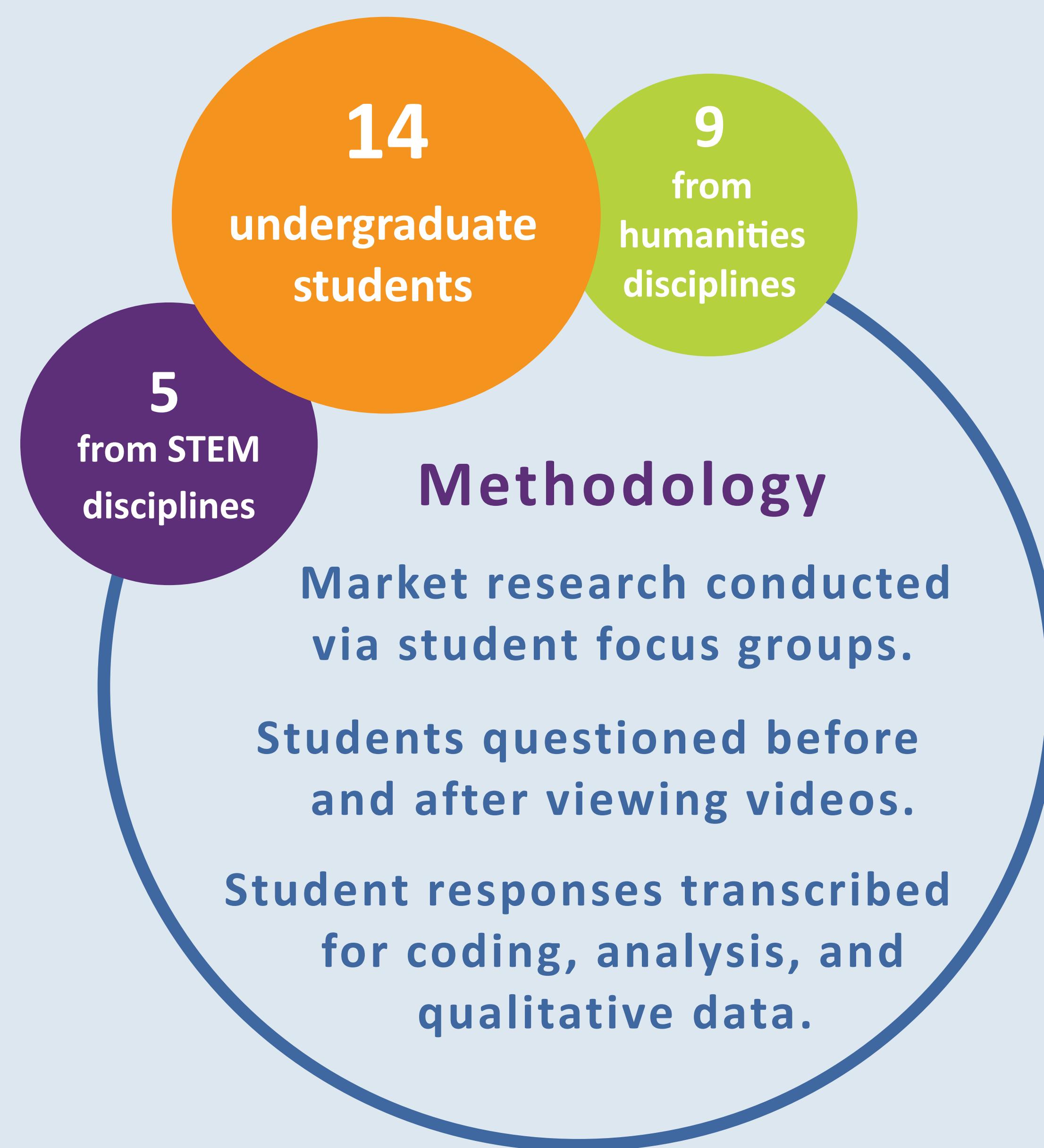


## 2018 Survey Data

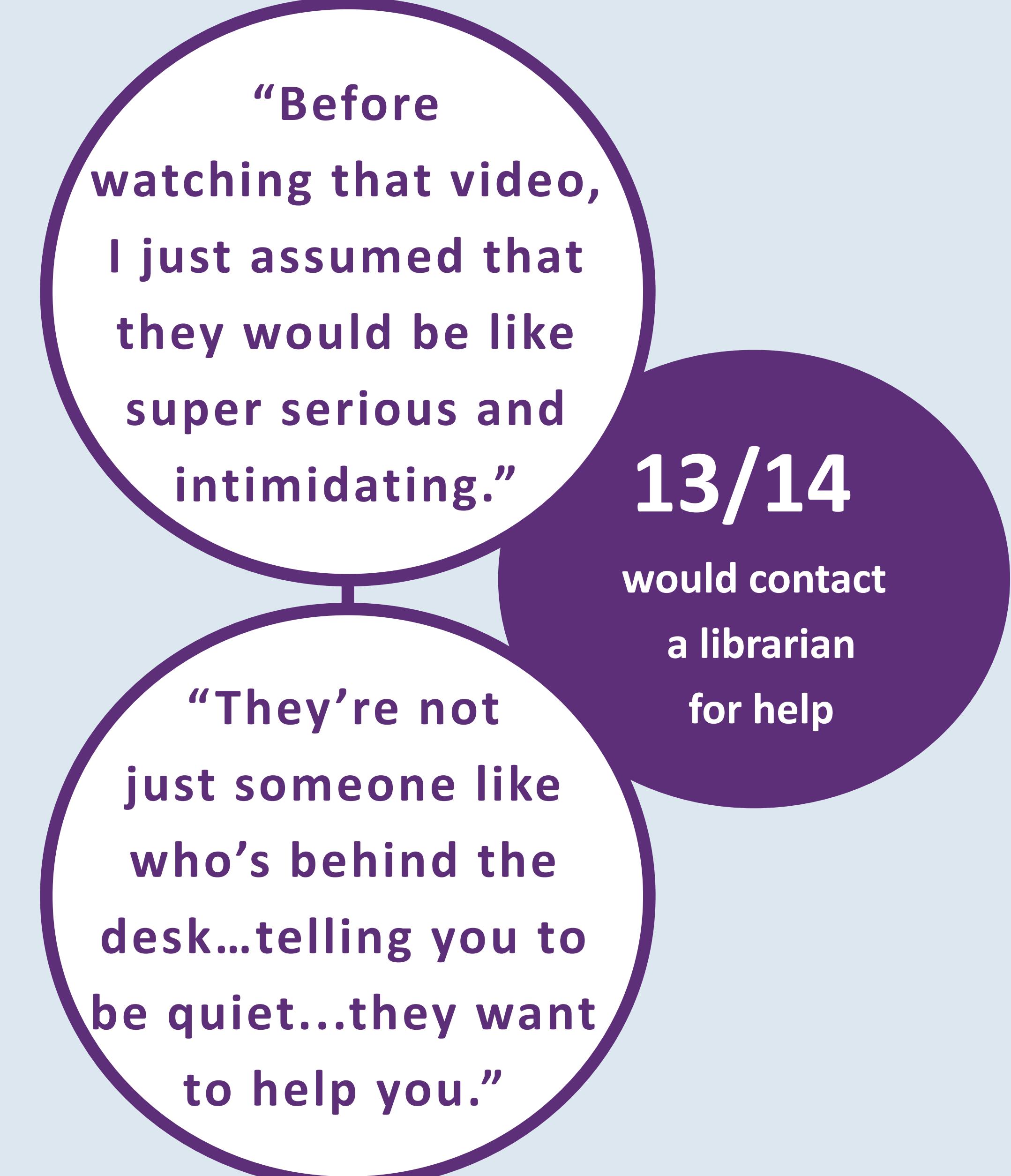
After Phase I of marketing campaign: 133 student participants were surveyed about awareness of subject librarians



## Focus Group Methodology and Analysis



## Focus Group Takeaways



13/14 would contact a librarian for help

*Students have a general lack of understanding about who in the library is a librarian, what a librarian does, and how a librarian can help them personally. They define research "help" in very broad terms – checking out headphones, printing, directional etc.*

*After watching the videos, they viewed librarians as more accessible and helpful. Videos helped better articulate our role and humanized librarians.*

*They were surprised at how friendly and willing to help librarians were, and had made prior assumptions that librarians are intimidating and serious. They were also surprised that librarians had "valuable past experiences."*

*Most students in the focus group found the videos to be effective or somewhat effective in promoting subject specialists to their peers and increasing librarian visibility.*

*Students are more likely to pay attention to library marketing content shared by their instructors rather than viewing this content through social media.*

## Suggestions from Focus Group



## Next Steps

