

I WISH I KNEW THIS EARLIER

A qualitative analysis of student
instruction feedback



**FAITH RUSK
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ABOUT US



Faith (she/her)

Lower Division
Research
Assistance &
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Librarian



Lizzy (she/her)

Teaching &
Learning
Librarian



Melanie (she/her)

First-Year
Experience
Librarian



Zia (she/her)

Online Learning
Librarian



ABOUT SF STATE

San Francisco State University

- One of 23 California State University campuses
- About 24,000 students
 - 87% undergraduates
 - 31% first in family to attend college (first-gen)
- Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI; 37% Latine)
- Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander–Serving Institution (AANAPISI; 26% Asian, 0.6% Pacific Islander, 0.2% Native American)

ABOUT OUR TEAM & UNIT

Student Success & Engagement Team

- Scope: Teach mainly on first-year and lower-division students, but implement programs to support student success at all levels
- Mission: The Student Success & Engagement Team collaboratively and compassionately supports all students through innovative instruction, creative outreach, quality research assistance, and flexible online learning.

Working groups

- Involved in working groups with people across the library focusing on information literacy, research assistance, user experience, and outreach and communication

AGENDA

1 INTRODUCTION + PURPOSE

2 METHODOLOGY

3 FINDINGS

4 NEXT STEPS



LEARNING OUTCOMES

You will be able to:

- Describe and explain the codebooks and coding process used in this study
- Interpret insights gained from student feedback
- Plan a feedback analysis project and adapt our process and resources at your own library, if you so choose



BACKGROUND

The Information Literacy Working Group recommended using the Project Outcome for Academic Libraries survey from ACRL for instruction sessions and events at our Library.

- Four Likert-scale questions about learning, application, and confidence
- Two open-ended, qualitative questions:
 1. What did you like most about this session? (Like Most)
 2. What else could the library do to help you succeed in your classes? (What Else)
- 8 of 14 instruction librarians used the survey in AY 22-23 to varying degrees
- Apart from individual reflection, the survey data has not been used

PURPOSE

Look back: Dig deeper into feedback to support user-centered, continuous improvement to library instruction

Look forward: Develop a more systematic approach to interpreting and acting on what our students tell us

METHODOLOGY: OVERVIEW

Pulled qualitative data from Project Outcome for Academic Year 2022–23:

- Like Most: 1,126 responses
- What Else: 918 responses

Created, tested, and adjusted a codebook for each question

Coded responses and analyzed trends in what's working and what's not

DEVELOPING THE CODEBOOK

MAR
2023

Codebook v.1

Code 30 responses without a codebook

Draft a codebook based on patterns in our initial codes

Discuss and revise code names and definitions

AUG
2023

Codebook v.2

Code a new excerpt with Codebook v.1

Discuss cases of disagreement or uncertainty

Adjust code names and definitions

NOV
2023

Codebook v.3

Code a new excerpt with Codebook v.2

Discuss cases of disagreement or uncertainty (again)

Adjust code names and definitions (again)

JAN
2024

Codebook v.4

Begin coding the full dataset with Codebook v.3

Identify a new set of problem cases

Adjust code names and definitions and test one last time

Consider: What is this for?

FEB
2024

Begin coding!



'LIKE MOST' CODEBOOK

What did you like most about this session?

^ See the full codebook in our slides:
tinyurl.com/loex2024

Already knew

Application

Citing & synthesizing

Clarity/delivery

Engagement/interactivity

Evaluating

Finding & searching

Librarian support

Library resources

Source types

Student learning (general)

Other

Unclear



‘WHAT ELSE’ CODEBOOK

What else could the library do to help you succeed in your classes?

