

# Citation Expectations and Realities

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## Preliminary Results

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## **Purpose**

The overall purpose of this study is to foster citation support and instruction offered at Okanagan College Library by incorporating evidence-based decision making practices. Following the concept of evidence-based librarianship, this study's findings will guide and support the development and delivery of library citation instruction, and support and provide the Library with a comprehensive and evidence-supported understanding of faculty members' and students' citation needs and expectations.

## **Goals**

To determine faculty members' expectations regarding students' abilities to incorporate appropriate and proper citations in assignments; To determine the knowledge level and amount of citation instruction provided by OC instructors; To determine students' citation knowledge and abilities; To determine faculty members' and students' expectations regarding the role of the Library in citation instruction and support.

## **Justification**

This study will contribute to the minimally researched topic of faculty members' and students' expectations regarding citation support and instruction. It will also add to the overall discourse of citation use, accuracy, instruction, and support in an academic setting. Most importantly, this study will guide Okanagan College Library's development and delivery of citation instruction and support and will provide insight into current citation practices, faculty members' and students' expectations, and students' citation abilities.

## **Methodology and Procedures**

Links to online, confidential, and voluntary surveys were e-mailed to faculty members. A stratified random sample of students in the Business, Science, Arts, Health, and Technologies departments were sent online, confidential, and voluntary student surveys. Anonymous statistics collected at OC Library reference desks at each campus library will be applied to this study as "secondary use of data", as defined by the Tri Council Policy Statement (Article 2.4).

The two online surveys (designed by the researchers and administered by the Okanagan College of Institutional Research) were administered from Monday, October 3, 2011 to Friday, October 28, 2011.

## **Survey numbers**

Faculty survey:

Surveys sent = 280

Sample size required = 84 (30% response rate)

Surveys returned= 81 (28.92% response rate)

Student survey:

Surveys sent = 1180

Sample size required = 350 (30% response rate)

