

Transforming Libraries for Graduate Students 2020 Panel:

[What Happens When You Assume: Identifying Graduate Student Information Literacy Support Needs](#)

Panelists ([find panelist bios here](#)):

Matt Ogborn / matt.ogborn@asu.edu

Abbie Basile / abasile@odu.edu

Mandy Havert / mhavert@nd.edu

Geoff Johnson / geoff.johnson@ucdenver.edu

Samantha Walsh / samantha.walsh@mssm.edu

This panel did not occur as planned due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are the panelists' written responses to the questions planned for the panel. The panelists welcome discussion and questions (email addresses listed above).

From the conference materials:

Description of Proposal

Graduate students are expected to conduct research at an advanced level, which includes a higher degree of field-specific knowledge and autonomy than many of them experienced as undergraduates. It stands to reason, then, that they need advanced information literacy and research skills. However, while it might be true that graduate students need these skills, discussions around information literacy instruction for graduate students often assume a baseline of literacy or research expertise that they may not actually have. Many graduate students need what could be considered more "introductory" support before they can get to their "advanced" objectives for a variety of reasons, and it's important for graduate student-serving librarians to identify student needs in order to meet them where they are.

From a variety of viewpoints, contexts, and disciplinary perspectives, this panel will explore the following: ways to determine where graduate students are in terms of their information literacy skills; what their needs are, from both their own point of view and those of graduate-serving teaching faculty; and strategies for addressing those needs. Specifically, the panelists will touch on topics such as discipline-specific nuance, students returning for graduate degrees or certificates after a long hiatus, students with differing objectives for their graduate studies (e.g., going to school to be a scholar as opposed to getting a master's degree to improve one's professional prospects), and collaborations with graduate teaching faculty, among other things.

This will be a traditional panel discussion with a moderator, four panelists, and a list of questions to address and discuss, as opposed to the several miniature presentations panel format that is common at library conferences. There will be 35-40 minutes of discussion amongst the panelists and 10-15 minutes of Q&A, followed by an invitation to all conference attendees to find us and discuss these issues further.

What takeaways will attendees learn from your session?

We hope attendees engaged in information literacy instruction and conducting workshops will come away from our session wanting to ask more questions of and about the students they serve, as well as a desire to interrogate assumptions (their own and those of the teaching and research faculty with whom they collaborate) about the skills graduate students possess when they arrive on campus.

Questions and Answers:

1. Consider faculty expectations versus student realities and needs in their academic programs:

1a. How would you characterize faculty expectations and/or assumptions about graduate students when it comes to research skills and using the library?

Abbie:

I support graduate students in engineering, physics, math, chemistry, and computer science. These students typically work in labs and research centers, performing experiments, developing models, and creating new products. Their faculty advisors and research supervisors are not always supportive of them taking time away from their lab work in order to enhance their information skills. Many faculty incorrectly assume that these students learned the necessary library and information skills during their undergraduate studies. So, these faculty members can be resistant to scheduling sessions on research and information skills as a matter-of-course with each new graduate student cohort.

Mandy:

It is my belief that most faculty expect their graduate students to come fully practiced in research skills related to the library and literature as well as that their students will be masters of anything technology related, due to their age or generation. My colleagues who are subject librarians for STEM programs will indicate that students in their disciplines do not use library resources. I still struggle with believing that. In one of my first years as a graduate services librarian, a lab manager approached me and indicated her graduate students and postdoctoral fellows needed instruction on conducting a quality literature review. In that particular case, the postdoc was an international student, and their understanding of what a literature review is and does was what most concerned the lab manager who wanted to make sure they had common understanding. All of the students and the manager indicated the usefulness of the training that the then-engineering librarian and I put together. It was clear the lab members wouldn't have sought the information on their own.