^ See the full codebook in our slides:
tinyurl.com/loex2024

Communication

Hours

Instruction

Lack of awareness

Neutral

Non-library

Personal initiative

Research assistance

Resources

Satisfied/positive

Space

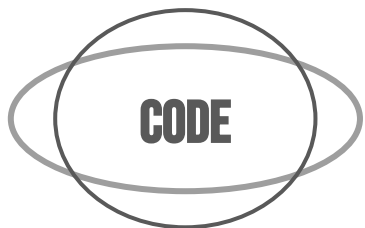
Technology

Unsatisfied

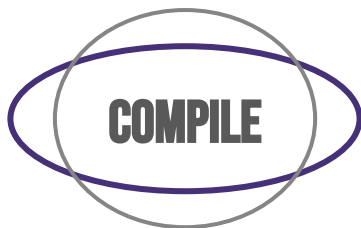
Other

Unclear

CODING THE DATA



Each person codes independently in a separate sheet of a Google Sheets workbook



Faith combines and sorts our four sets of codes:

- 4/4 agree: Easy!
- 3/4: Majority rules
- 2/4 or 1/4: Flagged for discussion



We discuss each flagged comment as a team until at least three people agree on a code

CODING THE DATA

Example: “Lizzy gave an insightful and informative demonstration of how to search, evaluate sources, and use sources to make a research paper.”

Original codes: 2 of 4 agree

1. Student learning (general)
2. Clarity
3. Finding & Searching and Evaluating
4. Finding & Searching and Evaluating

Final code: Librarian support

- As we discussed it, we decided this was actually the student’s main point.

IN-PROCESS CHANGES TO THE CODEBOOK: CODING

We agreed to create a new **Lack of Awareness** code in What Else as we noticed a pattern of students asking us to add resources or services that we already had.

Definition

Student expressed a desire for a resource or service that already exists. *Note: Only a secondary code!*

Rationale

Capture all the things, across all categories, that students don't know about

Examples

“One on one appointments would be very helpful as well”

“order a source for me if it is not available in sfsu library”

IN-PROCESS CHANGES TO THE CODEBOOK: RECONCILIATION

We renamed Clarity as **Clarity/Delivery** to cover the full range of Like Most comments about the way a librarian demonstrated or explained something

Definition

Student comments on the clarity of the lesson or the ease of following the material

Rationale

Captures sentiments toward the instructor's pacing and explanations

Examples

“I liked that it was very detailed and concrete so you know what you’re gonna do when you’re alone.”

“The slow pace”

IN-PROCESS CHANGES TO THE CODEBOOK: RECONCILIATION

We added a **Non-Library** code to highlight a group of What Else comments (initially coded Other) that could be the basis for outreach to campus partners

Definition

Student mentions a non-library unit or service (e.g., TASC or tutoring)

Rationale

Captures misattribution of non-library services or possible opportunities for collaboration with other campus services

Examples

“I wish there was accommodation for DPRC registered students such as printouts ... as well as other needed help ... as I requested a year ago.”

IN-PROCESS CHANGES TO THE CODEBOOK: RECONCILIATION

We created a new **Unclear** code in both codebooks as we noticed how often we had interpreted a vague or incomplete comment in different but equally plausible ways

Definition

Cannot determine intention or meaning; ambiguous, incomplete, or illegible

Rationale

Captures items that are not clear enough to code

Examples

“The amazing outgoing.”

“reading more about the subjects”

“Research”

HICCUPS AND DISAGREEMENTS: VERBS

We added some typical verbs to our Finding & Searching and Library Resources definitions to make coding easier and more consistent. (Spoiler: It didn't work.)

Definition

Student comments on finding sources or mechanics of searching (**generally verbs like *search, navigate, explore***)

Rationale

Captures student comments related to finding sources or conducting searches

Definition

Student comments on awareness of library resources (**generally verbs like *use***); includes comments about physical spaces in the library

Rationale

Captures increase in student awareness of library resources due to instruction

HICCUPS AND DISAGREEMENTS: VERBS

As a result of coding strictly by the book during reconciliation, we ended up assigning different codes to some comments that felt alike:

- “I liked *navigating* the library website” (Finding & Searching)
- “Learning about how to properly *use* the library website (Library Resources)

But some of us *didn't* consistently follow the verbs, and if 3/4 agreed, we skipped reconciliation. Which left us with similar comments with different codes for the opposite reason:

- “Learning how OneSearch worked and how I can *use* it for most assignments” (Library Resources)
- “Learning about how to *use* OneSearch” (Finding & Searching)

HICCUPS AND DISAGREEMENTS: USAGE

Many uncertainties stemmed from variations in how our students used words and how we used those same words:

- What do they mean by “database”? Is it ever the same as a “website”?
- What does it mean to “navigate” vs. “search” vs. “use” an online tool?
- Is a “tutorial” like a “workshop” or a “session”? Or is it actually a video?



