

We Don't Take Summers Off: Nurturing Undergraduate Student Research at a Small Liberal Arts College

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Word Cloud Prompt

What library projects do you spend your summers working on?

<https://pollev.com/erinsulla585>



Occidental College

- SLAC in Los Angeles
 - ~2,100 undergraduates
- Semester schedule



Undergraduate Research Center (URC)

- Founded in 1998
- Received a “Campus-Wide Award for Undergraduate Research Accomplishments” from the Council on Undergraduate Research in 2019

Summer Research Program (SRP)

- Faculty-mentored ten week program
 - End of May to early August
- Open to all Oxy students
- Applications due February 1 each year
 - Usually ~100-120 students accepted
 - Selected by a faculty committee

SRP Application

Components:

- Five-page research proposal
- Two-page personal statement
- Itemized budget
- Faculty recommendation letter



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Collaboration Begins (Fall 2022)

- 1) Strengthen research proposals ***before*** the SRP begins
- 2) Support research needs ***during*** the SRP



BEFORE

SRP Research Proposals

Pre-library collaboration:

- **The good:**

- Creative! Ambitious! Interdisciplinary!

- **The less good:**

- Vary in quality
- Too generalized
- Lack proper grounding in existing scholarship

55% of the 2023 SRP cohort
reported it was their first time
doing **any** mentored research

Research Proposal Workshops

November 2022: 3 workshops split between humanities/social sciences & STEM students

January 2023: 1 multidisciplinary workshop for all students

February 2023: SRP application (including research proposal) due

Research Proposal Workshops

How to:

- Formulate good research questions
- Ground an argument in scholarship
- Tailor to a specific audience
 - In this case, a selection committee consisting of multidisciplinary faculty



DURING

Library Mentors

- Each SRP student needs a faculty mentor
 - ...why not a library mentor too?
- Open to **all** library staff
 - Optional Google form sign-up
 - Mentors paired with students based on staff discipline interest & project titles



Major	Library Mentor	Mentor Department
Cognitive Science	science librarian /i	Chemistry
Cognitive Science, Mathematics	user services specialist	Computer Science
Comparative Studies in Literature & Culture	first year librarian	Comp Lit, Philosophy
Comparative Studies in Literature and Culture	humanities librarian	History, Asian Studies
Computer Science, Music	user services specialist	Cognitive Science
Critical Theory & Social Justice	director of teaching	Sociology
Critical Theory Social Justice	resource sharing specialist	Media Arts & Culture
Critical Theory/Social Justice (Geology minor)	first year librarian	Economics
Diplomacy & World Affairs	humanities librarian	American Studies
Diplomacy & World Affairs	social sciences librarian	Urban & Environmental Policy
Diplomacy & World Affairs	director of teaching	Art History
Diplomacy & World Affairs, Asian Studies	cataloging specialist	Geology
Economics	college archivist	Psychology

Library-Led Summer Workshops

- Each SRP student must attend a minimum of four professional development workshops
- Introduced librarian-led workshops for SRP 2023 as part of this broader series



Library-Led Summer Workshops

Research/Information Literacy Skills

- Introduction to the Research Process
- Introduction to Archival Research
- How to Read a Research Article
- Note-Taking and Citation Management



