

ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCES OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS EMBEDDED IN ONLINE COURSES

QQML 2010

Starr Hoffman, May 25 – 28, 2010
Chania, Crete, Greece

Purpose

Study academic librarians embedded in online courses.

- determine common practices
 - activities
 - promotion methods
- assess various experiences
 - time management
 - number of people involved
 - common vs. un-common experiences

Definitions

- **embedded librarian**

a librarian that participates in a particular online course by logging into the course management system (CMS)

- **blended course**

a course that holds key portions online and face-to-face; sometimes called a “hybrid course”

- **course with an online component**

a course that is held face-to-face, but where key resources or extra content is presented online (for instance, a course webpage linked to optional readings)

- **CMS (or LMS)**

Course Management System (or Learning Management System): software application designed for delivering online courses; Blackboard is a common example

Methodology

- six participants (academic librarians)
- several different institutional types
- geographically dispersed
- gathered information in several ways:
 - email discussions
 - observation of participants' library websites
 - online survey
 - phone interviews

Institution 1

- public
- 22,516 FTE students
- Carnegie Class: Master's Colleges & Universities
- Tennessee

- began in 2004
- 35 sections per semester
 - (primary librarian; others have 2 or 3)
- email faculty
- 6 librarians; 1 is designated “Embedded Librarian”
- not time-consuming (except beginning of semester)

Institution 2

- public
- 50,275 FTE students
- Carnegie Class: Doctorate-Granting Universities
- Florida

- began around 2006
- 5 or fewer sections per semester
- faculty hear by word-of-mouth
- 6 librarians at 4 campuses
- very time-consuming

Institution 3

- public
- 8,768 FTE students
- Carnegie Class: Associate's Colleges
- Arkansas

- began in Summer 2006
- 11 fully online; 7 blended sections / semester
- email faculty
- primarily 1 librarian
- not very time-consuming (only at certain times)

Institution 4

- private
- 16,494 FTE students
- Carnegie Class: Master's Colleges & Universities
- New York

- began in Spring 2008
- module automatically open to every online class
- no longer promote to faculty
- 1 librarian, 1 library technologist
- not very time-consuming

Institution 5

- public
- 3,812 FTE students
- Carnegie Class: Associate's Colleges
- Arizona

- began in Spring 2007
- 27-37 sections per semester
- email faculty
- 2 librarians
- very busy

Institution 6

- private, for-profit
- 22,316 FTE students
- Carnegie Class: Doctorate-Granting Universities
- Minnesota

- began in Fall 2007
 - tried three different models
- 8 sections per semester (quarterly semesters)
 - automatically included as a module in each course
- 1 librarian
- not too busy (courses & assignments are staggered)



Email Activities of Embedded Librarians

	inside CMS			outside CMS		
	passive email	intro message	active email	passive email	intro message	active email
Inst. 1	X	X	X	X		
Inst. 2	X	X	X	X		
Inst. 3	X	X	X	X		
Inst. 4	X	X	X	X	X	X
Inst. 5	X	X	X	X		
Inst. 6						