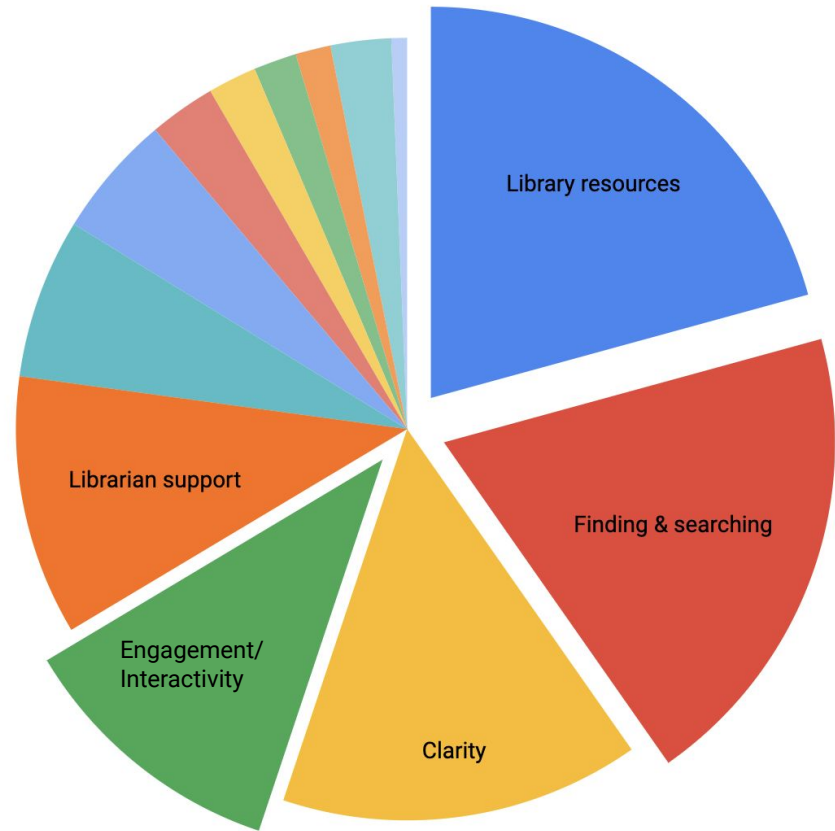
FINDINGS: LIKE MOST

“What did you like most about this session?”

- Our students like learning about **what they have access to** and **how to use it!**
 - The top two of the 13 codes, **Finding & Searching** and **Library Resources**, together made up 40% of responses
- Our students seem to appreciate **hands-on learning** activities
 - About 11% of responses mentioned **Engagement/Interactivity**

FINDINGS: LIKE MOST

- Library resources
- Finding & searching
- Clarity
- Engagement/Interactivity
- Librarian support
- Student learning (general)
- Evaluating
- Citing & synthesizing
- Unclear
- Other
- Already knew
- Application
- Source types