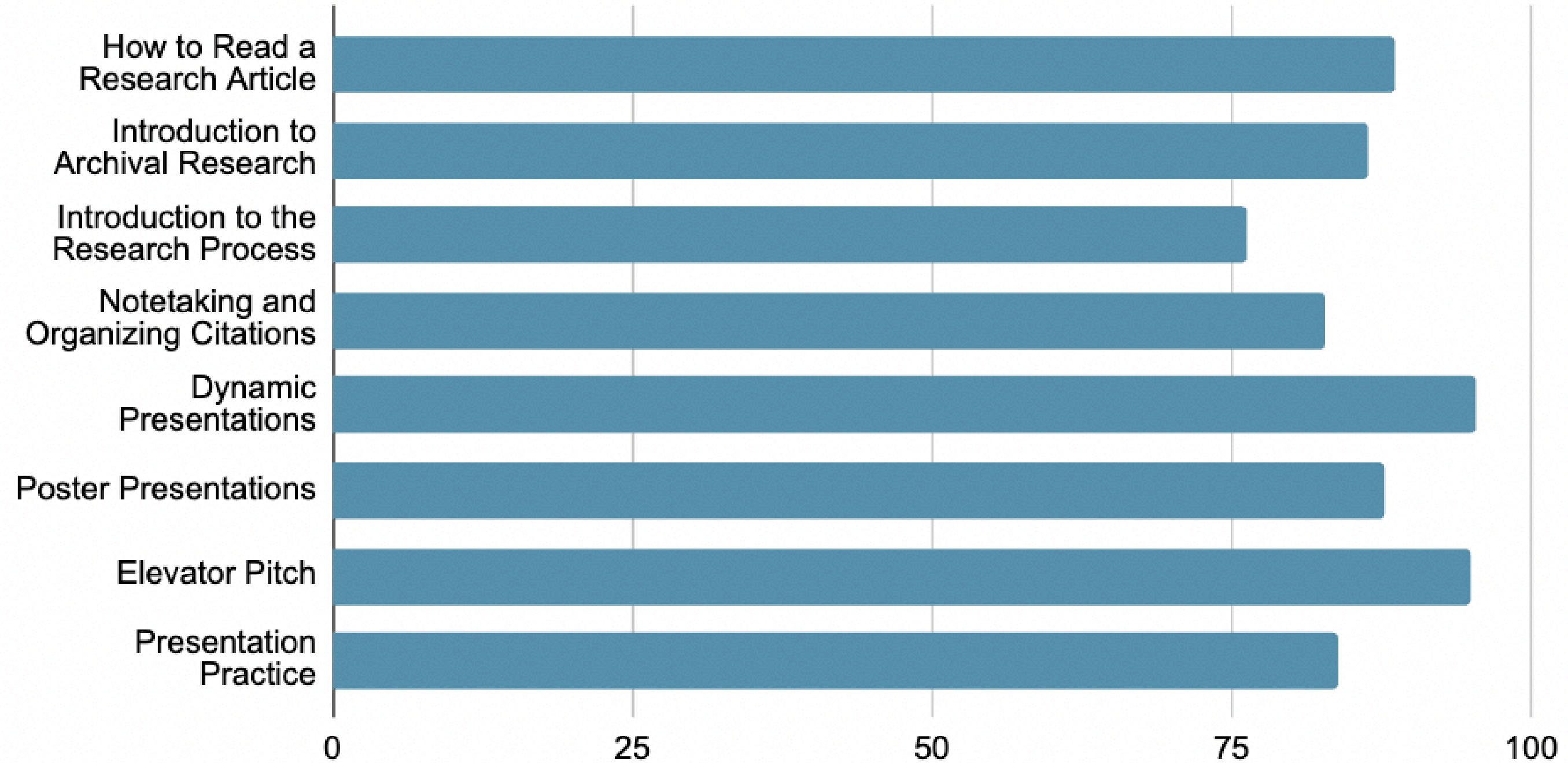
Library-Led Summer Workshops

Broader Skills

- The Elevator Pitch
- Dynamic Presentation Skills
- Poster Presentation Style
- Presentation Practice



Percentage of Students Indicating Library Workshops as Helpful or Informative





Prompt: *Tell us a story of how you've utilized library resources as a tool for success in your Summer Research Project. Also, reflect on your plans for how you might use the library to find success in the future at Oxy.*



AFTER?

Future Steps

- Hold all multidisciplinary research proposal workshops
- Provide library mentors with the same orientation materials as students
- Explain target audiences for summer skill workshops
- Find more campus partners!

Think-Pair-Share

Which of these initiatives might be successful on your campus?



Works referenced

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Thank you!



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