Feb 17th, 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Librarian Research Panel: Using Qualitative Research Methods

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The

CalArts'
Student Behaviors And Habits
Study

What is LibQUAL+®?

LibQUAL+ is a suite of services that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' <u>opinions of service quality</u>. These services are offered by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL).

~ Research Universities
~ Liberal Arts Colleges
~ Community Colleges

Studying Students

The Undergraduate Research Project at the University of Rochester

edited by
Nancy Fried Foster and Susan Gibbons

University of Rochester Study
CalArts CASBAH Study

- Library used anthropological and ethnographic methods:
  - Faculty interviews ←
  - Student interviews ←
  - Pilot services
  - Student-drawn library designs ←
  - Website workshops
  - Photo surveys ←
  - Mapping diaries

  Posters & Online Survey

- Purpose: to examine how undergraduate students write their research papers.

CalArts Environment

- Programs:
  - Both visual and performing arts (MFA, BFA, DMA)
- Faculty:
  - Professional, practicing artists
- Students:
  - Admission is mainly on the basis of demonstrated artistic merit, as assessed by the faculty of the individual programs.

Research Question

"How do students in an artistic and nontraditional setting view and act on the process of discovery?"

Faculty Interview Results

- *How would you define "research?"*
  - Research is an associative process of gathering and synthesizing information in order to create a contextualization.

- *Describe the attributes of a good research paper (or research on an art-making project).*
  - There is a demonstrated ability to synthesize information dialectally from a variety of sources and the student's own interpretations. **All art-making is a research process; rarely linear.**

Faculty Interview Results - Continued

- *How do you expect students to go about finding information and/or resources for doing research for a paper or an art-making project?*
  - Dialogue with the course instructor is primary. **Conversations are important**; with the instructor, *librarians*, other faculty, students, artists, *interesting people*, and experts.

- *Do you expect students to seek out help in their research process? From whom and why?*
  - Students need to discover their own **individual processes for discovering and integrating knowledge**.

Faculty Interview Results - Continued

- *What makes it difficult for students to complete a research project?*
  - There is a stigma connected with associating research with creativity.

- *How can librarians be more helpful to students during their research stage?*
  - **Personal interactions** between librarians and students are valued.

Faculty Interview Results - Continued

- *What else do you think would be useful for us to know?*
    - With our over-extended students it will always be easier for them to get information on something rather than to experience it. The library can help students **experience** the information-seeking process.

Student Interviews:
Sources of Information and Assistance

- Students general thought that they had or could find the material they needed.

- The course instructor was seen as the primary point person for assistance in finding resources for their project.

- When directly asked if they had thought to seek help from a librarian, half simply replied "No"
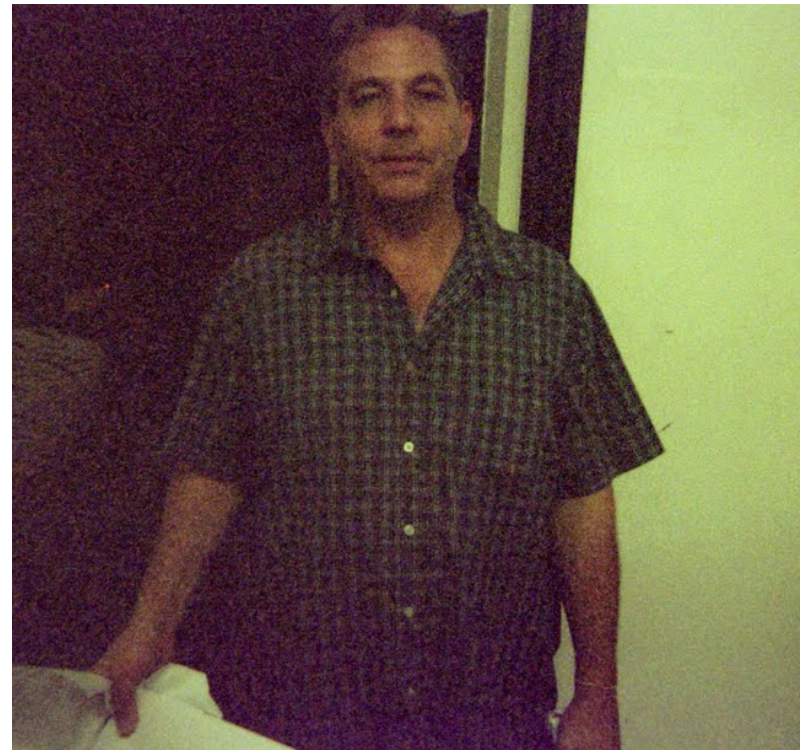
Photo Survey Highlights

- *Something you can't live without*
  - Tend to be more personal, comfort objects. No photos of current technology devices, such as computers or cellphones.

