A Survey of the Non-Users of a Technological University Library

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A SURVEY OF THE NON-USERS OF A TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

by

J. LUBANS, JR.

A sample of non-users, identified through a computer-based census of library use, were interviewed regarding their attitudes toward library use and their patterns of finding information. It was discovered that library use for the sample was strictly related to course work. As well, the non-user in the university had very likely been a frequent user of his high school or public library. Also, subjectively, it may be stated that non-use is not an aspect of low academic achievement or anti-intellectualism, rather it is based upon the individual student's need to know as prescribed by his curriculum. The study recommends that faculty make assignments that involve the use of the literature so that upon graduation the student has a justified confidence in his ability to use the literature.

1. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the major findings of this study is that the use of the library, especially from the eyes of the non-user, is strictly course-related and unless he is "force fed" in this manner, the inspiration or the inclination or the time are not there for the student to extend himself. A subjective conclusion is that the use or non-use of the library is not based on intellectual capacity or the Quality Point Average. (The non-user is not an anti-intellectual, rather, he would appear to be as intellectually well equipped as his library user classmates.) The students interviewed are intellectual, concerned and able to converse on topics not related to their academic pursuits. They state that they simply do not have the time to go very far beyond course requirements. The unfortunate side of all this is that once the student leaves academia and enters a profession his knowing how to use the literature could be very vital. What may happen is that through non-use and very likely mis-use, the tyro-user will now assume he is doing a fairly good job of finding possible solutions or applications to particular problems of scanning the current journals in his field or by some other inadequate method. Undoubtedly this accounts for some of the redundancy in research which has been estimated (New Scientist, 64, 2, (377), p338) at being in the area of 10%-20%. Millions of dollars in grants are involved. Personal case histories of duplicated research or of the mis-use and non-use of the literature are well known to most librarians. For that matter, how often is it that what we in librarianship consider at first glance as innovative frequently has been done before, as is revealed through a careful analysis of library literature? Although somewhat justifiable in the
humanities for the varying qualities of research, it has been stated that "approximately one out of twenty doctoral candidates in English and American literature is preparing a dissertation which duplicates a previous study..."(1)

To repeat, the primary result of this survey is that the non-user is just that because he has no need to use the library, and this does not seem right when ideally, if he is to be in any profession, decision making and problem solving will be requisite. The student when he leaves the university should have justified confidence in his ability to use the literature. This has already been called for in the recent National Academy of Sciences report which recommends, "the training of all students as well as faculty (throughout their college careers if feasible) in the use of the increasingly complex array of existing library and information services." (2)

Also, the unpublished results of the "Survey of Opinion of Practising Engineers," (3) show that the practising engineer is concerned with the effective use of literature. To quote the report:

"He (the practising engineer) apparently feels that library and literature use facility is an asset and an essential requirement for fully effective practice by any engineer. In school he didn't learn much of what he feels he should know about getting at engineering results reported in literature, and since then has had to do some digging in unfamiliar ground applying uncertain, uneasy methods. In school, also, he was given no inkling of the importance of engineering literature, and how to use it, how to get at it, as a needed tool in engineering practice.

If he had the decision, he would recommend that his school give emphasis to the teaching of techniques in library and literature use, and in the basic literature resources of specific engineering fields resulting in easy familiarity with such resources on the job."

That these conclusions are nearly twenty years old only strengthens the critical need for educating the university library user in the effective use of the literature in the 1970's.

As a solution for limiting non-use which again emphasises what has already been called for, it is recommended that faculty involve the use of the literature in research or problem solving assignments whenever possible. Since this will undoubtedly be met with little enthusiasm from some faculties, a further and perhaps alternate recommendation is the preparation and presentation, on either a free or credit basis, of lectures by librarians on the use of the various literature sources. Librarians need to take the offensive to show at the minimum that the economics of duplicated research is a serious matter and that the reduction of this is only to be accomplished through researchers who appreciate through the literature what has been done and what is being done in the particular area in which they are working.

Furthermore, librarians should study the library requirements of the student and concern themselves with the student's preparedness to interact with the library. For example, what can be done to improve the student's plight in not fully utilising library resources, what are the library needs of the student that are now unsatisfied, and what are the necessary steps to arrive at student library use satisfaction?
It should be noted that the attached questionnaire can be adapted to non-user studies at various academic institutions, either through the mail or by personal interview. The problem is finding the non-users. A census of library users as described later may well be the best way to discover the non-users. The New York Library Association, College and University Libraries Section, Committee on the Requirements of the Academic Library User will, through its members, endeavour to study use, mis-use and non-use of academic libraries. Some interesting reports should come from this committee's work.