Surveys bounced = 2

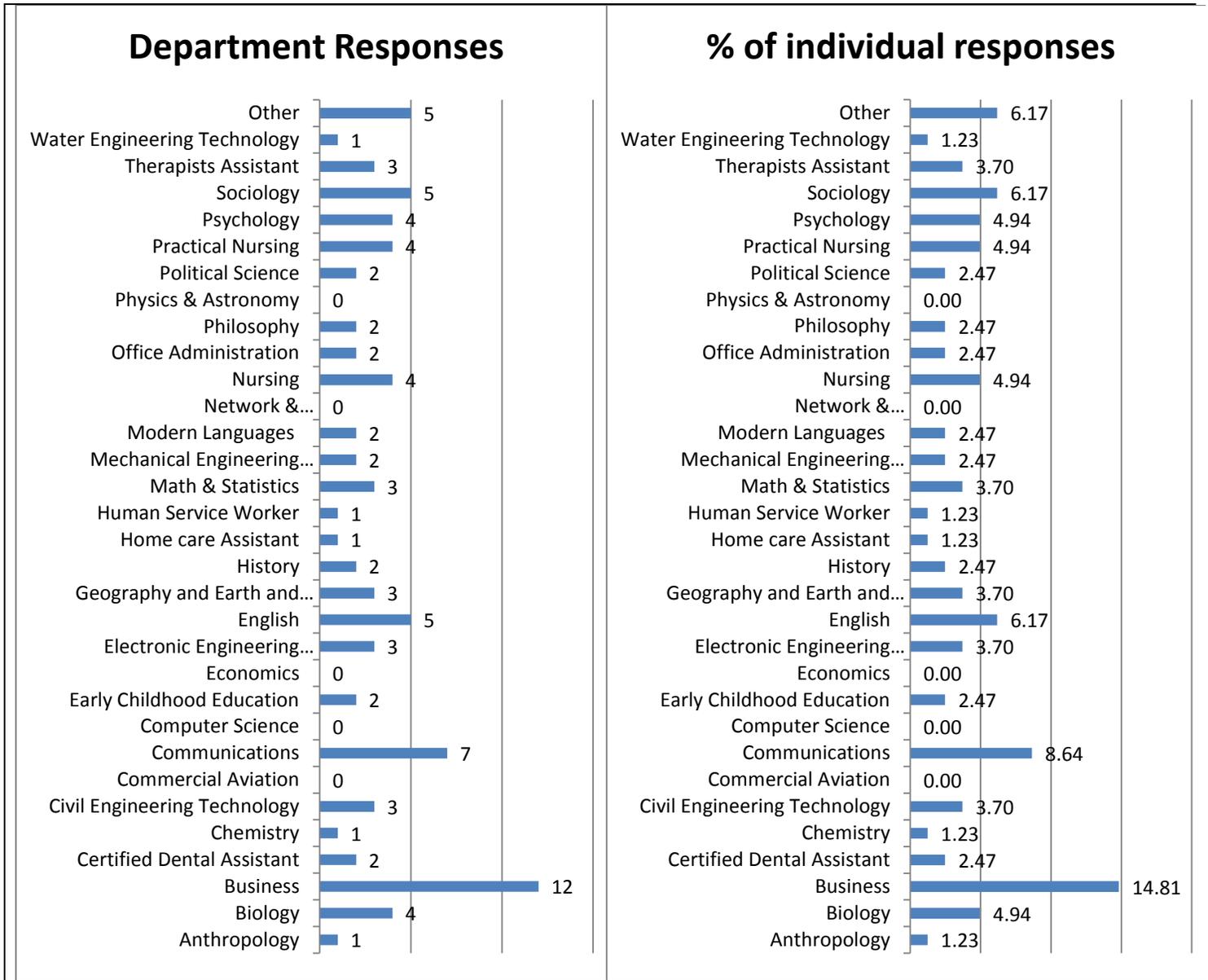
Surveys not completed = 50

Surveys returned = 191 (16.19% response rate)

# Faculty

## Who responded

81 individual faculty members = 86 department responses



## Select Findings

### Citation requirements

The majority of respondents (73%) stated that they do require students to include citations in assignments. A lower percentage (56%) stated that they require the use of a specific citation style. Of those who required the use of a specific citation style, 53.1% stated they required APA; 13.6 required MLA; 4.9% required Chicago/Turbian; and 6.2% required another style.

In regards to department requirements, 39% of respondents indicated their department had a requirement, while 15% were unsure. Department requirements roughly reflected individual faculty member requirements: APA at 34.6%; MLA at 9.9%; Chicago/Turbian at 4.9%; and other styles at 2.5%

### Citation Comprehension

Respondents' expectations of students' comprehension of the purpose of citation grew exponentially, relative to students' year of study: 16.5% of respondents had no expectations of first year students, while only 1.5% had no expectation of second year students. Respondents stated they have high to extremely high expectations of third and fourth year students. Approximately one-quarter to one-third of respondents indicated they had a mid-level expectation of students' comprehension of the purpose of citation in their first (26 %) and second (27%) year.

