

Identifying Research Questions



This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Research Questions

Investigate linkages between

1. outcomes that are beneficial/desirable to library users/stakeholders

and

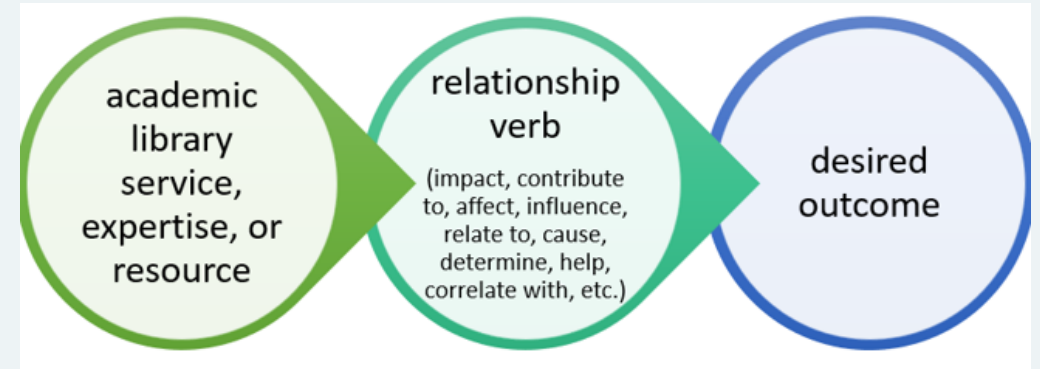
2. library services, resources, or space offerings (current or anticipated).



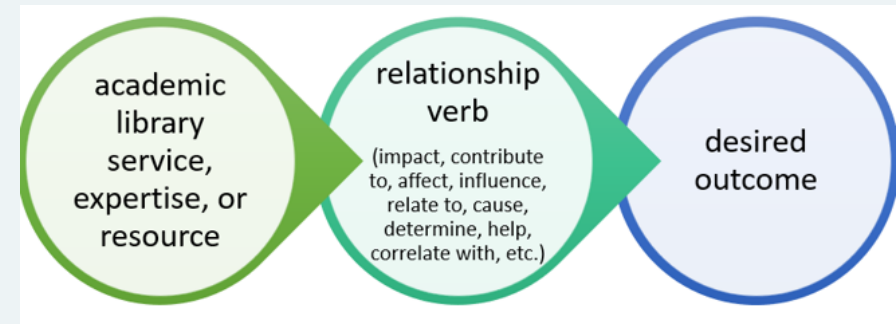
Research Question Structures

Common components:

- the service, resource, or facility the library provides
- a verb showing relationship (e.g., contribute, impact, affect, influence, relate, cause, determine)
- an area of impact (e.g., learning, productivity, research, accessibility, belonging, equity)

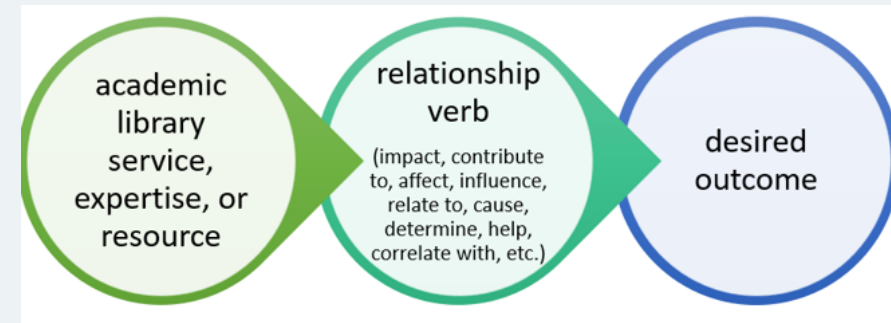


Reading & Resources



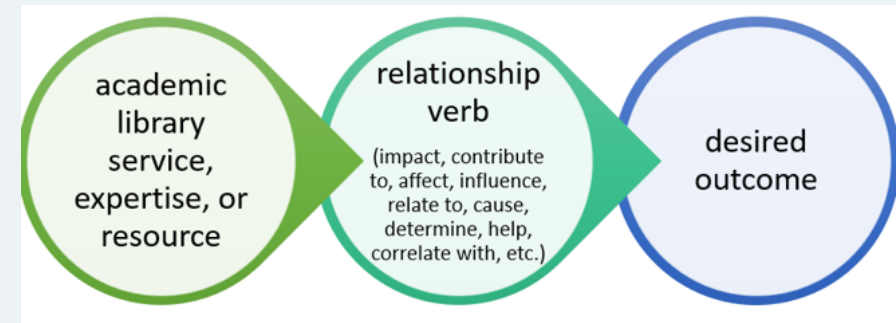
- Does library coordination of digital reading lists and course packs **influence** the diversity or quality of curricular choices of faculty members?
- In what ways does provision of reserve readings or e-textbooks **help** first year students be retained to sophomore year?
- Do “free” library-provided course resources **influence** students’ perception of college affordability?
- Does a career or employment collection **impact** student employment rates after graduation?
- Do campus “one read” programs **increase** student feelings of belonging?
- To what extent does a popular fiction collection **ensure** undergraduates feel welcome in the library?