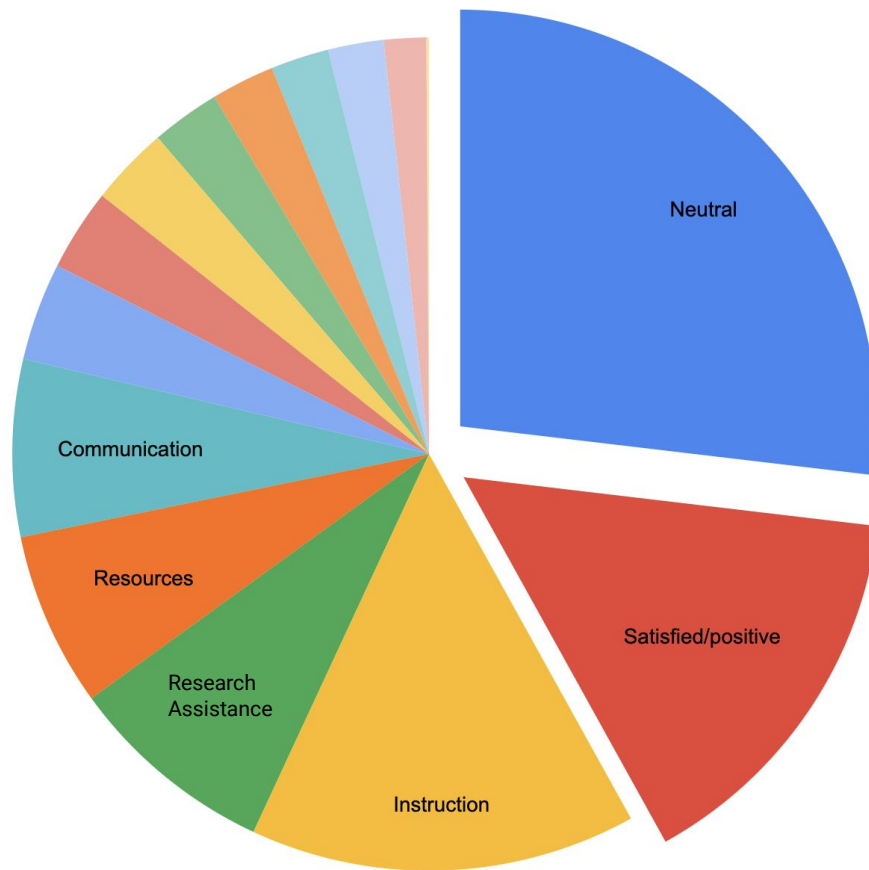
FINDINGS: WHAT ELSE

“What else could the library do to help you succeed in your classes?”

- **Nothing much, it's fine**
 - About 42% felt **Neutral** (26.9%) or **Satisfied** (15.1%) with what the library provides and the lesson they received
- **Our students want more!** Some common requests:
 - More instruction in classes and workshops
 - More tutorials, videos, and other digital learning objects
 - More communication about library resources and services

FINDINGS: WHAT ELSE

- Neutral
- Satisfied/positive
- Instruction
- Research Assistance
- Resources
- Communication
- Technology
- Space
- Personal Initiative
- Lack of Awareness
- Unclear
- Other
- Non-library
- Hours
- Unsatisfied



FINDINGS: A CLOSER LOOK

At the end of reconciliation, we sorted three sets of What Else comments to get a clearer picture of what students were telling us :

- **Instruction**: Positive (16%) vs. Constructive Feedback (84%),
More Instruction (74%) vs. DLO (27%)
- **Communication**: Praise (1.5%) vs. Constructive Feedback (98.5%)
- **Research Assistance**: Positive (20%) vs. Request (80%)

NEXT STEPS (1/3)

Share feedback and findings with appropriate librarians and working groups

- **Information Literacy Working Group (ILWG)**
 - More instruction!
 - Not necessarily more one-shots
- **Online Learning Librarian**
 - More digital learning objects!
 - Feedback will help guide the direction of DLO development

NEXT STEPS (2/3)

Share feedback and findings with appropriate librarians and working groups

- **Research Assistance Working Group (RAWG)**
 - Suggestions to promote research assistance more
 - Positive feedback regarding chat
- **User Interfaces Working Group (UIWG)**
 - Comments about wi-fi in the building, the library website, OneSearch interface, etc.
 - Feedback will help inform user testing priorities

NEXT STEPS (3/3)

Share feedback and findings with appropriate librarians and working groups

- **Outreach, Engagement, & Communication Working Group and First-Year Experience Librarian**
 - Better and earlier communication about library resources and services!
 - Feedback will help focus new communication efforts on reaching first-year and lower-division students where they are
 - Feedback will help us consider the language we're using to describe our services and resources

FURTHER RESEARCH

- Continue to collect instruction feedback
- Expand the dataset by recruiting more instruction librarians to participate
- Refine the codebook and our coding process
- Pull out subsets of data to analyze separately, for example:
 - All the courses taught by our team
 - All the sections of a particular course that use a set lesson plan
 - All English composition courses

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage using a standard feedback form for all library instruction
- A small team works well to analyze the data
- When developing the codes, think ahead:
 - Why do you want to know this?
 - Who will you want to share it with?
 - How will this be helpful?
- The process will go slowly at first, but it will speed up, we promise!

THANK YOU!

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tinyurl.com/loex2024

COMPLETE CODEBOOKS

'LIKE MOST' CODEBOOK

What did you like most about this session?



Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on having received prior library instruction or already knowing the material

Rationale

Captures instances of repetition for students, whether they learned the material in a formal lesson or not

Examples

“I mean it was repetitive of things I’ve learned before a few weeks ago”

“I already knew how to use OneSearch but having this session made it much easier to navigate.”

Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on their intention to apply skills they learned to their academic or non-academic work in the future (not to be used in reference to application during the session)

Rationale

Captures the ways in which students see an impact of the lesson beyond the instruction session

Examples

“It taught me skills that I will be using for other classes”

Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on citing or synthesizing sources

Rationale

Captures student self-assessment of learning or awareness related to citing or synthesizing sources

Examples

“Learning how to correctly cite since I feel like I’ve been doing it a little wrong.”

“I now know how to properly paraphrase.”

Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on the clarity of the lesson or the ease of following the material

Rationale

Captures sentiments toward the instructor's pacing and explanations

Examples

"I learned about a useful and complicated tool in an efficient and digestible manner."

"The slow pace"

"I liked that it was very detailed and concrete so you know what you're gonna do when you're alone."

Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on the interactivity of the lesson or feeling engaged

Rationale

Captures sentiments about active learning components of library instruction

Examples

“I enjoyed how interactive it was. I was able to follow along with the lesson on the computer. The activity search on our own research topics was very helpful.”

Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on evaluating sources or evaluation methods

Rationale

Captures student self-assessment of learning or awareness related to evaluating sources

Examples

“I enjoyed evaluating which links we would or would not use in a hypothetical assignment”

“The ACT UP method that i think is very useful for people to choose good sources.”

Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on finding sources or mechanics of searching (generally verbs like *search, navigate, explore*)

Rationale

Captures student comments related to finding sources or conducting searches

Examples

“Learning to navigate the library website to find strong sources.”

“It helped me understand how to narrow or broaden my search results to my preference.”

Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on helpfulness of librarians or willingness to offer support; general positive sentiment about librarians

Rationale

Captures positive student perception of librarians and the support they provide

Examples

“The librarian is so helpful and welcoming, and I intend to reach out to her if I ever need any future help in regards to finding research etc.”

“The enthusiasm of the staff, wanting to genuinely help students if need, much appreciated!”

Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on awareness of library resources (generally verbs like *use*); includes comments about physical spaces in the library

Rationale

Captures increase in student awareness of library resources due to instruction

Examples

“Free NYT subscription yo!!”

“I liked the overall tour of the different databases we have here at SFSU. It’s great to see how many resources we have that our tuition pays for.”

Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on awareness or importance of different source types

Rationale

Captures student understanding of different source types and their value or importance

Examples

“I learned the differences of primary and secondary sources on a deeper level.”

“This session help me identify primary sources and secondary primary and provide us an opportunity to access some primary sources that I might need for my project.”

Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments generally (without any specifics) that they learned something from the session

Rationale

Captures general student self-assessment of learning

Examples

“learned something that I never even knew existed”

“that I really did learn something new”

Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student's comments are not captured by other codes

Rationale

Captures items that are situated outside of the current codebook

Examples

“the chairs are super smooth to roll around”

“I liked that it was kind of a field trip to a new class. Having a new setting from time to time is engaging.”

“nothing, i felt lost the whole time”

Already knew
Application
Citing & synthesizing
Clarity/delivery
Engagement/interactivity
Evaluating
Finding & searching
Librarian support
Library resources
Source types
Student learning (general)
Other

Unclear

Definition

Cannot determine intention or meaning; ambiguous, incomplete, or illegible

Rationale

Captures items that are not clear enough to code

Examples

“The amazing outgoing.”

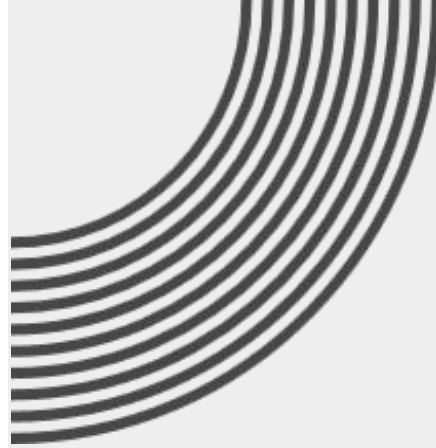
“Research”

“learning the difference between”

“COol”

'WHAT ELSE' CODEBOOK

What else could the library do to help you
succeed in your classes?



