

# Incorporating Research in the Studio: A Case Study of Faculty/Librarian Collaboration

Shari A. Salisbury | UTSA Libraries | Jane Lawrence | Department of Art & Art History  
The University of Texas at San Antonio | One UTSA Circle | San Antonio, TX 78249

## Beginnings

Our collaboration began with a meeting in May 2010 to discuss Ms. Lawrence's idea for a new upper division drawing course scheduled for Spring 2011. The course would involve a semester-long research project called *Journey: The Road to Discovery*, which would provide students with an opportunity to identify and explore an abstract idea directly related to their artwork in general and also would translate to their final project for the course.

Ms. Lawrence believes that art does not exist in a vacuum, and it is therefore important for students to take ownership of their place in the history of art and "locate their tribe." Students who wish to become artists need to be able to formulate and articulate an idea through research and writing.

Ms. Salisbury has taught one-shot library instruction classes for Ms. Lawrence and other instructors in the studio arts since 2008, but had never collaborated on a semester-long project before.

### Faculty Member's questions to Librarian:

- "How can I enhance critical thinking in my course?"
- "What is "research" in a studio setting?"
- "How can I incorporate research into the studio without taking too much time away from actual drawing?"
- "How can I teach students about the research I do as an artist and to appreciate its value?"

**First step: Identify what, in terms of research, you would like the students to be able to do.**

## Applying the Standards

We identified specific information literacy goals for the project as a whole, using the *Information Competencies for Students in Design Disciplines* from ARLIS as a guide.

- 1 Plan, record, and refine search strategies in order to complete a semester-length project
- 2 Employ complex search strategies to retrieve specific information
- 3 Analyze the context of information and how the context shapes the information and its interpretation

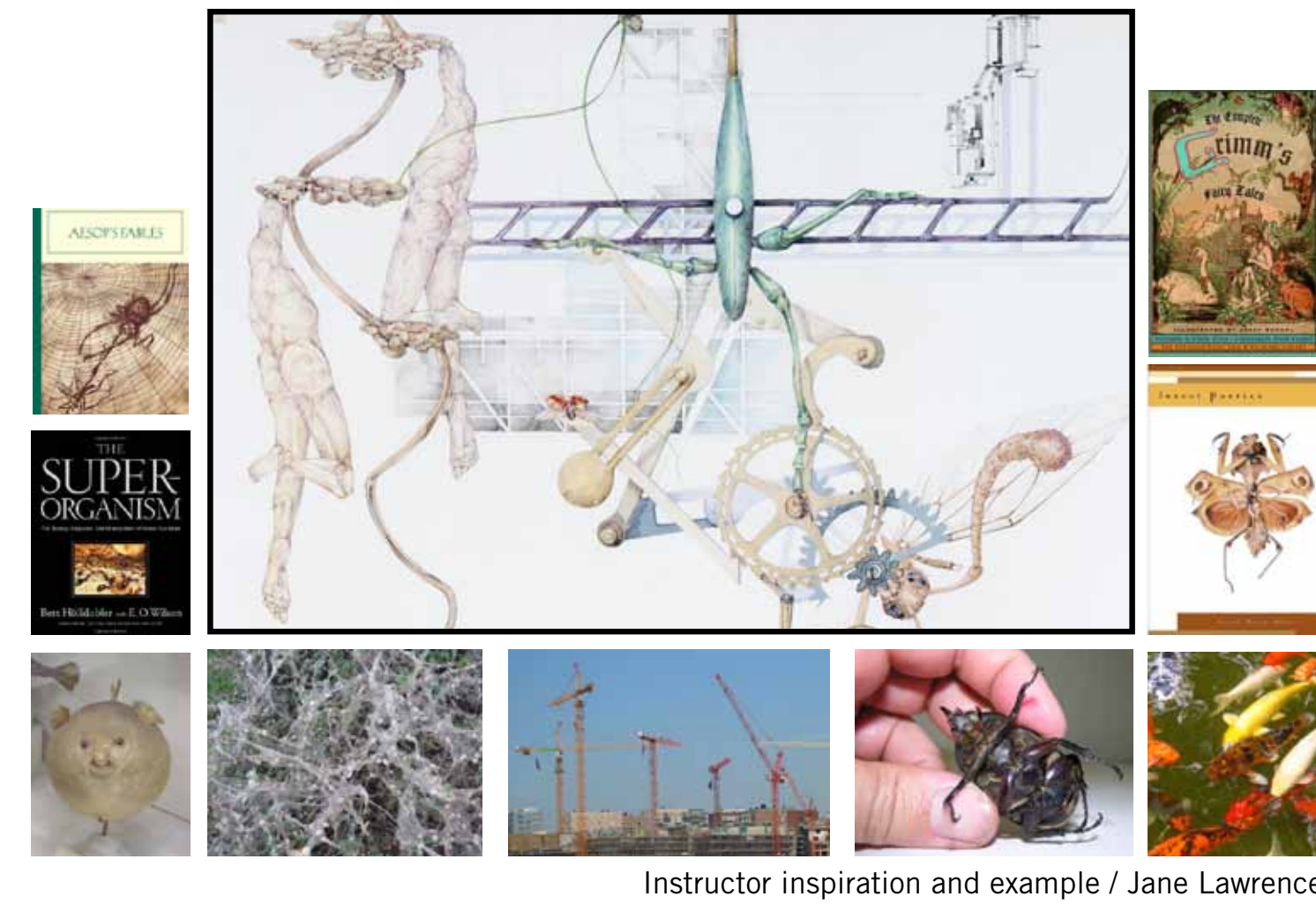
### Journey: The Road to Discovery Project Components