- *All the stuff you always carry with you*
  - All photos show cellphones, keys, and something to write on or with. A number of photos include cigarettes.

Photo Survey Highlights

- *Someone, other than yourself, doing research*
  - Research is seen as a social activity (i.e., more than one person) and almost always involves using a computer.

- *Your favorite thing in a library*
  - Focus is on library spaces, specifically seating areas. There are a couple of photos of the collections and one photo of a library staff member.

Photo Survey Highlights

- *An interior picture of where you live*
  - Mostly show messy and disorganized spaces without much warmth.

- *How you keep organized*
  - Surprised to see how many photos show paper-filled notebooks/planners. Very little technology represented.
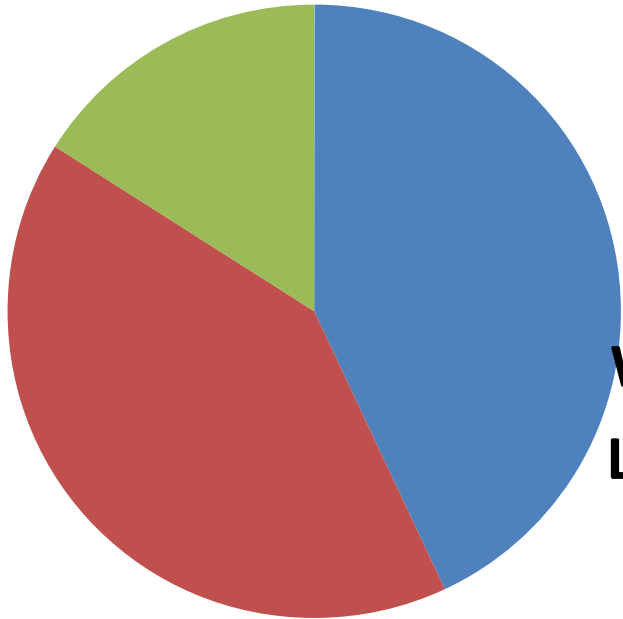
Photo Survey Highlights

- *The most frustrating location at CalArts*
  - Almost all pictures are of administrative offices with which students need to interact
- *Your favorite location at CalArts*
  - Artmaking spaces and outdoor spaces are predominant. Two of the photos were taken in the library.
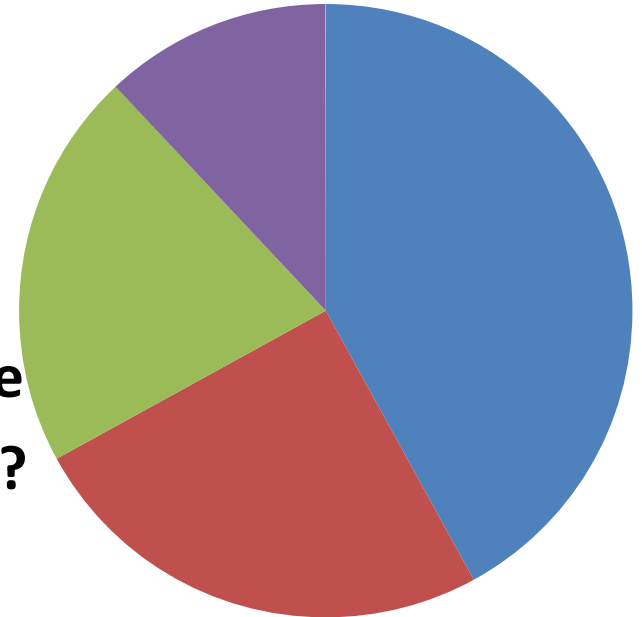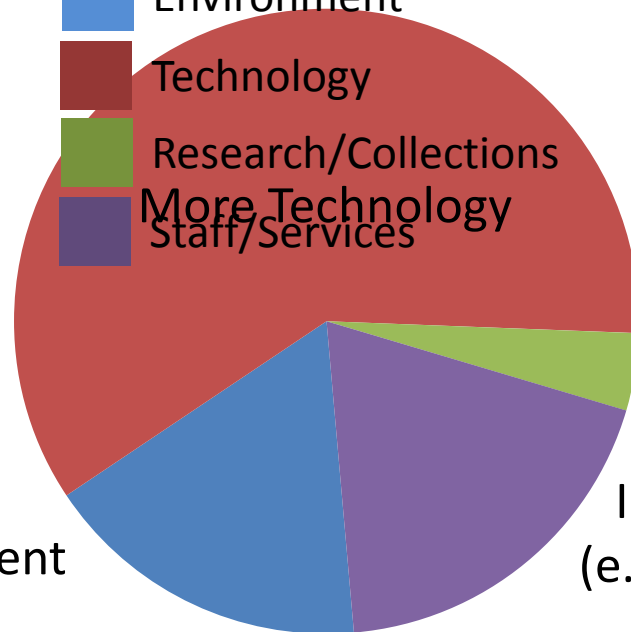
Poster Surveys

Why did you come to the library today?