2. METHODOLOGY AND BASIS FOR RESEARCH

This study has grown out of a computer-based census (4) of library use taken during 1968 at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Campus. At that time it was discovered that the incidence of non-use or only occasional use was rather high and should be studied further.

The referred-to study involving 2906 students identified 239 who specifically termed themselves as non-users and 1135 individuals who had used the library "a few times". Some of these "few times" users showed through a lack of opinion on library services and facilities that possibly a number of non-users were also to be found in this group. (Presumably "few times" use is a more acceptable statement than non-use.) Out of 16 categories, 10 of these failed to receive more than half response from the 1135 "few times" users, indicating an extensive uncertainty or unfamiliarity with such topics as reserve reading, journals, indexes and abstracts, and card catalogues. Within this 1968 study the undergraduate non-users were predominantly sophomores and freshmen, 56 and 95 respectively, with juniors 31, and seniors 9.

The following table (5) illustrates another finding about non-use according to the 1968 census, that is, as the student advances in his college career he becomes more amenable to, or is forced to make more use of the library, very likely due to the nature of the advanced courses he is taking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern of Library Use</th>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
<th>Juniors</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than once a week</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 8 times a semester</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the time of the present research 116 undergraduates who had indicated non-use in the 1968 survey were still enrolled. From these 116, a sample of 30 was drawn through random numbers. It was found that of the 30, 2 had withdrawn in the last semester and 1 failed to be interviewed. Twenty-seven interviews were conducted during a two-week period, using the structured interview questionnaire (Appendix).
As a sidelight, it may be of interest to outline the procedure of persuading the respondents to be interviewed. The first step was sending out 30 memoranda asking them to telephone or come in. None telephoned, while a total of 3 appeared. Next, in a certain degree of desperation, numerous telephone calls were made asking the individuals to come - about 21 did, most of them on the first phone call. However, a number that had promised to come by failed to do so. Some refused to come to the phone when called a second, third or fourth time. (Universities are becoming increasingly "burned over" with questionnaires.) As a last resort, 4 questionnaires were mailed out and surprisingly, 3 were returned promptly and properly filled out. Therefore, the return for the survey is 90%. This 1970 survey is predominantly made up of juniors from the School of Engineering, which in the 1968 study had the greatest number of non-users (146 out of the 239 undergraduate and graduate non-users were from the engineering curriculum).

Non-use has not been adequately treated in the literature nor has there been research in this area. Essentially, most studies of library users are based on people who happen to come into the library or are book borrowers. The studies concentrate on what the users do in the library, not how well, or for that matter for what purpose they use it, or how successful they are. Quite often the reports relate the number of books borrowed versus the student's academic standing.

The category of mis-use has also received some attention. In at least one instance (6) tests were given to users to measure their knowledge of library matters and the results are generally disheartening. Mis-use would appear to be considerable through ignorance at all levels of education, from high school to doctoral candidates.

Barkey's (7) study in 1965 summarised work that shows the non-use of libraries based on withdrawals of books, and found that the library is not used extensively by even liberal arts undergraduates. Indeed, the summary reveals that a consistently high percentage of the samples do not borrow books. But how realistic is it to say that non-use is the same as not borrowing books? The results of a recent study (8) can be extrapolated with some measure of accuracy to show that for every book borrowed, five books and/or journals are used; in addition the library is put to a number of other types of use. On that basis, a person may use the library without ever borrowing a single book. Therefore, it would seem that the equation of circulation records to library use cannot really be considered as a justifiable or accurate quantification of library use or non-use.

3. TABULATION AND COMMENTARY OF NON-USER INTERVIEWS

(It should be repeated that this research is about non-users who are about 8% of the student body. Their statements are apt to be different from those of the library's regular users and should not be construed as representing the overall validity of a technological university library's functions or status.)

Respondents to the survey arranged by school and year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mathematical mean cumulative Quality Point Average (QPA) for the 27 respondents, spread out over a normal appearing distribution of high, average or low academic achievement, is 2.5. This is slightly higher than the overall QPA for the "average" Rensselaer student which is 2.4. It is worth noting that had the total sample of 30 been available for interviewing the QPA would have been 2.4 for the sample. The QPA distribution for the 27 ranged from 1.6 to 3.4 out of a possible 4.0.