- Two introductory assignments to teach students appropriate resources and how to locate and evaluate information.
- Annotated bibliography that includes summary, evaluation and relevance of the sources to the student's investigation.
- PowerPoint presentation
- Large-scale informed drawing
- It was important to emphasize to students the connection between their research and finished artwork: the research was about THEM, what inspires THEM.

### Do you think a research component in a studio art class is valuable?

- "It really has focused my work and will help shape the rest of my art both in learning to do the research and in learning what it is I'm truly interested in."
- "Having a general direction to go is important, but this was too in-depth for a studio class."
- "It helps to expand your current knowledge of the subject and couples it with new thoughts with [sic] leads to greater ideas."
- "It helped me to talk about my work a little better."

\*Selected student responses from SurveyMonkey



Instructor inspiration and example / Jane Lawrence

## The Librarian Moves into the Studio

1-28-11	Library – Assignment 1	2 hours
2-4-11	Classroom – Explain future assignments	½ hour
2-11-11	Library – Assignment 2	2 ½ hours
2-18-11	Classroom – Discuss Annotated Bibliography, plagiarism, citing	1 hour
3-4-11	Classroom – Discuss first drafts of Annotated Bibliographies	1 hour

### Upper division Studio Art Class — 15 seniors, 1 junior

Met once/week (16 weeks) for 6 hours

Number of hours of class time this semester: 96 hours

Number of hours spent with Librarian either in Library or classroom: 7 hours

Number of sessions with Librarian in the Library: 2

Number of sessions with Librarian in the classroom: 3

As part of being embedded in the classroom, the Librarian also attended other classes at the request of the Faculty Member to provide additional feedback.

4-1-11	Classroom – PowerPoint presentations
4-22-11	Classroom – PowerPoint presentations
5-2-11	Classroom – Final critique of large-scale informed drawing