Geoff:

To build on some of what other folks have mentioned, I think Information Literacy Skills fall into the category of things a lot of teaching faculty - and a lot of librarians, too - assume students learned somewhere else. There's an assumption that students had to do in-depth research in the literature and synthesize scholarly conversations as undergraduates, and that's not always the case. Or oftentimes in the graduate programs I work with, folks are coming back to school after quite a long hiatus, so even if they have done those things before, 1) everything looks a lot different than it did when they were doing research 15 years ago, and 2) it's been a very long time since they did any of it.

Samantha:

I often find that faculty do not take the time to introduce the existence of the library or acknowledge students' need to devote time to develop skills that we teach. They assume that when they assign work that involves searching, citations, etc., the students will find their own way to the library databases and have already developed citation skills. My institution is unique in that we are not a "typical" university, but a school within a large hospital system, where many students are involved as employees and researchers as well as students. As a result, departments and services are very siloed, and it's difficult to know what is available to whom. Many instructors assume students will find their way to the library, while many students don't even realize it is open for them. Thinking about research skills more specifically, I find that many professors have a "They should already know this" attitude, and/or believe that their course is not the place to incorporate this

material. A willingness to incorporate into class time does not seem to increase when faculty realize that their students don't always "know this". I find that the skill sets professors and students seem to have the most disconnect over are Academic Integrity-related, including citation and attribution.

Matt:

I believe that graduate faculty generally assume that their graduate students already learned how to use the library and how to do high-level research when they were undergraduates and thus need no further instruction. Unfortunately, there are various reasons that this is untrue. Many students did not receive any library or information literacy training as undergraduates; some received training long ago, prior to technological advances in libraries that may have changed how students do research; some received training but have forgotten it; and others experienced quality instruction that was appropriate for undergraduates but did not address the research-intensive needs of graduate students. In addition, graduate students are an extremely diverse group, and it benefits all of them to have resources available to either provide them with research skills or "level up" their current expertise.

1b. How has this played out in graduate student instruction or workshops? What can you do as a graduate student librarian to surface discrepancies between faculty expectations and student realities? Are librarian interventions helpful?

Mandy:

Given the experiences I have had with graduate students, I have been working to develop a self-assessment for library and research skills. The purpose of this self-assessment is to help students identify where they may want or need more practice or training on research and scholarly communication skills. I believe that this sort of self-assessment will be more important this pandemic year when we will be encouraged to limit contact time with our student populations and use of physical classrooms. For a student to be able to see they need a workshop or consultation on intellectual property or authors rights can help them prioritize an already overloaded schedule.

I maintain a strong relationship with the Graduate School which sponsors a professional development team. I am a member of that team. We meet regularly to discuss matters related to programming intended to professionalize the student's professional skills and life that they might not otherwise formally address. One area that fuels the disconnect between faculty and a graduate student is the very human response to imposter syndrome. I hold direct conversations wherever I can with students about the dangers of imposter syndrome. Students who challenge those feelings often begin much-overdue conversations with their faculties about workloads, imbalance expectations, and unclear goals. More than once students have thanked us for programming which has helped them with crucial conversations. This is not information literacy instruction but it does help the students create room to identify and ask for the information they need.

When I am approached by faculty to help address research organization or file and information management needs, I provide instruction sessions that meet the needs of students, knowing that it is never a one-size-fits-all solution. I've heard every argument from graduate students about why they don't or won't use a citation manager: I have seen some of those same students pulling out their hair with formatting problems at dissertation submission deadlines. When I connect with students the first thing I do is insist they begin a relationship with their subject librarian. Encouraging students and faculty to leverage the library as a resource has so many benefits at all stages of graduate programs.

Geoff:

Most of the instruction I do happens in the form of one-shot sessions in graduate classes. So there's usually a specific assignment they're working on and I'm usually able to see it. Even so, I tend to try and dedicate at least a third of the time in class (25 minutes or so) to asking them to talk about their experience, concerns, what they want to know, a useful tip they'd share. Most of them have something they're unsure of, a question they've never really gotten answered, and so on. I find that once a couple of students ask what they are worried will be a dumb question (It never is. I regularly see nods and hear add-ons along the lines of, "I've wondered about that too!"), it really opens things up for other students to jump in with what they want to know. Spending time without planned activities and instead focusing on Q&A gives the students the opportunity to drive the session rather than the instructor's or my assumptions about what they need.