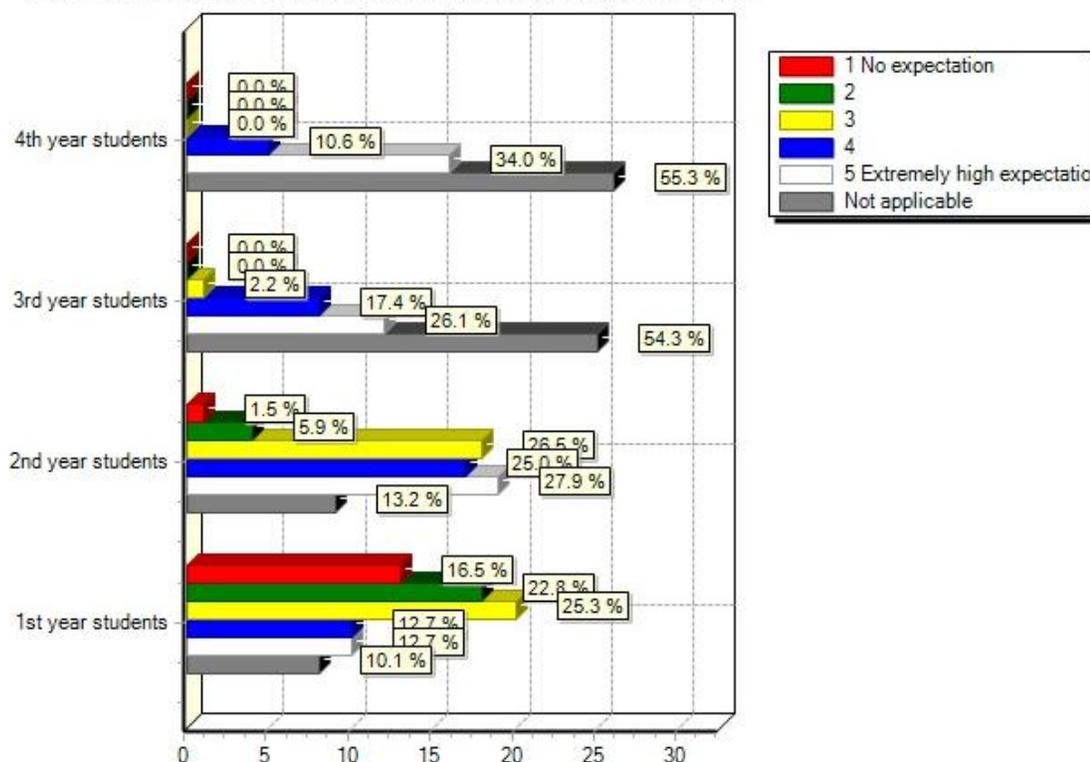
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*"My main concern is that my students recognize and credit where they get their data, information etc. I haven't put any emphasis on how they provide me with that info."*

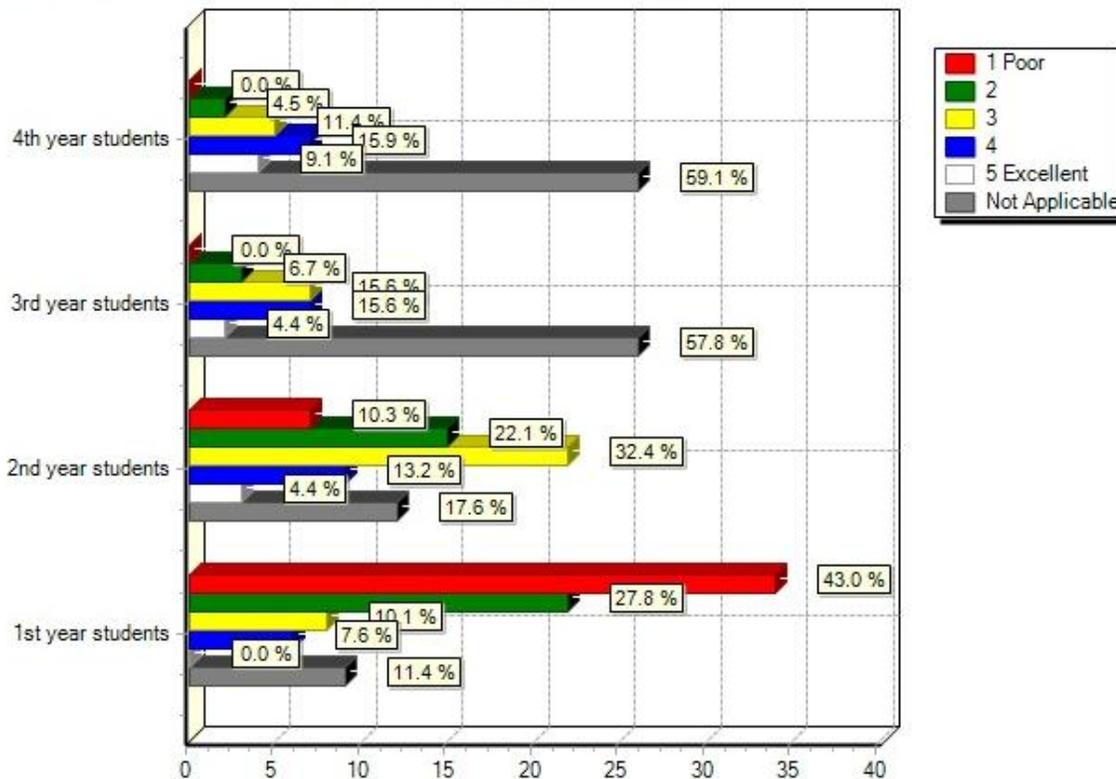
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A large number of respondents (43%) rated first-year students' comprehension of the purpose of citation as poor; however, that number significantly decreased for second-year students (10.3%).