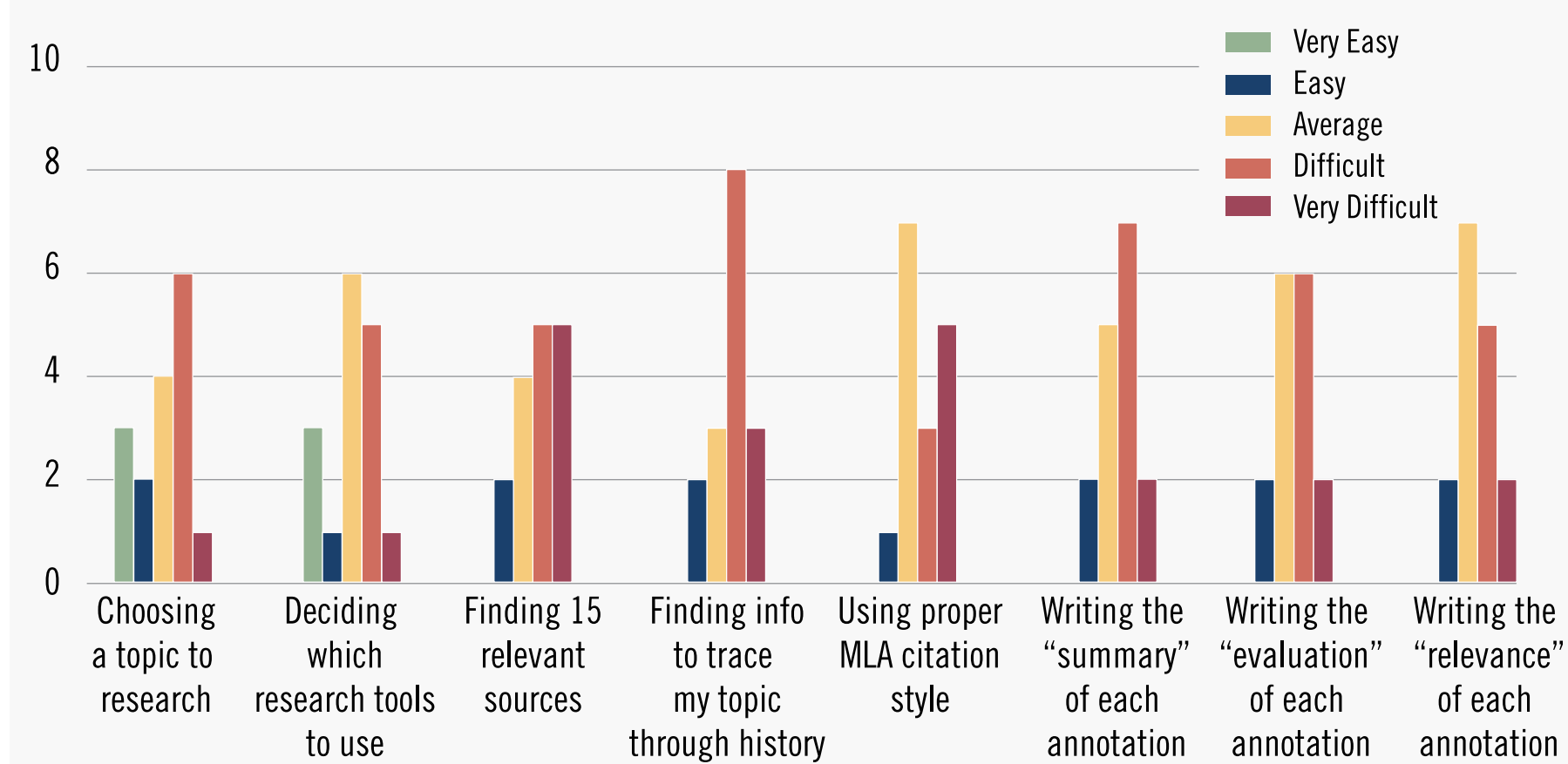
## The Annotated Bibliography Assignment

The annotated bibliography was the core information literacy assignment.

Ms. Lawrence did not want research to take too much time away from drawing, so an annotated bibliography was chosen:

- Much less time than writing a research paper
- Annotations would allow students to demonstrate critical thinking through careful reading and clear understanding of source content, evaluation of source quality and its relevance to their topic and final art project.

### Please rate the different parts of the Annotated Bibliography assignment, on a scale from Very Easy to Very Difficult.



\*Student feedback via SurveyMonkey

## Assessment

Assignments 1 and 2 allowed us to see if students were identifying appropriate sources and mastering search skills.