1. **QUESTION:** If you are not a graduate student, do you intend to do graduate study?

   No 22%  Yes 78%

   The implication here should be evident. In graduate school, if anywhere, it is requisite that the student become familiar with the current and past advances in at least his field. The library will very likely have to be used.

2. **QUESTION:** When you receive your degree, what profession will you enter?

   The intended professions include: electrical engineering, research and development, chemical engineering, aeronautics, computer sciences, medicine, and U.S. Navy. Ideally, all involve the need to know how to use the subject literature effectively.

3. **QUESTION:** Do you live on campus or commute?

   All live on campus, that is, in fraternities or apartments on nearby streets.

4. **QUESTION:** Do you use other college libraries in this area?

   No 67%  Yes 33%

5. **QUESTION:** Why do you use another library?

   Those that have used another library have done so for "incidental" use only. The following are comments made by the students.

   **COMMENTS:**
   
   "Used SUNYA, when doing research in sociology...more books there."
   "Records of Shakespeare's plays are at Russell Sage...better environment...girls"
   "Have used Hudson Valley Community College Library twice - textbook wasn't in RPI Library, but was in Hudson Valley - needed for open book test."
   "Russell Sage Library - a few times - more convenient - better to study."

6. **QUESTION:** Here at RPI do you use a department's library?

   No 81%  Yes 19%

   There are eleven departmental libraries on campus plus the School of Architecture Library. The respondents indicated very light usage of these "staff" collections.

   **COMMENTS:**
   
   "It is my first year to use it"
   "Rarely use it"
   "Occasionally will use them, particularly the Architecture Library"
7. **QUESTION:** Do you use a professor's personal library?  
No 78%  Yes 22%  

**COMMENTS:**  
"Once or twice"  
"Occasionally"  
"On occasion, in anthropology"  

8. **QUESTION:** Did your high school have a library?  
No 0%  Yes 100%  
If yes, did you use the high school library more than you use the RPI Library?  
No 37%  Yes 63%  

**COMMENTS:**  
"More need to use the high school library...at Rensselaer, through first three years at least, no need"  
"I was a library assistant in high school."  
"About the same use for me."  
"Had to use it to get good grades"  
"I was more library-oriented then"  
"Needed to write papers...it was a big library...more free time to read"  
"Used Williams College Library...also more when in high school...encouraged to use the college library."  
"In high school it was a requirement...I had more free time...I could read more on my own time...at Rensselaer, courses do not require library use."  

9. **QUESTION:** Did you use the public library in your community?  
No 22%  Yes 78%  
If yes, did you use the public library more than you use the RPI Library?  
No 24%  Yes 76%  
Was any library use instruction given you in the public library?  
No 95%  Yes 5%  

**COMMENTS:**  
"I did more reading for enjoyment"  
"I read fiction (had time to)...now I buy paperbacks"  
"I used public library mainly to get books for pleasure...something I haven't done since I've been at RPI"  
"I needed to use the library...or sometimes went there to kill time by going in and browsing"  
"Had greater need to use the library"  
"Used it for high school assignments, for example, in senior year, for two weeks, every day was spent in public library on research"  
"Public library was better organized...simpler to find things...also use of it was course-related"  
"In high school we were required to do papers"  
"I used the public library more than RPI Library...simply by using it a few times"  
"Papers were due...had to use the public library"  
"Would go to public library...read odds and ends about science and other things of interest"  
"Would use public library for pleasure reading...I have no time or inclination for such at RPI"  

Quite clearly from the foregoing answers and comments it can be said that the present "non-users" were users, often frequent users of either the public or secondary school libraries, and that almost all have been given a basic orientation to the use of the library.
10. **QUESTION:** If you have ever had a formal introduction to the use of a library, how effective did you think it was?

