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Assessing Undergraduate Nursing Students' Information Needs and Perceptions of the Library: A Longitudinal Evaluation - Year 1

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Objective

The project will follow incoming undergraduate students in the traditional BSN program over four years. Using data from yearly assessment surveys and focus group interviews, this project will allow us to identify gaps in information literacy skills, inform our instruction, improve selection and development of learning tools and resources, and identify the best time for library interventions and communication.

Methods

Data will be collected for our longitudinal evaluation over 4 ½ years as we follow a single cohort of students. Yearly assessment surveys will be distributed to the entire cohort. A focus group will be selected from the study cohort. They will meet once per year for 4 years. Individual follow-up interviews will be conducted with the focus group participants 6 months post-graduation.

Pilot -

Feedback from a pilot survey helped us refine our questions to elicit the most helpful responses from students on future surveys.

Year 1 -

Baseline survey: We administered a survey during summer orientation for the incoming class of 151 students from 6/11/15-7/31/15. We provided a raffle prize (~\$90 FitBit) as survey incentive. We had a 55% completion rate.

Focus group: Our 7 focus group participants were recruited from the study cohort. This focus group met for the first time on March 8, 2016 for 90 minutes. We provided dinner and a \$20 gift card.

Year end survey: We shared a link to the survey via the Office of Student, Academic & Multicultural Services' email newsletter "The Pulse" from 2/7/16-3/15/16. We provided a raffle prize (\$85 gift card) as survey incentive. We had a 15% completion rate.