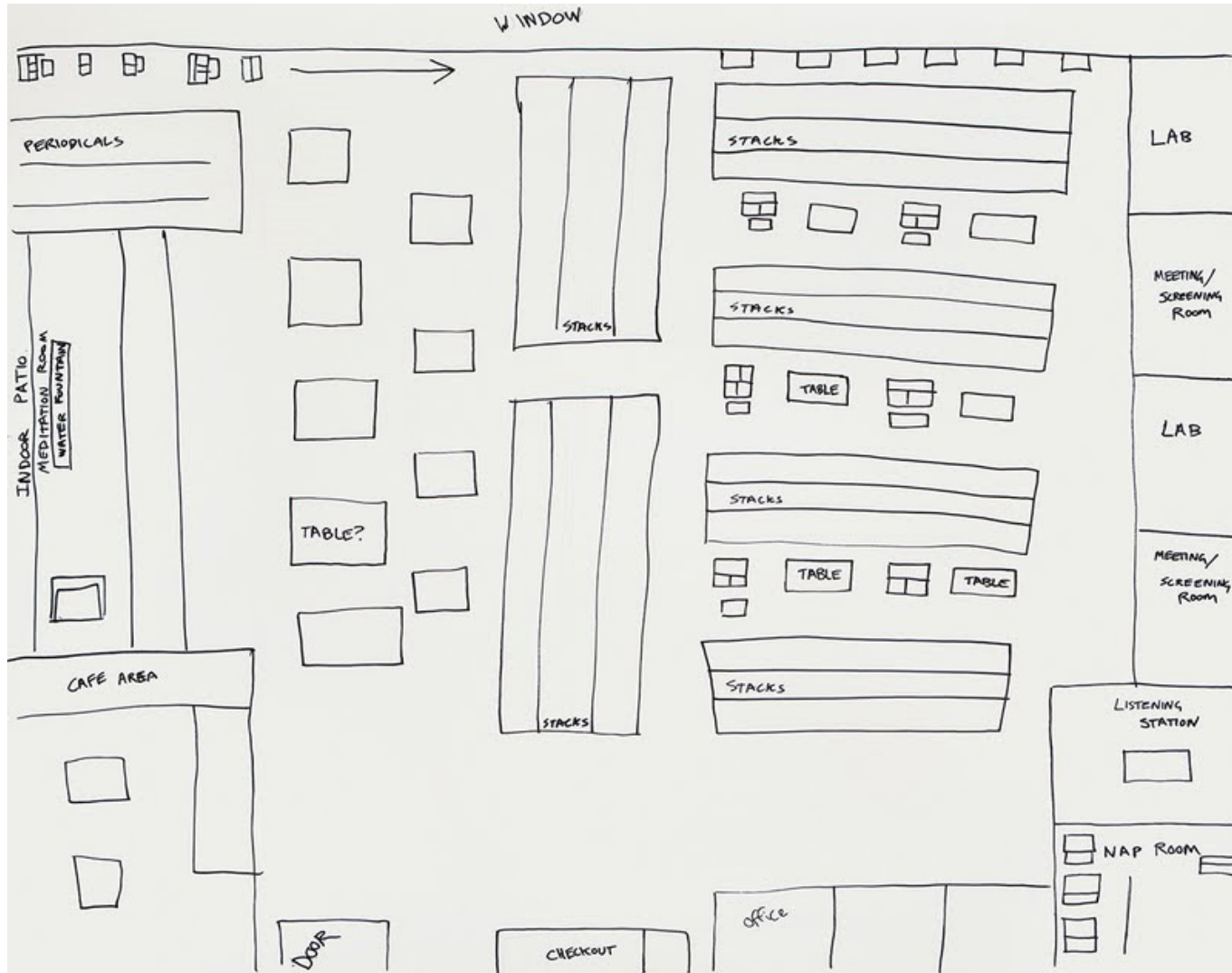**What do you like about the library?**

What would make the Library better for you?

Environment

Technology

Research/Collections

More Technology
Staff/Services

Increased Collections
(e.g., Video Games)