Samantha:

I find that sessions on search skills and databases are the most requested by professors. However, I know from experience and from discussions in these sessions that students are anxious about citation and proper attribution. I try to infuse Academic Integrity concepts into searching and literature review sessions. At the very least, I let students know we can support them with "Academic Integrity" type questions during these sessions and give a quick demo of a reference manager.

The 'Academic Integrity' session that I do provide each year is only in our medical school and is not something I've been able to instill in the larger graduate school. The session that I inherited was/is simply teaching a reference management tool, basically "tech training". Beginning this year, I'm shifting to a more theoretical, comprehensive look at incorporating others' work and sources into your own. In service of this, I've begun each session polling the students with the question, "When incorporating outside sources into your work, what are your main concerns? (e.g. Self Plagiarism)". While many students gave answers relating to citation style and avoiding plagiarism, there were many responses that expressed concern with properly searching in order to effectively present the evidence base. It was very interesting and exciting to learn that students do not delineate the skills of searching and citation and this has and will inform my teaching of each.

Matt:

We have a relatively new graduate workshop series at ASU Library called the Graduate Scholars Toolkit. We have plans to move most or all of our current in-person workshops to either webinars or online modules, to benefit both busy graduate students who can't find the time to attend synchronous training and our online graduate students. I am very cognizant of the fact that offering workshops that cover important information at only certain times and in certain places can almost be more of a burden than a benefit to graduate students who are desperately trying to fit yet another thing into their punishing schedules.

We currently have one workshop, called "Library 501: What Grad Students Need to Know about the Library," that specifically aims to introduce new graduate students to the library and all of our services. It is not dissimilar to the type of instruction that we provide our undergraduates, but it has more in-depth information about such things as citation management and using our research databases. This workshop is also available as an online module, and we had plans to move six more in-person workshops to online modules by the start of the Fall 2020 semester. I am also making efforts to arrange for myself or one of my subject-specialist colleagues to address as many incoming groups of graduate students as possible during orientations, graduate colloquia, department meetings, and so on about all of the resources and services the library has for our

graduate students. All of this has been impacted and significantly delayed by the ongoing COVID pandemic, of course.

I'm not sure that we've created the best or most appropriate library interventions for our graduate students, but I do strongly believe that graduate students who know how to use the library well and take advantage of its databases and tools will be more successful. Even something as simple as setting a graduate student up with a citation manager will make their research more organized and effective.

Abbie:

Since we know that information literacy instruction is inconsistent across institutions, majors, departments, there are typically gaps in information skills and scholarly communication knowledge in the graduate student body. I've been fortunate to have found that the graduate seminar series presented by most of my departments welcome my offers to be a presenter. These presentations have enabled me to start conversations regarding the value of information skills workshops for graduate students. When faculty attend, they hear the types of questions their graduate students ask and sometimes comment afterward on their surprise at the lack of knowledge their smart, innovative STEM students have when it comes to library research. Those comments present a great opportunity to discuss assumptions regarding what has been learned at the undergraduate level. Some of these conversations are fruitful, while others don't result in what I would characterize as a successful intervention.

2. On the topics of Information equity and meeting professional needs:

2a. What are some techniques you have used to assess the needs of graduate students?

Geoff:

I try to ask students directly when we're together (like when I do a one-shot session with a grad class). I also administered a survey to all graduate students about how we can best meet their needs at one of the schools my library serves, and I have plans to survey the other school next school year.

Samantha:

In the past, myself and my colleagues have organized focus groups and online surveys (typically circulated via social media) attempting to understand what graduate students need from us in terms of services and resources. These attempts have always had a low response rate.

