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# Building bridges, building fluencies

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# Building Connections, Building Fluencies @ McMaster

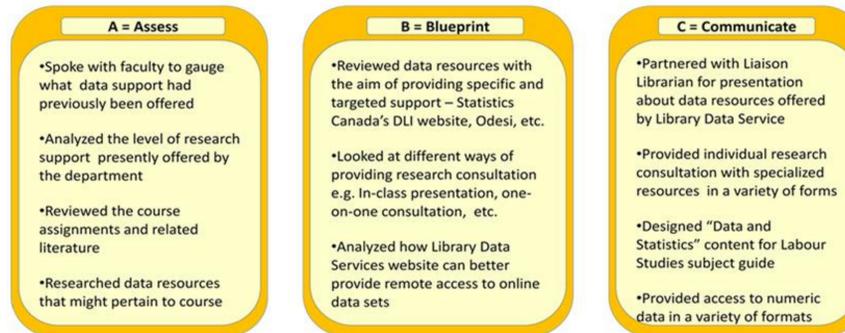
Vivek Jadon, Data Specialist & Susan Shepley, Liaison Librarian

## Abstract

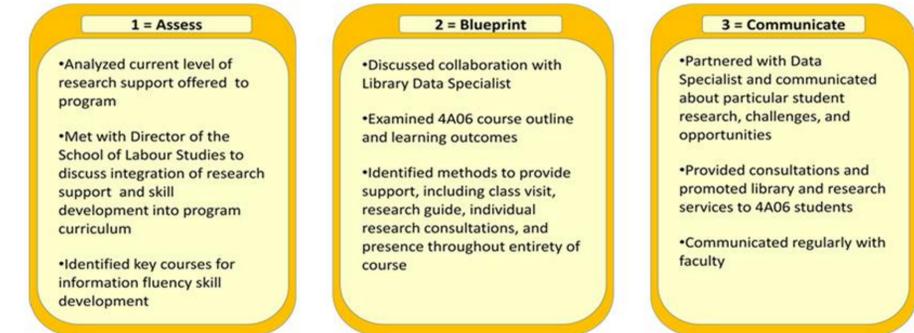
During the 2008 academic year, a class of upper-year undergraduate students in the School of Labour Studies at McMaster University began approaching the research help desk with high-level research questions; some could be answered with the help of "traditional" resources and others through highly specialized data sets. It became apparent that the library's data specialist and the liaison librarian to Labour Studies were also receiving questions from these students by way of referrals from research help staff, recommendations from faculty, and through student word-of-mouth. Nearly every student needed referral to expert help.

This poster discusses how this particular project aims to utilize and build upon specific fluencies for the 4th year Labour Studies course, Research and Field Experience. In this project, the data specialist and the liaison librarian work closely together and draw upon their particular areas of expertise .

### Numerical Research Support (Delivering 1, 2, 3 as easy as A, B, C) Role of the Data Specialist



### Information Fluency Research Support (Delivering A, B, C as easy as 1, 2, 3) Role of the Liaison Librarian



“Both Susan and Vivek have been useful assets to my research in both data and information gathering for my thesis, my MRP, as well as general statistical information for class-related data assignments...They provided me with thorough information and paid specific attention to the [level of] detail my research required .

- LS 4A06 Student”

**Information Fluency:** the ability to gather, evaluate, and use information in ethical and legal ways. Information fluency encompasses and integrates three important skills: information literacy, technology literacy, and critical thinking. (UCF Information Fluency Initiative)

**Numeracy:** requires understanding of the number system, a repertoire of mathematical techniques, and an inclination and ability to solve quantitative and spatial problems in a range of contexts. Numeracy also demands understanding of the ways in which data are gathered by counting and measuring, and presented in graphs, diagrams, charts and tables. (Department of Education and Skills UK)

## Ongoing Successes

- Collaboration fills existing need and supports high-level research and use of specialized resources
- Allows contact with entire class and builds awareness of library and research tools and support
- Encourages communication between library departments and with faculty
- Has led to inroads with other similar courses

## Ongoing Challenges

- Assessment tool(s) needed to measure success of initiative and how well fluencies are being met
- Need to strengthen formal ongoing communication
- Need to gather formal feedback from faculty
- Not mandatory for students to meet with librarian or data specialist

## Plans for the future

- Develop and implement formal assessment tool
- Suggest required research consultations for each student
- Include final research papers in McMaster's IR
- Build more formal research guides and tools for course



## Labour Studies 4A06 Course Objectives

- to provide students with the opportunity to do either 1) original field work and to develop qualitative and quantitative research skills, or 2) do an in-depth, analytical thesis.
- to develop an analytically rigorous research project.