What is your expectation of students' comprehension of the purpose of citation?



### How do you rate students' comprehension of the purpose of citation?



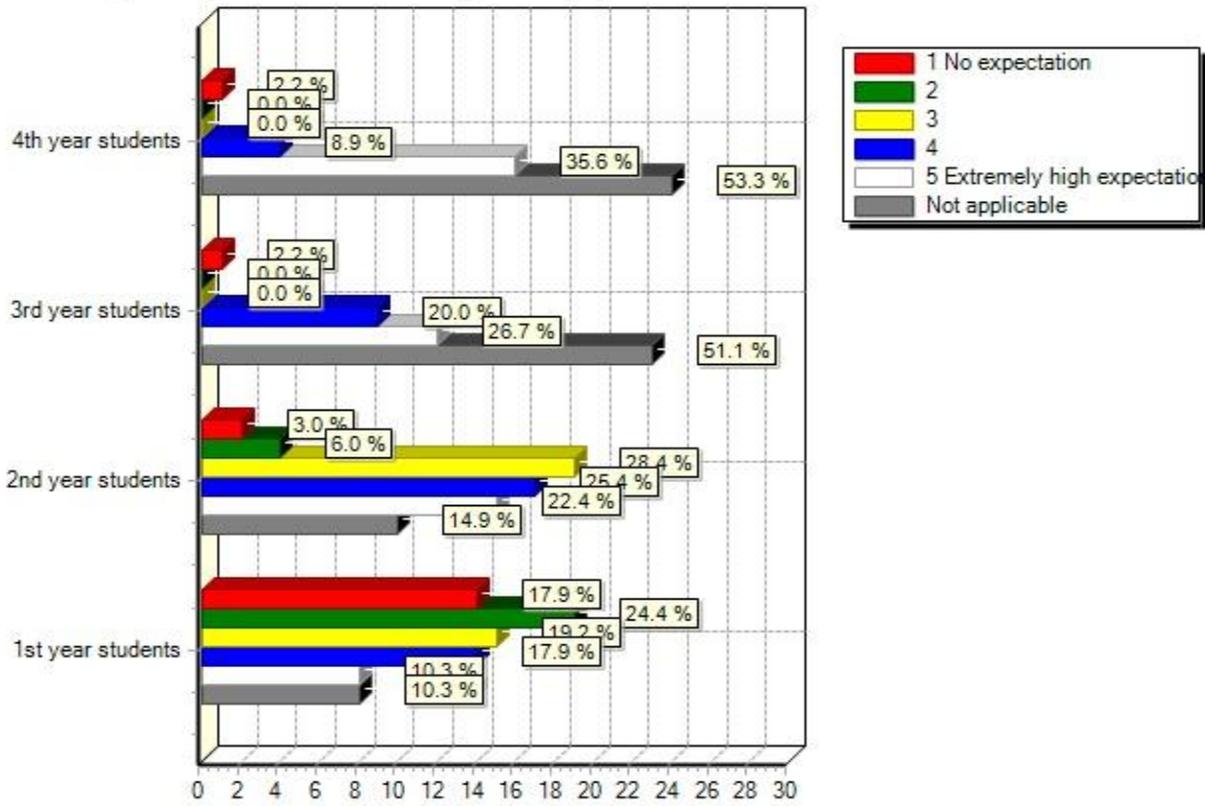
### Citation Ability

Approximately 42% of respondents had little to no expectation of first year students' ability to create proper citations. However, about 28% had high to extremely high expectations. Respondents' expectations rose for second year students, as only 3% had no expectations and 28.4% had mid-level expectations. The level of expectation for third and fourth year students was high among respondents.