I've also always solicited feedback about the library during instruction sessions and consultations, which has been the way that I've collected the most useful information about graduate student experiences. Obviously, this is a highly subjective and anecdotal way of information gathering. More recently, I've been trying to bring assessment into my instruction sessions in a formal way. I try to begin and/or end each session with a question that solicits feedback about the library, as well as a question asking what students are still confused or anxious about, in relation to the session's content.

Matt:

Honestly, we are not yet at an assessment stage. I am merely trying to figure out ways in which we can reach as many of our 23,000 graduate students as possible with basic library and information literacy training. Assessment will hopefully follow.

Abbie:

As a subject liaison, I teach workshops and classes for graduate and undergraduate students, provide online chat reference service, and select print and online materials for research, teaching, and learning. All of these duties involve direct interactions with graduate students, their advisors, and graduate program directors. I often receive emails directly from graduate students in my areas who need a particular resource that they are unable to locate. I also get emails simply asking for research help. All of the above provide me a window into skill levels, common problem areas, and potential teaching topics. Each semester, I try to visit 2-3 of the research centers and labs in my subject areas to hear about what they're working on and find out what type of research materials they need for their work. These visits not only inform my assessment of graduate students' needs, but they allow the students to put a face with a name and to see that someone can be contacted for help going forward. In CY2021, I will be conducting surveys and interviews with graduate students to delve in more deeply to their information skills and needs. I expect to find both strengths and deficits when I analyze the data on existing information skills.

Mandy:

One of my primary job responsibilities is to conduct twice-annual graduate student advisory panels on behalf of the University Librarian. Our UL sits in the meetings and asks clarifying questions and responds to students. My role as facilitator is to help ensure relationship building as well as surfacing feedback to reinforce our successes and correct any shortcomings. I then continue to build those relationships throughout the years, whether or not students decide to continue on the panels. We had planned, due to pandemic restrictions, to move to survey-based queries and online focus groups. We saw the fatigue our students at all levels were experiencing and refrained from adding more to their stress.

2b. To what extent does your library put equitable resources toward graduate student information literacy and undergraduate student information literacy?

Samantha:

This question does not apply to my institution, as we only serve graduate students. However, the school at my institution breaks down into a medical school (MD granting) and a graduate school (MPH, MS, PhD granting). The library, like many services and departments within the institution, historically prioritizes the needs of the medical students. We are much more embedded in the medical school's curriculum than any other, and collection development efforts are aimed at the medical school. As graduate school liaison, I feel it is my responsibility not only to advocate for the graduate students within the library, but as students within the institution at large.

Matt:

This is a difficult question for a couple of reasons. First, we have numerous subject-specialist librarians who work directly with graduate students and their faculty in specific departments. These librarians typically do not work with undergraduates, and they don't necessarily provide general library and information literacy training to graduate students. Instead, they use their subject expertise to help graduate students with higher-level questions and needs. Second, we have a number of instruction librarians who specifically work with undergraduate students in 100- and 200-level classes to teach them library and information literacy. In fact, my division, E-Learning and Instruction (ELI), has eight individuals in it, seven of whom primarily focus on undergraduates. In

addition, much like many of our peer institutions, we have many more undergraduate students than graduate students. That said, the focus of the subject-specialists working with graduate students is not necessarily information literacy. Just like some of our graduate faculty, I think the library itself often assumes that graduate students have more library and information literacy skills than they actually do.