Instruction



- To what extent does information literacy instruction **impact** achievement of learning outcomes sought by employers?
- Is increased use of library resources **correlated with** student employment at six months post-graduation?
- Does supplying students with the company profiles provided by common business databases **affect** the hiring outcome of on-campus internship interviews?
- How does the library makerspace **affect** student entrepreneurship?

Reference



- Do reference services **contribute to** increased student learning?
- Does student use of virtual reference service **impact** GPA at graduation?
- Are students who attend reference consultations **more likely to earn** higher course grades?

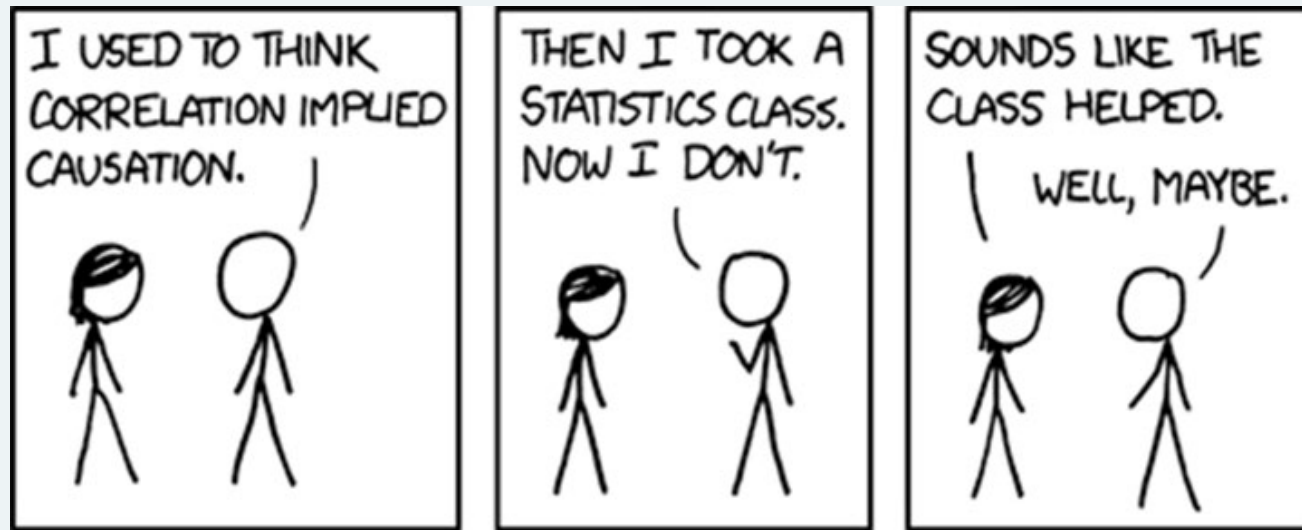
Mapping Potential Impact

	Library Service, Resource, or Space #1	Library Service, Resource, or Space #2	Library Service, Resource, or Space #3	Library Service, Resource, or Space #4
Intended Outcome #1	X			X
Intended Outcome #2		X		
Intended Outcome #3			X	

How to Write Impact Research Questions

Library Service, Resource, or Space	Relationship Verb (Impact, Contribute to, Affect, Influence, Relate to, Cause, Determine, Help)	Intended Outcome
Does [library service, resource, or space]	Relationship Verb	Outcome
In what ways does [library service, resource, or space]	Relationship Verb	Outcome
To what extent does [library service, resource, or space]	Relationship Verb	Outcome
How does [library service, resource, or space]	Relationship Verb	Outcome
In what ways does the physical and digital/virtual reference desk	contribute to	improved GPA scores at graduation?
To what extent does information literacy instruction	impact	achievement of learning outcomes sought by employers?
Does interlibrary loan	help	faculty create more successful grant proposals?

Correlation & Causation



Questions to Ask about Research Questions

- Is the question worth answering? Why? What is the purpose of answering it?
- What evidence, data, or other information will help answer the question? How can you obtain/access that information?
- What do other studies that answer this question include or look like?
- What research methods would yield the evidence, data, or other information you need? What are the advantage and disadvantages of each research method you are considering? Might multiple methods be used in tandem?
- What user groups, partners, collaborators, or stakeholders should be involved?
- What do you expect to result from this assessment? Who will need or want to know about the results? How do expect them to act on the results?

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