- Effective 56%
- Ineffective 15%
- Not relative 22%
- Depend on it now 7%

**COMMENTS:**

- "Not well organized - teachers were "forced" to provide library use instruction - Librarian not too friendly"
- "I already knew...started using library in fifth grade"
- "It did the job...I learned where to find anything"
- "Very effective, but not now"
- "Not effective, because I got lost in larger libraries"
- "Library use instruction not effective in sophomore or junior year but freshman one was good and I depend on it now"
- "So-so...forgotten most of it"
- "Ineffective in English class...asked help from librarian"
- "I had library use instruction in sixth grade and depend on it now"

11. **QUESTION:** Should the RPI Library offer instruction in the use of the Library? No 52% Yes 48%

**COMMENTS:**

- "No, not necessary - most have already had it - they can always ask at the desk, no sense of bringing everyone in!"
- "No, most have already had it...if not, should be able to figure it out on own"
- "No, not worth it because not needed (only for graduate work). Often freshmen realise they don't need to use the library...then they have no desire to learn library use"
- "Yes, and I would take it...probably be an easy course"
- "No, because no interest would be shown."
- "The library pamphlet is as effective as anything; if you press for library use instruction, you'll find apathy."
- "Yes, I feel a lack in the ability to use the library"
- "No, if there is any need, ask the librarian"
- "Yes, but less on instruction...rather more on the resources..."
- "Yes, should be available on a volunteer basis"
- "No, the information desk should serve the demand, but possibly offer it as a night session"

11a. If it were for credit as on optional course, would you take it? No 80% Yes 20%

11b. What year in a student's life at Rensselaer would you recommend our giving such a course?

- Freshman 79%
- Sophomore 4%
- Junior 13%
- Senior __
- Graduate ___
- Anytime 4%

**COMMENTS:**

- "Yes, if I had the time I would take it"
- "The junior year is when the student is just starting to get more specific courses...the classes split in the junior year...might need for the respective courses"
- "Yes, I would take the course...would help in other courses to know how to find information."
- "No need to use the library, but might be worthwhile for the few that do use it; not worthwhile for the majority"
"Not take...if given on free time would be more helpful"
"During Sophomore year there is a need for books from the outside."
"Yes, the library is a big place...but only if there is a need"
"In junior year - this is the first time for me to use the library. I have
to do a term paper on the North American Indians."
"No, a pamphlet is okay, and did get one in freshman year...when someone has
to use it they can figure it out for themselves."
"No, because people would think the instruction not to be relevant. I would
not myself have the time to take it...rather it would help more other students
outside of the Engineering curriculum."
"Yes, during orientation week, a half-hour tour of the library. I would not
take the course for credit because of course overload."
"No, most students should already know how to use the library."
"Not a bad idea, but I wouldn't take it."

12. QUESTION: Do you know any librarians? Very briefly, what is your general
opinion of them?  
Helpful but not capable 14%. Helpful and effective 57%. 
Professionals doing a professional job 17%. Do not know any 12%. 

COMMENTS:
"Most librarians I knew from high school were former teachers of mine that
assumed a less demanding job, but were still involved in education."
"She didn't get along with students"
"Helpful, but not professionals...just women who came in to help out in the
library."
"Helpful, but not capable, in Catholic high school - emphasis on religious
books... Library was only good on religious topics."
"High school library attendants were not very friendly."
"In high school just monitors, discipline enforcers...more helpful in public
library" 

13. QUESTION: If you were assigned the job of developing a new process or a new
procedure, would you be apt to consult the literature as to what had already
been done? No 0% Yes 100%. 
13a. Would you know how to go about this? No 56% Yes 44% 
13b. Whom would you ask for guidance to find already-available information? 

Faculty 39%  12 times first 
Classmates 12%  3 times first 
Librarian 31%  never first, 9 times second 
Researchers in that field 18% 

The respondents who answered yes to knowing how to go about consulting the
literature were not always fully confident they would know just how to go
about doing it. For example:

COMMENTS:
"Yes, I have a vague idea of how to."
"Yes, basically, I think I could."
"I would ask either faculty or librarian...if general, librarian, if technical,
faculty."
"Do not know now, - but maybe will with Processes course in Chemical Engineering."
"Yes, I would approach it through general works and then periodicals."
14. QUESTION: In your class work, have you had to use recorded information (books and magazines) to fulfill assignments? No 50% Yes 50%

COMMENT:
"Rensselaer is not humanistic. I would go to the library for a reference but one book is enough for my purposes in applied math."

15. QUESTION: Do you yourself have a collection of books, which you might refer to as your personal library? No 4% Yes 96%

The size of these personal libraries range from 15 to 700 volumes...with a median of about 40-50.