Abbie:

As with most institutions, we focus our information literacy program on undergraduate students. We have recently been able to add an Undergraduate Student Success Librarian position to our instruction department. This type of position is not uncommon. However, not many libraries have a similar position for graduate student success. There are a few reasons for this, I think. Graduate student instruction requires in-depth knowledge of information tools in the disciplines due to the intense, subject specific nature of graduate work. Many librarians can teach a class for freshmen doing research on pros/cons papers on social topics. Not all of those librarians can teach a session for PhD students in a political science research methods seminar or for masters' students researching biological diversity in the plant kingdom. Additionally, the lack of a spotlight on graduate students is somewhat the result of the middle-child syndrome. They're overlooked in their academic position between faculty and undergraduate students. Finally, graduate students work independently. Their classes tend to be small-group seminars. Many more sessions need to be taught to reach the 50 or more students who may be enrolled in a single undergraduate lecture course. Since there never seems to be enough instruction librarians, the scaling aspect of graduate student instruction is a logistical factor that cannot be ignored.

Mandy:

This is a hard question. It is definitely tilted toward undergraduate IL as our institution historically is an undergraduate institution. When faculty believe that their incoming graduate students already have what they need to succeed, it's hard to implement successful IL programs at the graduate level. The ability to get in front of students for orientation programs is limited by many facets, but mostly time and competing programs at the beginning of the year. I have the most success where a subject librarian is embedded in the graduate seminar class, and we have the opportunity to provide a one-shot instruction on library resources and services. I am blessed to be able to fully partner in a handful of those classes. The graduate seminars provide a great platform for orientation. I find that information shared at new student orientations is lost. Too much information in addition to the general "I'm new to this institution" firehose leaves little room for meaningful retention. In the year 2017 the Hesburgh Libraries conducted a self-study and strategic planning process. In the report graduate IL programming was listed as a 3-5 year timeline, which is where we find ourselves now.

Geoff:

My job title is Graduate Teaching and Learning Librarian, and part of the reason my position was created was that there was a perception in the library that graduate students, programs, and faculty didn't think the library was there for them. So there's been an effort to make that distribution of resources more equitable.

2c. Where do you address the divergent needs of students in professionalization/practitioner programs versus academic/scholarly programs?

Matt:

This is something that we definitely did *not* consider enough when we began our graduate workshop series in earnest in the Fall 2019 semester. I brought together a slate of about a dozen workshops, some of which we held on each of our four campuses in the Phoenix metro area.

However, the campuses have distinct identities, with certain programs at each and different focuses for graduate students. For instance, the Polytechnic Campus, which is the easternmost of our campuses, has proportionally fewer graduate students than our other campuses, and the graduate students who are there tend to be in professional/practitioner programs that offer terminal master's degrees that are not necessarily research-intensive in the same way that a doctoral program with a dissertation is. This meant that certain workshops weren't really appropriate for this campus. My subject-specialist colleagues who work with specific departments are more attuned to the practitioner versus scholarly distinction, but it's something that I'm working on better addressing from my more generalist perspective.

Abbie:

I try to simply meet students where they are. I make a concerted effort to keep on top of my graduate programs and how they are constructed. Do some offer only a masters' degree while others also offer a PhD? Are there new graduate certificate programs or online degrees that I need to support? Are a program's seminar speakers from industry or are they more likely to be academic researchers? Knowing the answers to these types of questions informs my work in all areas--collection development, reference, outreach, and instruction.

Mandy:

Our professional programs are supported either independently (Law School) or by branch librarians who are the subject liaisons (Architecture and Business). In these cases, the librarians for professional programs have been largely independent (physically, politically) since I began working at the institution as a staff member more than 20 years ago. Students in masters programs are supported by the appropriate subject librarian. Those librarians feel they address the graduate student needs, and by all counts, they do so successfully.

I do admit students from the professional programs into my dissertation camps when space allows, but the program is originally intended for Ph.D. students in programs under the administration of our Graduate School. I have spoken with the director of the Law School Library about the increase in interest among their international law (LLM) students and asked if they would like some support in getting some in-house programming up and running. More than a year has gone by without any further conversation and with the anticipated need for changing room capacities and social distancing, it may not be an issue for my programs going forward.