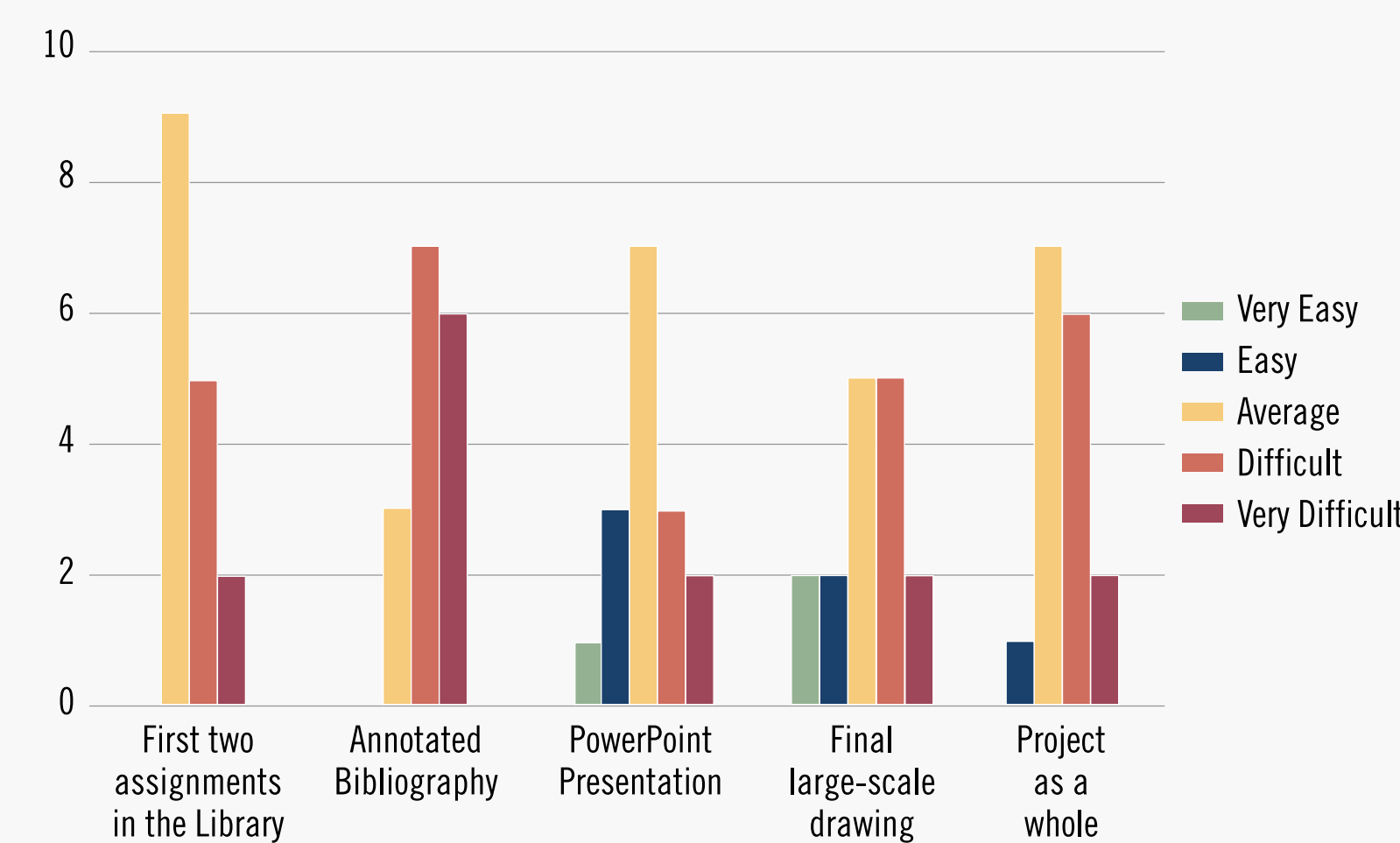
Assignment 3 allowed us to see if students were using critical thinking skills to evaluate, analyze and synthesize the information they found and connect it with their own work.

In like manner, the PowerPoint presentation allowed us to assess whether the students were able to analyze, synthesize and evaluate the information they found and correlate this with their own work.

The students' large-scale informed drawings allowed us to assess whether the students were able to synthesize the verbal and analytical information they had shared in Assignment 3 and the PowerPoint presentation into a visual vocabulary that enhances their own iconography or imagery and style.

SurveyMonkey allowed us to assess student impressions of various aspects of the project using a combination of forced-choice, Likert items and open-ended questions.

### How would you rate each component of this project and the project as a whole?



\*Student feedback via SurveyMonkey

## The Faculty Perspective: Benefits of Working with Librarian

### 1. Information factors:

- Librarian can provide expertise in identifying learning outcomes based on instructor's course objectives and can help to set information literacy goals that will enhance or complement course objectives particularly as they relate to critical thinking.
- Librarian can collaborate with instructor to design assignments in a gradual and cumulative manner so students can master the skills they need to complete their research project.
- Librarian can assist instructor with resource gathering: locating information based on both instructor and student research needs.

### 2. Calming factor/Reoccurring presence in classroom:

- Librarian can assist instructor in keeping students focused, directing research toward specific goals.
- Librarian's presence in the studio clarifies and supports student learning.
- Helps to keep the frustration level down by providing a friendly, accessible resource for help, in addition to the instructor.