16. QUESTION: What do you think your professors, in general, think about using the Library?

14% Recommend it 11% Have reserve books there 8% Make assignments to use it 46% Are neutral or non-committal 16% Do not place too much value on it 5% Are opposed to it.

COMMENTS:
"Sociology professor recommends it highly. Others do not use it very much, not even the humanities professors. Most theory comes out of textbooks."
"They don't say anything about the use of the library."
"Some make reference to library...one in humanities does not think too much of it."
"Do not place too much emphasis on it."
"Professors will make reference to books, but few students will go to look these up."
"The faculty do not really stress the library in classes."
"Their general opinion is that the library is deficient."
"They make suggested readings and would be happy if you did read them, but do not really expect you to follow up."
"In general, if you go on the times it is mentioned, the faculty are not too hot on it."
"From time to time a professor will mention a reference, but generally understands that it will not be looked up. It's a matter of time...they do it to be cool."
"May be opposed to because they want us to do work independently...i.e., not from a book in the library. For example, the 7-page solution to an assigned problem was found by students in a library book. The professor had used it as a "source" for the problem."

17. QUESTION: Please give me your opinion of this quote, "The library is the heart of the university". Do you regard it as: 2% true 4% false 46% not applicable to RPI 40% true on some campuses 8% a nice ideal but unrealistic.

COMMENTS:
"The Library is just not good enough to be the heart of RPI."
"Almost all assignments at RPI can be done without outside references. The Library is not essential. More outside assignments should be given in every course to make the Library more important."
"It is idealistic to think that only the Library is necessary. At least this is so in the United States. Faculty are the main part of the university."
"Certainly not here...the professors are the heart of the university."
"Would be true if a library on liberal arts campus...there they need various sources for comparison...We buy all ours at the bookstore."
"Not true at RPI because it is not a university; never claimed to be a liberal arts university. If it were for the liberal arts, we would need a bigger and better library."

"The Library should be the heart of the university." (This statement was made after the campus-wide rally of over half the student body around the "Requisites for a Technological University", Requisite 1 being a new Library building with considerable increase in resources.)

18. QUESTION: What do you think about this statement made by a student, "The Library is a tool hall for nerds"?

3% True 38% False 59% "nerds" are not the only users

COMMENTS:
"Can't say...don't know any nerds that use the Library. Nerds go to the tool hall in Amos Eaton Building."
"Library is used by people who want to use it. There are just as many nerds on campus who don't use the Library as there are non-nerds who don't use it."
"No comment."

(Definitions: "Tool hall" is a place for study...extended study. "Nerd" is a person who enjoys "lucubrating" and gets good grades, thereby making it more difficult for the non-nerd to keep up with the class test scores. "Tool or die" must study but does not like it.)

19. QUESTION: Would you term some of your personal reading recreational?
7% No 93% Yes.

COMMENTS:
"A lot."
"During vacations."
"Yes, but seldom."
"I have read very few books since being here at RPI."

20. QUESTION: When did you last read a book? (How long ago in weeks?)
Most had read a book within the last two months.

21. QUESTION: Are you reading anything now besides assigned material?
74% No 26% Yes.

22. QUESTION: Do you, when you read, read books all the way through, cover to cover?
31% No 69% Yes.

23. QUESTION: How would you term your pattern of use of the Rensselaer Library? (Note that two years ago all the respondents had indicated non-use of the library. This bears out the claim that as the student progresses in his academic life he is apt to make use of the library.)

22% more than once a week 11% more than eight times a semester
22% few times a semester 45% very seldom, or never

23a. If you checked either of the last two above, what in your opinion is the reason? 89% no need 11% poor collection
COMMENTS:

"Now I use it frequently, in previous semesters almost never...have found it a good place to study and get books that help explain material covered in class."
"Good for technical material but no curriculum need. Library is poor in recreational material."
"No need before now" (junior, second semester)
"Nothing brings you to library...no habit...no assignments made...no pressure on part of faculty."
"Very seldom or never in first two years...now I come in for journals and newspapers and technical works...no need before."
"Use now to find additional information for courses."
"Most courses have texts with all the information in them. Once you know Ohm's law, you don't need to look it up. The main difference between liberal arts and the sciences - no differences to Ohm's law, while criticism on topics in liberal arts is varied..."
"Increase in use because I switched to management. More required reading and more free time."
"First started reading in lab courses and extra books as needed in courses."
"Use now because of term papers since sophmore year."
"Go to fraternity brothers for information on courses...no need for library."
"No need because of courses being taken."
"Use now for purposes of study."
"No need - no assignments"

REFERENCES


(3) 'Sponsored by the American Society for Engineering Education, Engineering School Libraries Committee, as reported by Edward A. Chapman in his "Report on American Society for Engineering Education Engineering Literature Project," June, 1953.'