Geoff:

I work with a few programs, especially master's degrees in public administration and social work, where I've come to understand over the years that the vast majority of the students in those programs aren't getting a master's as a stepping stone to a doctoral degree, but rather to gain a credential that will allow them to get a promotion, have better opportunities to get a job in a new organization, etc. In those programs, I often find myself wondering how much of a service is being done for the students assigning them a relatively typical research assignment that asks them to find 12 (or however many) scholarly articles. I do believe it's valuable for master's students to know what makes literature scholarly, how to locate scholarly literature, evaluate and use it, but I also wonder how often, honestly, practitioners in some of these fields actually consult the scholarly literature to solve problems that come up. So, a few times, I've worked with instructors in those programs to incorporate practitioner literature into assignments, or at the very least to make part of an assignment to "translate" the scholarly literature into something more applied, rather than just making a literature review along the lines of what you'd see in the literature.

Samantha:

The students that I work with that fall into this “professional/practitioner” bucket are students who, in their role as students, spend most of their time in labs. They are working on teams composed of PI’s, faculty, assistants, other students, and more. While these students are typically training for careers in what we consider “academia”, they are not studying in the library or sitting in our sessions as much as other students. I struggle with reaching these students, but I do try to encourage education sessions with lab groups (which are extra tough because of how diverse they are in terms of experience!), and always offer to come to labs and department offices for consultations. The current COVID situation has opened up a new opportunity in terms of Zoom/virtual meetings, which myself and my staff are now much more comfortable with.

3. How do your strategies differ when dealing with in-person graduate students versus online graduate students?

3a. Does one group get more attention than the other?

Abbie:

During a regular semester not impacted by a pandemic, I have more in-person than online graduate students. I have some departments that have hybrid classes and they invite me to teach an information literacy session every semester. My online students, for the most part, are fairly self-sufficient. Most of our university’s online students are in the military and are stationed around the world. So, they are comfortable and accustomed to online communication and learning. Periodically, I’ll get a graduate online student who is completely new to online learning. These students tend to be older adults returning to school after a long break. Their discomfort with technology presents a big hurdle to their success. When working with those students, I am trying to boost their confidence and teach them research skills in equal measure. I would say this group of uncertain, self-doubting students gets more attention from me since they need more specific instruction and often have many more questions than those working from the naval base in San Diego, for example.

Mandy:

I generally do not support online graduate students--but with the shift to online courses and engagement wrought by the pandemic, Spring 2020 saw that we all were online. We have few programs that have been designed for or are administered as online programs. When I was the education subject librarian I did more remote work as the graduate program is a master’s program with teachers applying their education while teaching in the classroom. Consultations happened remotely, by email or phone when I was doing this, so there was little to no online pedagogy involved. For our Fall 2020 orientation sessions I provided recordings to engage with new and incoming students. I also began a weekly blog post to provide some asynchronous support to graduate students. My weekly structured writing and research sessions moved fully virtual via Zoom for the AY2021 and we did the same with our dissertation day camps and the Wintersession dissertation camps. I began providing academic / library success sessions to students working remotely this year and was invited by the Graduate School to do the same with prospective graduate students in the spring semester.

Geoff:

In my case, this often depends on who is requesting instruction. I’ll work with either format happily. I try my best not to assume that the same approaches I use in-person will be effective online. That is, I don’t try to move an in-person lesson plan online; and, in general, I fight tooth and nail (by this I mean I very politely advocate) against doing synchronous instruction online. I generally assume

that if students are taking classes online, it's at least partially because they don't want to be in a specific place at a specific time. I do have a lot of instruc So if I can develop materials and activities that address similar learning outcomes that they can complete when it's convenient for them, I feel like I'm supporting more students more equitably.

Samantha:

We have one graduate program that is entirely online, with a second in its pilot semester. These programs have a lot of support in terms of IT and staff, but are absolutely underserved by the library. A large part of this is due to the library's lack of a presence on Blackboard, which hosts all of the information for these programs. We're able to get around this with our in-person students as they visit the library and we are embedded in some of their courses, but the online programs only ask us to participate in orientations. In order to expose library services and information literacy education to these students, our first step is becoming involved in their programs on Blackboard.