Conclusion

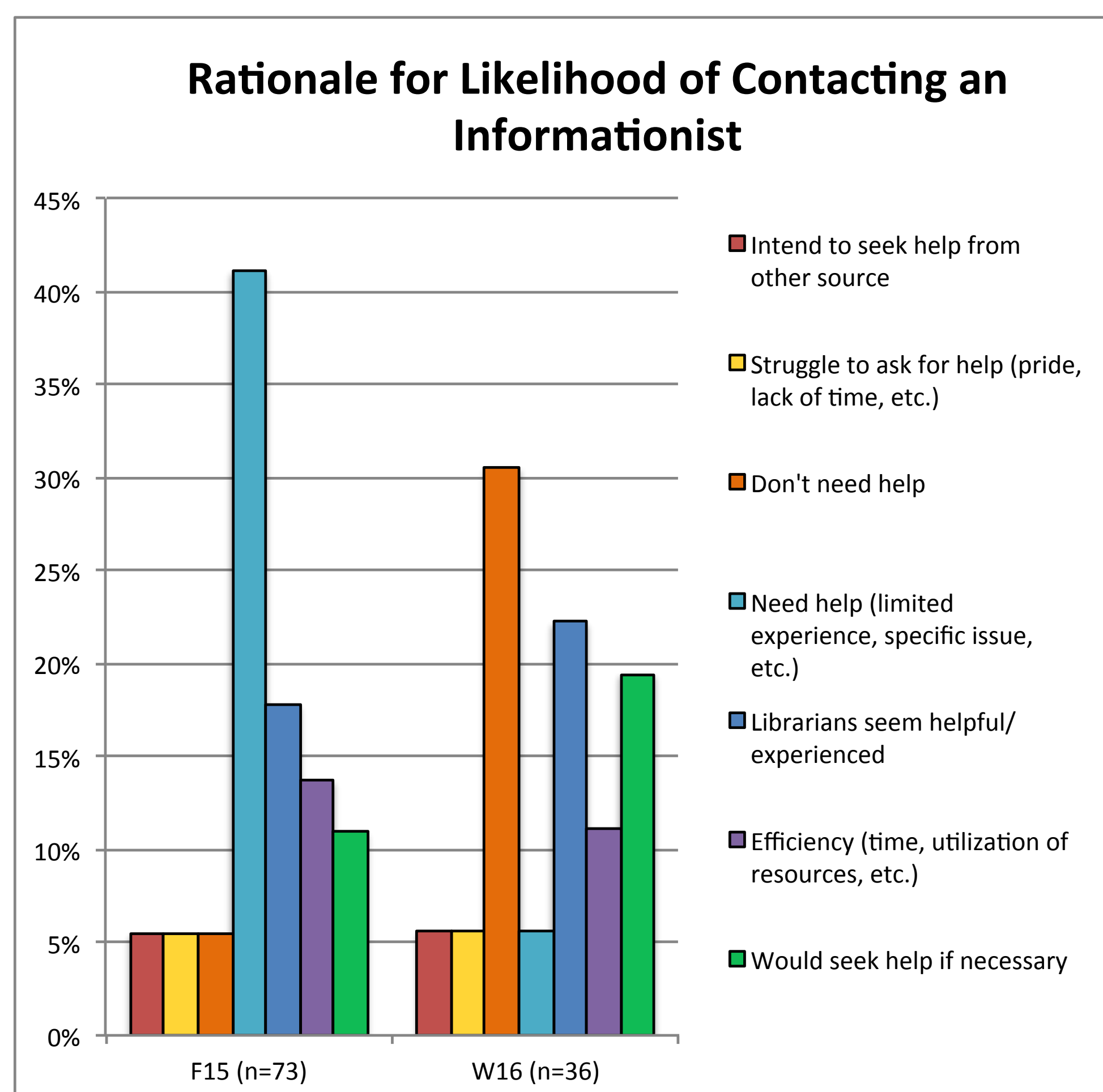
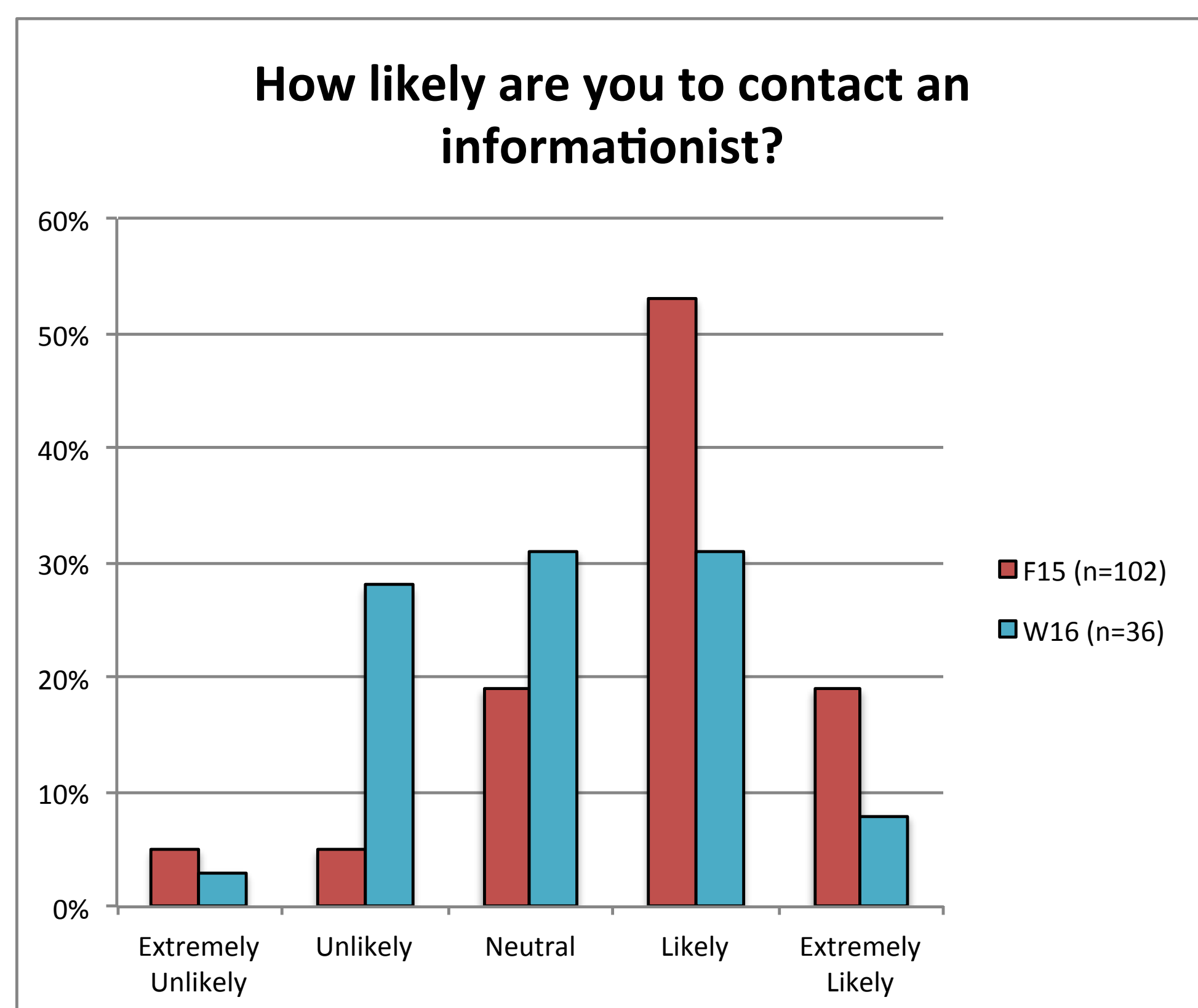
Our first curriculum-integrated instruction opportunity comes during their 2nd year, so it's going to be challenging to make significant changes to our involvement. We will use the data collected from this project to support a proposal for a new supplemental library session for Nursing students taking one of the required English or Composition courses. Currently, they receive a very basic introduction to library resources, but it's not enough of a foundation for what we expect them to be able to do in our 2nd year library session.