DISCUSSION

R. A. WALL: May I ask if Mr. Lubans regards the non-user percentage in his library as an irreducible minimum, or can it be lowered further? On another point, one of the last comments on the questionnaire (pJ-ll) was 'Go to frat brothers for information on courses ... no need for the library'. Is there a possible comparison here with Professor Allen's 'gatekeeper' function (1)?

J. LUBANS: We think that something can be done to bring non-users into the library if work is set which requires the use of our stock. With regard to the second point the comparison may well be valid. However the fraternity network is quite a powerful and well-established means of communication in American institutions.

D. J. HILLMAN: The fraternities are very highly organised and maintain data on exams and required study so that students can revise efficiently. They also issue confidential guides, rating both courses and instructors.

A. E. HOWARTH: Several of the people questioned in this survey mentioned the lack of recreational reading in the Rensselaer library. Did they imply that this type of reading should be provided, and, in Mr. Lubans' opinion, would such provision tempt non-users into the library?

J. LUBANS: Recreational reading, such as science fiction etc., is provided but the main obstacle seems to be that lack of time and the attraction of other pursuits prevent people doing more reading.

J. S. DAVEY: Surely the non-user must have books for his course! If he does not come to the library he must then buy the essential course books.

J. LUBANS: The students most certainly rely on textbooks - these and the slide rule are their bibles! They do not, however, find a need for additional reading in the library.

D. J. HILLMAN: Why does Mr. Lubans expect undergraduates to use the library at all? A well-written text book for engineering students will cover most needs for course work (2).

J. LUBANS: We feel that there is a need to inculcate library habits early so that they are established for postgraduate needs.

I.W.G. MARTIN: Mr. Lubans has said (pJ-1) that "subjectively, it may be stated that non-use is not an aspect of low academic achievement or anti-intellectualism". Some of the statements quoted definitely seem to have an anti-intellectual tone: are these perhaps only a small proportion of total sample, or meant as a joke (as in the question about 'nerds')? I would also be interested in the evidence about the academic achievement of the non-users. Should there, perhaps be another study to establish correlation between 'non-use' and final academic results?

J. LUBANS: I think that we are justified in accepting the Q.P.A. of the students interviewed as evidence of their academic ability which, on this basis, was very slightly above average. With regard to anti-intellectualism I found that they showed a high standard of knowledge of their subjects (not related to their courses) and a high degree of concern over political and social problems generally.
R.W.P. Wyatt: If it is true that university life discourages reading, does Mr. Lubans think that there is a different pattern during vacations and when students have left College? Do students drop the reading habit more or less than the rest of their age group?

J. Lubans: Many of our students look forward to doing some reading during the vacations. The fall off after leaving the University is no different from the general fall off in reading interests and many radical students say that they do not read at all! Someone has stated that U.S. college graduates read, on the average, one book a year.

R.W.P. Wyatt: Can Mr. Lubans say anything about the personal libraries of the students.

J. Lubans: At Rensselaer we award a personal library prize. We have found that students possess from 40-700 books.

REFERENCES


(2) In his closing remarks the Chairman, Dr. F. Taft, pointed out that the engineering curriculum had been more or less static between 1919 and 1939, but there had been many changes in recent times. - Ed.
APPENDIX

RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

LIBRARY USE - STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Introductory Statement to Respondent:

This interview-survey is being done with the approval of the RPI Psychology Department on the use of the Rensselaer Library - the main Library in the Chapel Building. Essentially, the survey is to try to work out recommendations on ways the Library can be more useful to Rensselaer students. It is meant to identify your library experiences and attitudes as they may relate to the RPI Library and to libraries in general.

Your responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not appear in the report of findings or in any other discussion based on this interview.