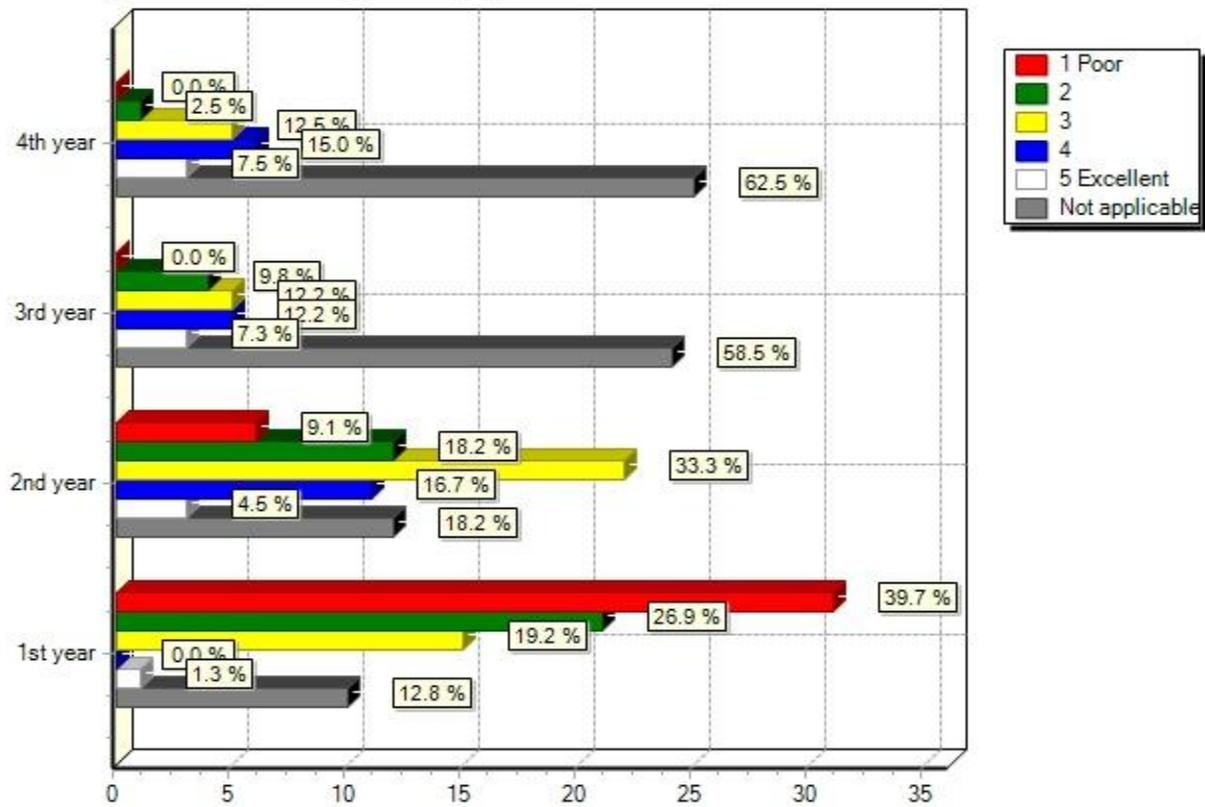
*"Overall, I think students do know the purpose of citation, but the execution is lacking."*

Respondents rated first year students' ability to create proper citations as poor (39.7%) and considerably poor (26.9%); however this ranking drops in the second year to 9.1% and 18.2%, respectively. Thirty-three percent of respondents ranked second-year students' ability as mid-level. Third and fourth-year students were ranked considerably poor to excellent.

**What is your expectation of students' ability to create proper citations?**



**How do you rate students' ability to create proper citations?**



## Library services

The majority of respondents indicated that they do suggest to students that they use style guides create by Okanagan College librarians; however, 23.5% indicated that they were not aware of the guides.