Matt:

One of the reasons that the E-Learning and Instruction division was formed in my library is because in-person students receive more library support than online students. This certainly isn't intentional, but I think it shows how traditional library services haven't always moved at the same rapid pace as technological advancements. Librarians offered a certain kind of instruction and support for hundreds of years, but in the last ten years or so online students have needed different kinds of support that are often asynchronous and at massive scale. In addition, librarians have often been expected to continue their support of traditional, in-person students while also trying to meet the very different needs of online students. As I see it, this is one major reason that in-person graduate students have gotten more attention. I am currently working on making more of our workshops available as online modules that can be embedded in learning management systems (Canvas), so at the very least the fully online graduate students have access to more information about library services and tools.

3b. What assumptions are being made?

Mandy:

The experience I have with online learning and instruction now is that there remains a disconnect for internet access and technology needed to successfully provide for online learning. It's abundantly clear that access and technology are not universal. I spent time getting a graduate student access to a wifi hotspot for when our work at home orders were issued. He and his wife had neither broadband nor a smart device to use as a wireless hub. That was evident in working with students working remotely after those SAH orders were issued. An additional disruption is family or home life where multiple residents are sharing the same bandwidth and vocal / visual spaces. The distraction factor can prove challenging for focus and engagement with online workshops and instruction. Despite the building reopening in July 2020, we still see resistance from graduate students who do not want to be on campus with our undergrads, particularly since there was a spike in cases just after the beginning of our academic year. What's frustrating to me is that we work so hard in our dissertation camps to convince graduate students that writing is not a solely solitary practice and yet the pandemic tried so hard to ensure it remained an isolated endeavor. Once we convinced our students that there was 'community' to be had in our Zoom rooms, those that stuck with us realized it was still productive to connect and be with one another virtually.

Geoff:

Thinking back to when I taught an information literacy course for credit, I remember realizing that I'd been assuming for half the semester that students knew how to use the course management system. After that, I spent time at the beginning of each semester just showing them how to submit

an assignment and things like that. That informs my approach to one-shots in the sense that 1) I can't assume that students know how to use any particular tool I decide to use for a learning activity, and 2) in the one-shot context, I don't really have time to teach them a tool. So I spend a lot of time talking to course instructors with whom I collaborate to talk about what tools they already use in the course, so that I can make my information literacy stuff integrate as seamlessly as possible into the class as the students are already experiencing it.

Samantha:

I believe that myself and my colleagues may be assuming that if these students need us, they will come to us. However, we're not realizing that they likely are unaware of the services that we can provide in terms of information access and attribution support.

From the program and faculty perspective, easy remote access is very important for these students. They work with us to ensure this is available and to provide easy to follow instructions, but once this is completed there is an assumption that these students have learned what they need from the library, when in reality, far from it!

Matt:

I think that online students are often perceived to be the most tech-savvy students, and perhaps because of this perception we sometimes accidentally assume that they don't need as much help with library resources. However, people enroll in online graduate classes for many different reasons, most of which have little to do with their facility with technology. Online graduate students need and deserve as much help as their in-person peers--it's really a matter of equity.

Abbie:

My answer above reveals an assumption that since most of my online military students are pursuing their education while deployed or stationed elsewhere, they are comfortable using technology. This doesn't truly relate to their knowledge of information resources in their disciplines. I find that online graduate students, similar to on-campus graduate students, need to be introduced to some of the key information tools in their fields. Some of these resources absolutely should have been shown to and used by them during their undergraduate coursework. Too often, that's not the case. So, I think it's easy to assume that an online learner, especially one who is comfortable with technology, is aware of our online library tools and knows how to use them. But, as we know, those are two very different types of knowledge and skills sets.