The bigger challenge seems to lie in drawing the students away from thinking about the library purely as a place, but instead as a part of a broader concept - encompassing both the physical space of the library, as well as the resources it provides (access to databases, informationists, etc.).

"I honestly thought that libraries were there to have books and where people went to do stuff. I didn't think that librarians could have helped a lot."

Results: Perception of the Library

In the survey, we asked students how likely they were to contact an informationist for help and why.



"I assume it's going to be difficult to get in contact with the librarian and I don't know where you guys are during the day or where I could go to get in person help. So I think that is what would prevent me. I just assume it's difficult."

During the focus group, we asked how they thought an informationist could assist them. A major theme that emerged was that students viewed "the library" primarily as a space; a place to study or work, but not as a key component of students' education through access to informationist assistance with research, online databases, etc. The students also seemed unaware of the extent of the library's resources, often perceiving the library just as a place for book storage.

Results: Search Skills

To help measure their level of searching ability, we provided students with a scenario and research question and asked what resources and search terms they would use to answer the question. We developed a grading rubric that scored the way they used concepts, synonyms, Boolean operators, and search refinement.



Resources Used		
Categories	F15	W16
Database (specified)	30.8%	29.4%
Search engine	30.8%	35.3%
Publications	15.4%	2.9%
Databases (unspecified)	12.8%	14.7%
Credible website	2.6%	0.0%
Non-credible website	1.3%	11.8%
Other	3.8%	0.0%
No response	2.6%	5.9%

Search Term Response Scores			
Score	F15 % (n=51)	W16 % (n=24)	Sample Response
7	2% (1)	4.2% (1)	Depression, teenagers, adolescent, non-pharmacological, medication, mental health, treatment, treatment options, therapy, pharmacological
5	5.9% (3)	16.7% (4)	depression adolescence treatment not drugs
4	11.8% (6)	29.2% (7)	Non-pharmacological AND adolescent AND depression
3	49% (25)	33.3% (8)	Pharmacological alternatives to treat depression in teens
2	21.6% (11)	12.5% (3)	herbal medication, alternative treatments
1	5.9% (3)		Mental health
0	3.9% (2)	4.2% (1)	Google

"I think I still need help with all of the electronic resources. I don't think I really know about them all and how they all work."

Results: Information Needs and Challenges

Finding reliable sources (30%) and relevant information (29%) were the top two most frequently mentioned information seeking challenges. Students also discussed challenges in executing a search (13%), for example, they had difficulty in selecting the best search terms or using a database. A small percentage of students discussed challenges in actually getting to the full text of the articles (3%)

