

Research Methods for Understanding the Library Support Needs of Academic Departments and Programs



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

25 May 2021

ACRL/NEC Joint Annual Virtual Conference

**Heather Williamson (hwillia2@providence.edu), Sarah Edmonds
(sedmond1@providence.edu), and Peter Rogers
(progers2@providence.edu)**

Phillips Memorial Library

Providence College

Providence, RI

Presentation Objectives and Organization



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

- **Objective**
 - Use our experience to provide a framework for others to do similar projects
- **Organization**
 - Background and Context
 - Methodology
 - Study Finding and Accomplishments

Background and Context



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

- **Providence College**

- 1917 - Founded
- Primarily undergraduate Catholic & Dominican institution in Providence, RI
- Historically and traditionally - a liberal arts & humanities focus

- **Providence College School of Business (PCSB)**

- 2012 – Accredited
- 2017 – The Arthur F. and Patricia Ryan
Center for Business Studies





PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

Background and Context

- **Fall 2020 – PCSB Enrollment**
 - 42% of students majored in Business
 - 44% of graduate degrees were in Business
- **What does this mean for a traditionally liberal arts college?**
- **How does the library support the business school?**
- **2018 – Ithaka S+R asked us to participate in a study, Support of Changing Practices of Teaching in Business Schools**

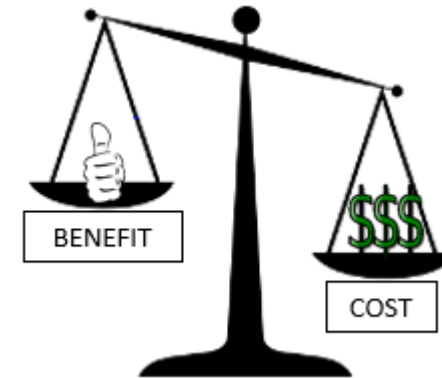


Methodology



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

- **General Observations on applied research**
 - Methodology is in service of applied goals
 - “Cost” of research < “Benefits”
- **Methodological Package from Ithaka S+R**
 - October 2018 training workshop with other project participants
- **Divergence/adaption from Ithaka S+R methodology**

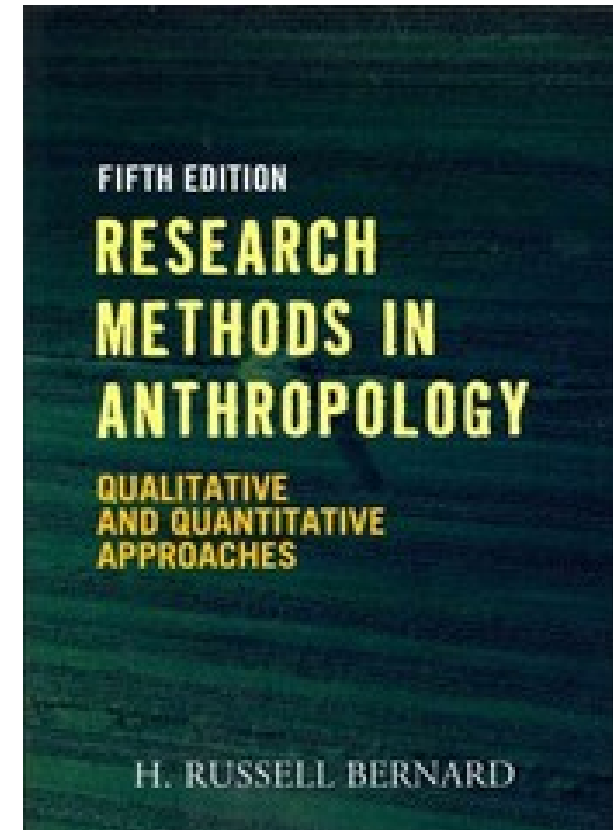




PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

Theory

- **Exploratory**
 - Not seeking rigorous scientific generalizability
- **Qualitative**
 - No need for statistical expertise or analysis
- **Inductive**
 - Grounded coding later in the project
- **Stakeholder Engagement**
 - General library relationship building



Practice



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

- **Sample Selection**
 - Deliberate and non-random
 - Snowball sampling
 - The politics of sample selection
- **Semi-Structured Interviews**
 - S+R template with institution-specific modifications
 - Recorded and transcribed by professional **HUMAN** transcribers
- **Coding and Qualitative Analysis**
 - MAXQDA
 - Grounded theory coding scheme





PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

Ethics

- **Institutional Review Board**
- **Partial anonymization of interview transcripts**
- **Complete anonymization of quotes in final report**
- **Post-project destruction of transcripts and digital recordings**
- **Tension with recent trends toward open scholarship and data sharing**



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

Methodology Conclusions

- **Institution-specific**
- **Flexible and adaptable**
- **Organic and incremental**
- **Process generates actionable information**
- **Sheer virtue of doing research**



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

Study Findings

- **Importance of Active Learning**

- Some classrooms are more conducive to active learning than others
- Provide support and latitude when faculty are experimenting with active learning

- **Faculty are interested in having a way to curate media content**
- **Marketing and Management are more likely ask for instruction sessions**
- **Investigate having librarians come to department meetings**

Study Findings



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

- **Have a librarian get some basic training in each subject area.**
- **Provide specific resources, such as online access to the WSJ and NYT.**
- **Range of opinions about the necessity of monitoring students' success.**
- **Concerns about how the business core curriculum and PC's overall core curriculum are preparing students for upper-level classes, capstone courses, internships, and the workplace**

Staying on Track

Pre-Project Curriculum Mapping



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

2023 Academic Planning Form: ACCOUNTANCY

As of 5/22/2019

1st course(s) recommended for Accountancy - ACC 203

	Fall Semester	# of Credits	Spring Semester	# of Credits	Total Year Credits
1 st Year	DWC 101 (4 credit hrs; Honors 5 credit hrs)	4	DWC 102 (4 credit hrs; Honors 5 credits hrs)	4	
	ACC 203 Financial Accounting*	3	ACC 204 Managerial Accounting (ACC 203)*	3	
	MTH 108 Math Business Analysis II****(<i>Quantitative Reasoning Core</i>)	3	ECN 102 Principles of Economics: Macro	3	
	Core (Recommended: ENG 101 or ENG 175 (<i>Intensive Writing I Proficiency</i>))	3	Core	3	
	ACC 113 Data Applications in Business (2 cr.)	2			
		15		13	28

Examples of our work available in there is interest



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

Accomplishments

- **Campus-wide digital subscriptions to *NYT* and *Wall Street Journal***
 - Important resources for active learning
 - Exploring adding the Washington Post
- **Bloomberg Terminal training**
- **Enabled the Springshare LibGuides LTI in Sakai**



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

Accomplishments

- **Continued embedding in marketing classes**
 - Expanded the content to short video tutorials that were used by students to address different parts of assignments
 - Awareness of the various disciplines of business and their varied library resources and support needs
- **MBA orientation sessions via Zoom**
 - Diversity of the PCSB student body



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

Lessons Learned

- **Identify your “allies” and “key informants”**
- **Attitude toward librarians can vary widely by institution and department.**
- **Librarians/Libraries must be very targeted and specific.**
- **There is a need for continual curriculum analysis.**
- **Create space for experimentation and failure.**
- **Expand the use of virtual spaces in addition to physical ones**

Supporting Documents



PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

Providence College Local Report

https://digitalcommons.providence.edu/lib_research/1/

Ithaka S+R Capstone Report

<https://sr.ithaka.org/publications/teaching-business/>

Core Curriculum – Academics at Providence College

<https://academics.providence.edu/core-curriculum/>