Communication

Hours

Instruction

Lack of awareness

Neutral

Non-library

Personal initiative

Research assistance

Resources

Satisfied/positive

Space

Technology

Unsatisfied

Other

Unclear

Definition

Student expresses a desire to know more information about the library, or a wish to have known something sooner

Rationale

Captures what students want to hear from us about or want to know about

Examples

“I am a senior, I wish I knew this earlier!”

“Post signs about where to check out a book”

“Just make us more aware of all the services you all provide”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on increasing library hours

Rationale

Captures the desire for increased library hours

Examples

“The library could have study rooms stay open later (or even 24 hours).”

“Why is the library closed on Saturdays? Would be nice for my Saturday class and for completing group projects”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on the value of instruction, the desire for more instruction (including DLOs), or the teaching librarian's delivery

Rationale

Captures student ideas about instruction and their perception of its value; thoughts about instruction that could go to ILWG

Examples

“Do more of what you did today for other classes.”

“videos to watch and go back to as a refresher”

“Slow down and write the steps out”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student expressed a desire for a resource or service that already exists. *Note: Only a secondary code!*

Rationale

Capture all the things, across all categories, that students don't know about

Examples

“One on one appointments would be very helpful as well”

“order a source for me if it is not available in sfsu library”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student responds with *n/a, nothing, no, not sure*

Rationale

Captures null and uncertain responses

Examples

“No suggestions at this time”

“IDK”

“Not sure because I am never in the library to be honest.”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student mentions a non-library unit or service (e.g., TASC or tutoring)

Rationale

Captures misattribution of non-library services or possible opportunities for collaboration with other campus services

Examples

“I wish there was accommodation for DPRC registered students such as printouts (visually challenged like myself), as well as other needed helpt (comfortable seat, typist, and etc., as I requested a year ago)”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on their own actions or use of information/resources as a next/necessary step

Rationale

Captures feedback from students who feel they can work independently or ask for help if needed

Examples

“Ya’ll are awesome. Honestly, nothing. I need to reach out and utilize the tool of the library more.”

“I would like to try out getting in touch with other librarians to see if there is even more to learn about!”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student requests research assistance support or comments on its value

Rationale

Captures student interest in and awareness of (or need for) research assistance support; thoughts about RA that could go to RAWG

Examples

“Do they have sessions where they can help you research for your topics? If not, that would be helpful.”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on the availability of library resources or requests access to more or different resources (journals, databases; not DLOs)

Rationale

Captures thoughts on access to information resources

Examples

“Provide more accessible online books”

“Nothing! The library offers a lot of resources.”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student expresses general satisfaction or positivity. *Note: if they mention something specific related to another code, use that.*

Rationale

Captures positive responses to what the library offers

Examples

“I am happy with the services offered thus far. Keep blowing my mind! ^_^”

“You guys are great!!”

“Not much that I can think of. Pretty slay.”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on different library spaces

Rationale

Captures what students like or dislike about the library as a space

Examples

“I love the library atmosphere and that definitely helps me study”

“More signs/arrows pointing to room number I was lost trying to find this one honestly hahaha”

“Get carrels bc I don't like people peeping over my shoulder”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments on technology in the library or the library website

Rationale

Captures student experiences with library technology and website

Examples

“Technological issues are a little too frequent for the library to be a seamless place for research”

“The wifi is pretty bad in this room”

“Streamline the complicated website, update it to meet modern standards.”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student comments that they are not satisfied with library offerings/support

Rationale

Captures negative feedback

Example

“Everthing”

** By the end of the process, the example above was the only comment with this code. Moving forward, we may merge it with the Other code.*

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other
Unclear

Definition

Student's comments are not captured by other codes

Rationale

Captures items that are situated outside of the current codebook

Examples

“make printing free”

“invent a button that combusts all transphobes and racists when pressed. my mental health would be that much improved.”

Communication
Hours
Instruction
Lack of awareness
Neutral
Non-library
Personal initiative
Research assistance
Resources
Satisfied/positive
Space
Technology
Unsatisfied
Other

Unclear

Definition

Cannot determine intention or meaning; ambiguous, incomplete, or illegible

Rationale

Captures items that are not clear enough to code

Examples

“reading more about the subjects”

“Lead us in the right direction in the library cannot provide us with a specific answer.”