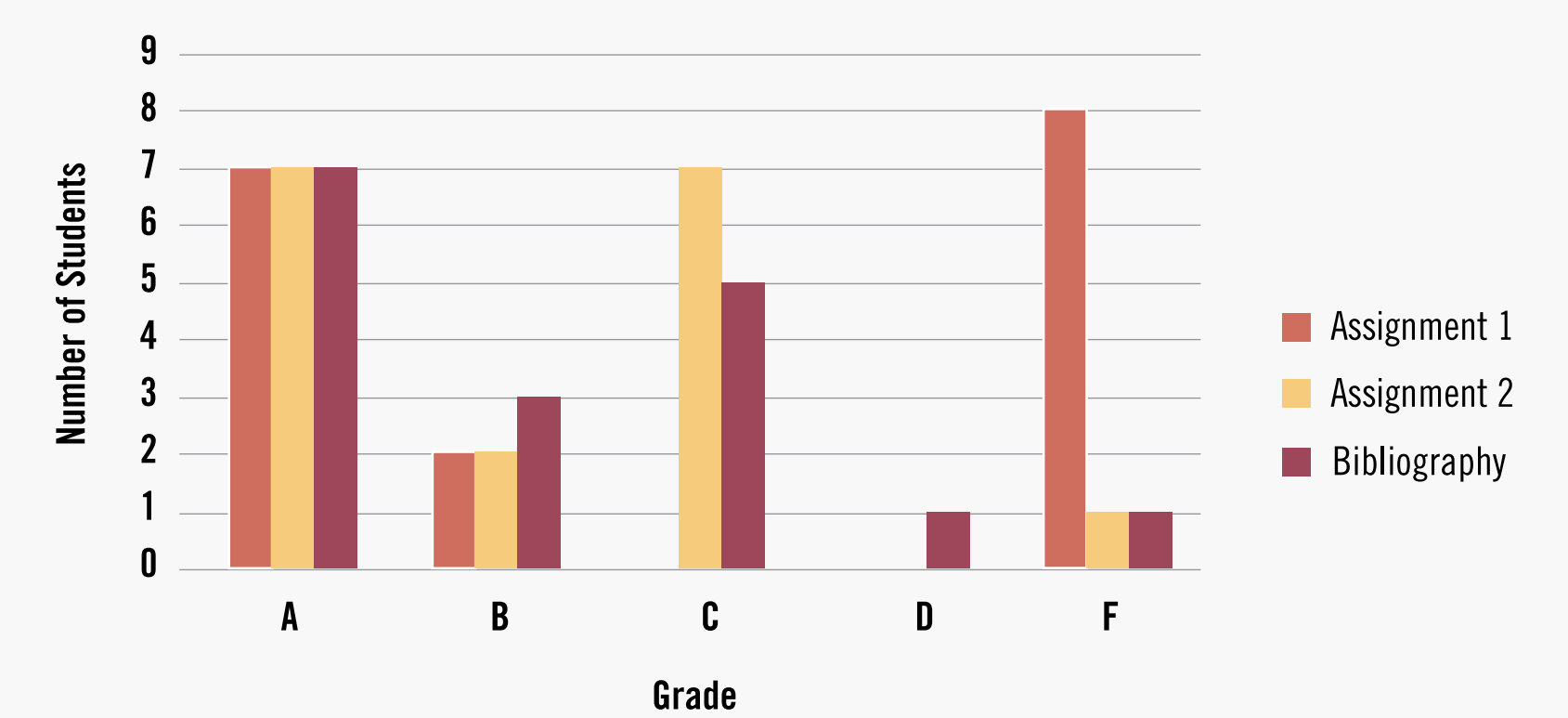
### 3. Cool factor:

- Librarian has the expertise to quickly locate and provide information that will keep the students excited about their research.
- Librarian can inform instructor of new resources and how to use them.
- Librarian can locate materials that may pertain to instructor's future needs or interests based on information gathered during project development and implementation.

### 4. Assessment factors:

- As a team member, the librarian can assist the instructor in evaluating objectives and student outcomes throughout the project.
- Librarian can assist studio instructor with citation and annotated bibliography evaluation by checking students' sources.
- Team-teaching or collaboration is extremely helpful and saves valuable time during the assessment of multi-disciplinary projects. Each member can focus on the objectives that pertain to their expertise while they learn from one another and build a stronger knowledge base that will be invaluable in future projects.