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   a. Your class is Fr. So. Jr. Sr. Grad. QPA:

2. If you are not a graduate student, do you intend to do graduate study?
   No____ Yes____

3. When you receive your degree, what profession will you enter?

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4. Do you live on campus?____ or commute?____

5. Do you use other college libraries in this area?
   No____ Yes____
   If yes, which of these do you use?
   ___ SUNY, Albany
   ___ N.Y.State Library
   ___ Union College
   ___ Siena
   ___ Russell Sage
   ___ Albany Medical
   ___ Hudson Valley
   ___ Other

Why do you use another library?
   ___ Closer
   ___ RPI Library unsatisfactory... If so, explore:
   ___ Other reason

J-14
6. Here at RPI do you use a department's library?
   No_____ Yes_____ 

7. Do you use a professor's personal library?
   No_____ Yes_____ 

8a. Did your high school have a library?
   No_____ Yes_____ 
   If yes, did you use the high school library more than you use the RPI Library?
   No_____ Yes_____ 
   Was there an introduction to the use of the high school library given you?
   No_____ Yes_____ 

8b. Did you use the public library in your community?
   No_____ Yes_____ 
   If yes, did you use the public library more than you use the RPI library?
   No_____ Yes_____ . If yes, please explore __________________________ 
   Was any library-use-instruction given you in the public library?
   No_____ Yes_____ 

9. If you have ever had a formal introduction to the use of a library (instruction in library use), where and when was it given and how effective did you think it was?
   Where ____________________________ 
   When ____________________________ 
   ____ Effective ) (explore) ________________________ 
   ____ Ineffective ) ____________________________ 
   ____ Not relative 

10. Should the RPI Library offer instruction in the use of the Library?
    No_____ Yes_____ 
    a. If it were for credit as an optional course, would you take it?
       ____ NO _____ Yes
       Why Yes? ____________________________________________ 

J-15
10. b. What year in a student's life at Rensselaer would you recommend
giving such a course?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Senior</td>
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<td>Graduate</td>
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11. Do you know any librarians? Very briefly, what is your general opinion
of them? Any experiences with librarians worth relating?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helpful but not capable</td>
<td>Help</td>
<td>Explore</td>
<td>Stumbling blocks to knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help</td>
<td>effective</td>
<td>Professionals doing a professional job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals doing a professional job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you know any</td>
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Experiences: ______________________

12. If you were assigned the job of developing a new process or a new procedure,
would you be apt to consult the literature as to what had already been done?

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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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If yes, would you know how to go about this?

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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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Whom would you ask for guidance to find already-available information?

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<tr>
<td>faculty</td>
<td>classmates</td>
<td>librarian</td>
<td>researchers in that field</td>
<td>other (explore)</td>
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13. In your class work, have you had to use recorded information (books and
magazines) to fulfill assignments?

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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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If yes, where, in general, and from whom did you get the information?

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<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td>From whom?</td>
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14. Do you yourself have a collection of books which you might refer to as your
personal library?

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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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If yes, about how many books?

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<td>Any magazines or journals?</td>
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</table>
15. What do you think your professors, in general, think about using the Library?

- Recommend it highly
- Have Reserve Books there
- Make assignments to use it
- Are neutral or non-committal
- Do not place too much value on it)

Please explore: ________________

16. Please give me your opinion of this quote, "The library is the heart of the university." Do you regard it as:

- true
- false - explore
- not applicable to RPI - explore
- True on some campuses
- a nice ideal, but unrealistic

17. What do you think about this statement made by a student, "The library is a tool hall for nerds"?

- true - explore
- false
- "nerds" are not the only users

18. Would you term some of your personal reading recreational?

- No
- Yes

19. When did you last read a book? (how long ago in weeks?)

20. Are you reading anything now besides assigned material?

No ______ Yes _____
If yes, what? _______________________

21. Do you when you read, read books all the way through, cover to cover?

No ______ Yes _____
Please explain No:
____ only after certain information
____ not enough time
____ other reasons ____________________
22. How would you term your pattern-of-use of the Rensselaer Library?

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>more than once a week</td>
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<tr>
<td>more than 8 times a semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>few times a semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>very seldom, or never</td>
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If either of first two above, in what class did you begin to use the Rensselaer Library:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Why?</th>
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<td>(freshman, soph., Jr., Sr., graduated?)</td>
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23a. If either of the last two above, what in your opinion is the reason?

- no need
- poor collection
- use another library (on campus)
- use another library (off campus)
- hate to use the place (explore)
- other (explore)