Similarly, 71.6 indicated that they suggest to students that they seek citation support from Okanagan College librarians, while 18.5% indicated that they were not aware of the support.

## Instruction

The vast majority of respondents (90%) stated that students should receive citation instruction at Okanagan College and 66.7% of respondents have provided in-class citation instruction. Slightly less than half of the respondents (45.7%) have asked a librarian to provide in-class citation instruction.

Approximately 38% of respondents thought that librarians should be the primary deliverer of citation instruction, while 30.9% felt it should be college instructors. Close to 15% of respondents felt it should be high school instructors.

## Students

### Who responded

191 Okanagan College students from the Business, Science, Arts, Health, and Technologies departments completed the survey. 241 students selected the survey link, but did not complete the survey. 2 students were sent surveys, but the e-mails were bounced-back.

## Select Findings

### Citation requirements

Over half (52.4%) of student respondents indicated it was not a requirement to use a specific citation style in high school assignments. For those who were required to use a citation style in high school, the main citation style used was MLA (19.9%), followed by APA (12.6%), and followed by Chicago or Turabian (2.1%).

The majority (81.6%) of students are required to use a specific citation style for their college assignments. Most students (59.2%) are required to use APA, 44.5% must use MLA, 12.6% of students are required to use Chicago or Turabian, and 1.6% of students have another citation-style requirement.

### Citation Comprehension

62.1% of students indicated they have not received citation instruction at another post-secondary institution.

70.7% of students indicated they have received citation instruction from a course instructor at Okanagan College. 29.3% were either unsure or did not receive citation instruction from an instructor.

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*"The library provides an excellent resource to faculty and students with citation support, thank you for this. I feel that faculty have to work together with the library to make sure students know how important citations are (faculty expectations) and how to do it properly (librarian support). This is really important for college students in our program. Keep up the great work."*

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*"I have attended several of the citation seminars given by the library; I found them extremely informative and helpful."*

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Over half of respondents (52.1%) have received citation instruction from an Okanagan College librarian, with 47.9% either unsure or have not received citation instruction from a librarian.

### *Citation Ability*

In terms of confidence levels, only 3.7% of students feel extremely comfortable creating citations. 33.5% feel confident, but not extremely confident. The largest group was 38.2% of individuals feeling moderately comfortable with their ability to create citations. 14.1% feel they have a small level of confidence, and 10.5% of students do not feel confident at all.

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*"I understand the need for citations, but I was never told to or taught how to cite anything in high school, so I had to completely learn how to do so during first year at OC. I only ever had to do a reference list, before...never citations in text."*

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In contrast, 13.4% of students feel their instructor's perception of their citation abilities is that they are extremely capable at constructing citations. The same percentage of students (36.4%) thought their instructor's perception was that they were capable, but not extremely capable, or felt they were moderately capable at constructing citations. 9.6% of students thought their instructors thought they had minimal citation capabilities, while 4.3% of students indicated their instructors hold the perception they are not able to create citations.

### *Library services*

Surprisingly, less than half (47.1%) of student respondents indicated they use one or more of the citation style guides created by Okanagan College Library. 32.5% of students surveyed were simply not aware of the guides, and 20.4% do not use the guides at all.

Only 31.9% of students seek citation support from Okanagan College librarians, while 46.1% do not. 22% of student respondents are not aware that librarians are available to provide citation support.

### *Instruction*

In terms of citation instruction, 41.9% of students indicated they did receive citation instruction in high school, while 39.8% did not. A smaller percentage (18.3%) responded that they were not sure if they received citation instruction in high school.

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*"Instructors should have one practice citation activity in their first week of classes. That should gauge student knowledge immediately and prevent unnecessary time wasted with multiple explanations."*

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When asked who students would like college citation instruction primarily delivered by, 78% indicated their course instructor, 38.7% indicated a librarian, and 7.9% indicated they would prefer a different person to deliver citation instruction.

Almost half of student respondents (49.7%) answered that they would not attend a citation instruction session outside of class time. 28.3% said they would possibly attend a session outside of class time, but were not certain, and 22% would not attend a session outside of class time.