### Student Grades



## What might we do differently?

- Reinforce from the beginning the connection between their research and their own final art project
- Tweak the first two assignments to make requirements clearer
- Spend more time discussing how to evaluate sources in terms of credibility, comprehensiveness, and relevance to their investigation
- Spend more time discussing annotations
- Require fewer citations; worry less about details of citation style
- Allow more leeway in grading rubrics

## Conclusion

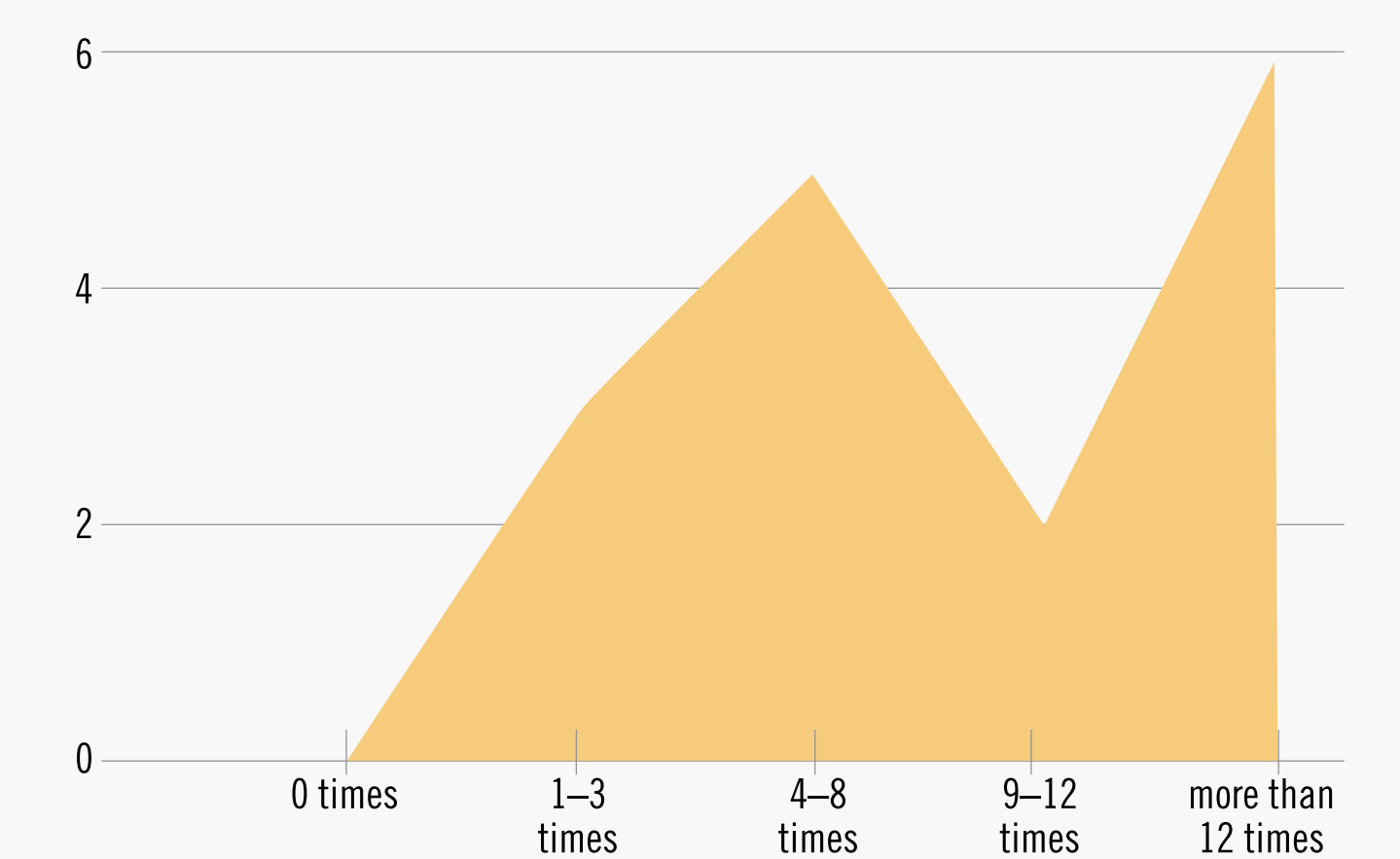
Most students successfully integrated their research with their own artwork resulting in informative presentations and thoughtful large-scale final drawings. However, their successes were tempered by the following points:

Some students had difficulty relating their research to their artwork and viewed the research as just "another tedious assignment" rather than viewing the research as being about them, their inspirations and finding "their tribe."

Despite the fact that the majority of the students were graduating seniors, they were not at the level expected in order to effectively conduct their own research, cite sources, and annotate a bibliography. Significant improvement to accomplish objectives was seen in most students as the librarian interacted more with the class.

The challenges encountered highlighted the desirability of collaborating with a librarian in the studio throughout the required art curriculum to improve expected information literacy outcomes.

### How many times per semester have you used Library resources?



\*Student feedback via SurveyMonkey

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