Improved Services
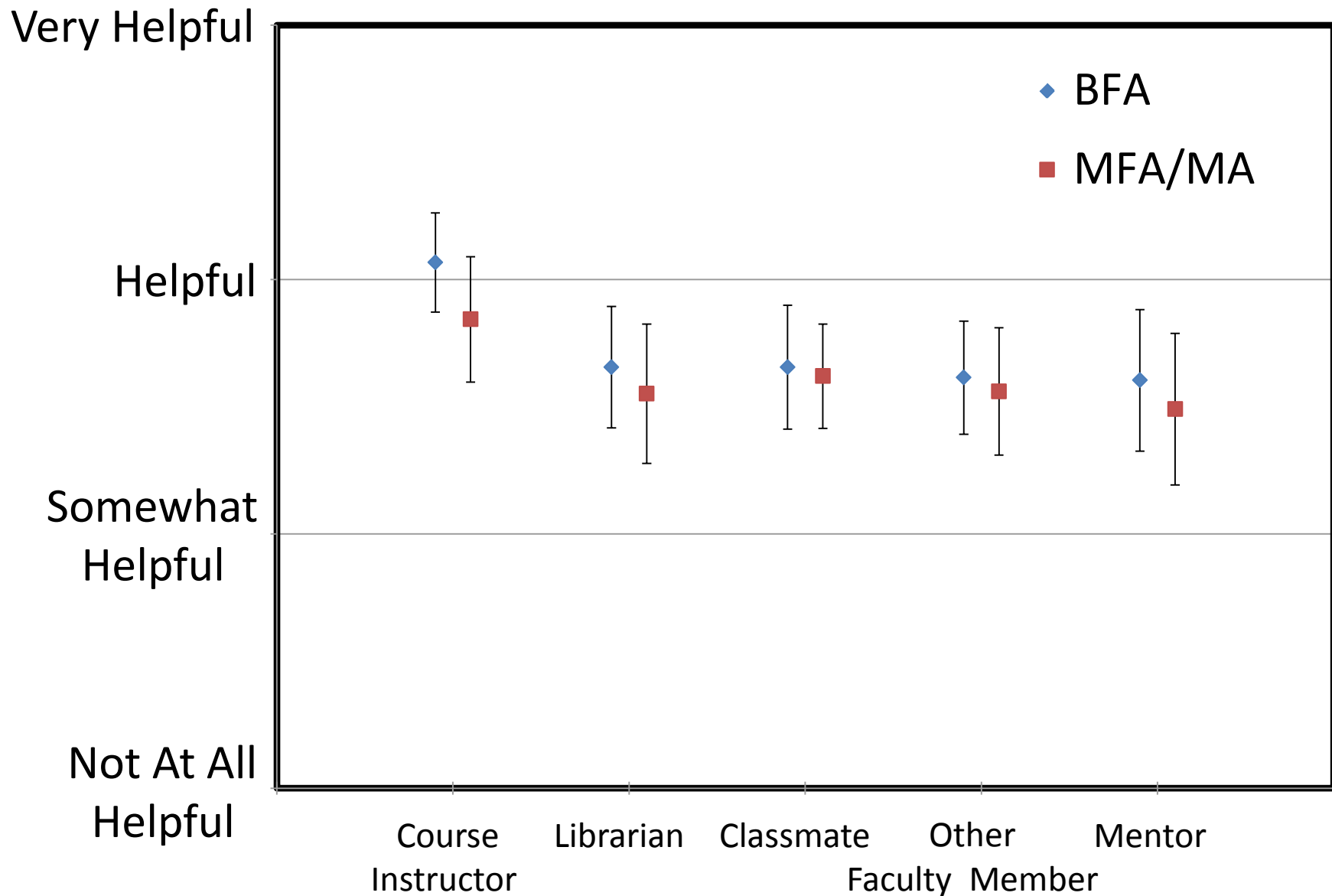(e.g., increased hours)

Better Environment

A Sample Library Design

Online Survey

- Administered through SurveyMonkey.com
  because knowledge is everything

- 111 responses collected

- Three main themes
  - *Where do you study?*
  - *Who do you seek help from?*
  - *What resources do you use?*

- Additional open ended questions posed

How helpful do you think the following people are for finding the information, resources, and/or background materials for your papers and/or projects?

Threads

- Self-defined information-seeking paradigm.
  - Scientific method may or may not be relevant.
- Research is a social process and non-linear.
  - Online assistance is not valued.
- Library as destination; a space for socializing, studying, finding resources, and using technology = *Learning Hub*.
- Barriers:
  - Research stigma
  - Technology (both quantity and quality)
  - Environment (hours; dedicated spaces)
- Key = faculty engagement

Photo Survey

- **Interviewed students were asked to take photos of…**
  - One picture to best represent the library to a new student
  - The computer you use most often, showing its surroundings
  - All of the materials together that you bring to classes
  - Something you would call "high tech"
  - Something weird
  - Your favorite place to study
  - Someone, other than yourself, doing research
  - Your favorite thing in a library
  - Something you've noticed that you think others don't notice
  - Your communication devices
  - An interior picture of where you live
  - How you keep organized
  - Your favorite part of the day
  - All the stuff you always carry with you
  - A place in the CalArts Library that is confusing to you
  - Something you can't live without
  - Your second favorite place to study
  - Where you spend most of your tim
  - The most frustrating location at CalArts
  - Your favorite location at CalArts
  - Something you would call "outdated"