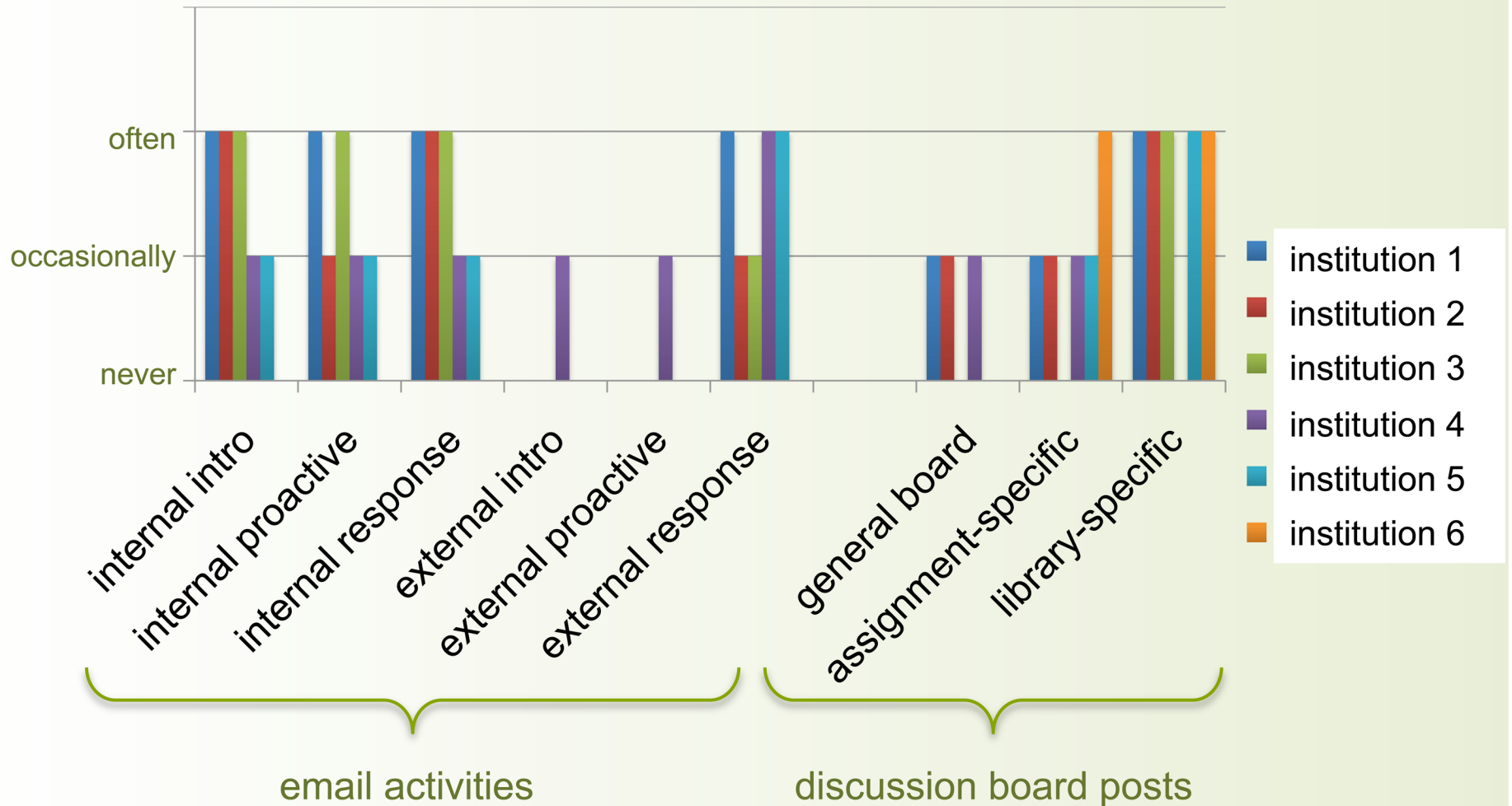
Use of Discussion Boards

	general discussion board	assignment-related discussion board	library-specific discussion board
Inst. 1	X	X	X
Inst. 2	X	X	X
Inst. 3			X
Inst. 4	X	X	
Inst. 5		X	X
Inst. 6		X	X

Other Activities

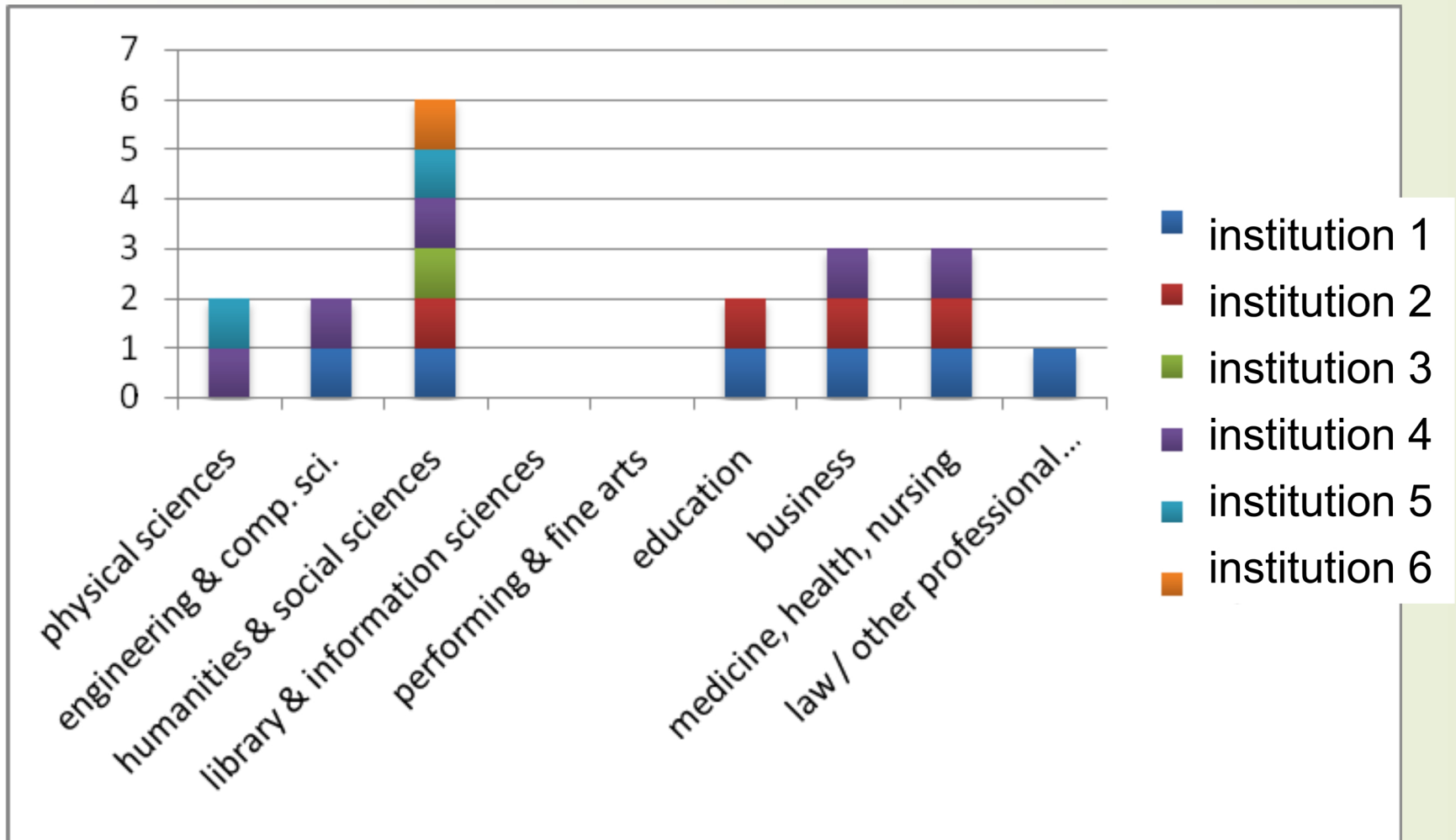
	phone reference	library instruction (online)	library instruction (F2F)	posted FAQ	link to library catalog	link to tutorials	link to library databases	link to subject guides	link to other library resources
Inst. 1	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Inst. 2	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Inst. 3	X			X	X	X	X		X
Inst. 4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Inst. 5	X	X	X			X	X	X	
Inst. 6				X	X	X	X	X	X

Activities, by Frequency

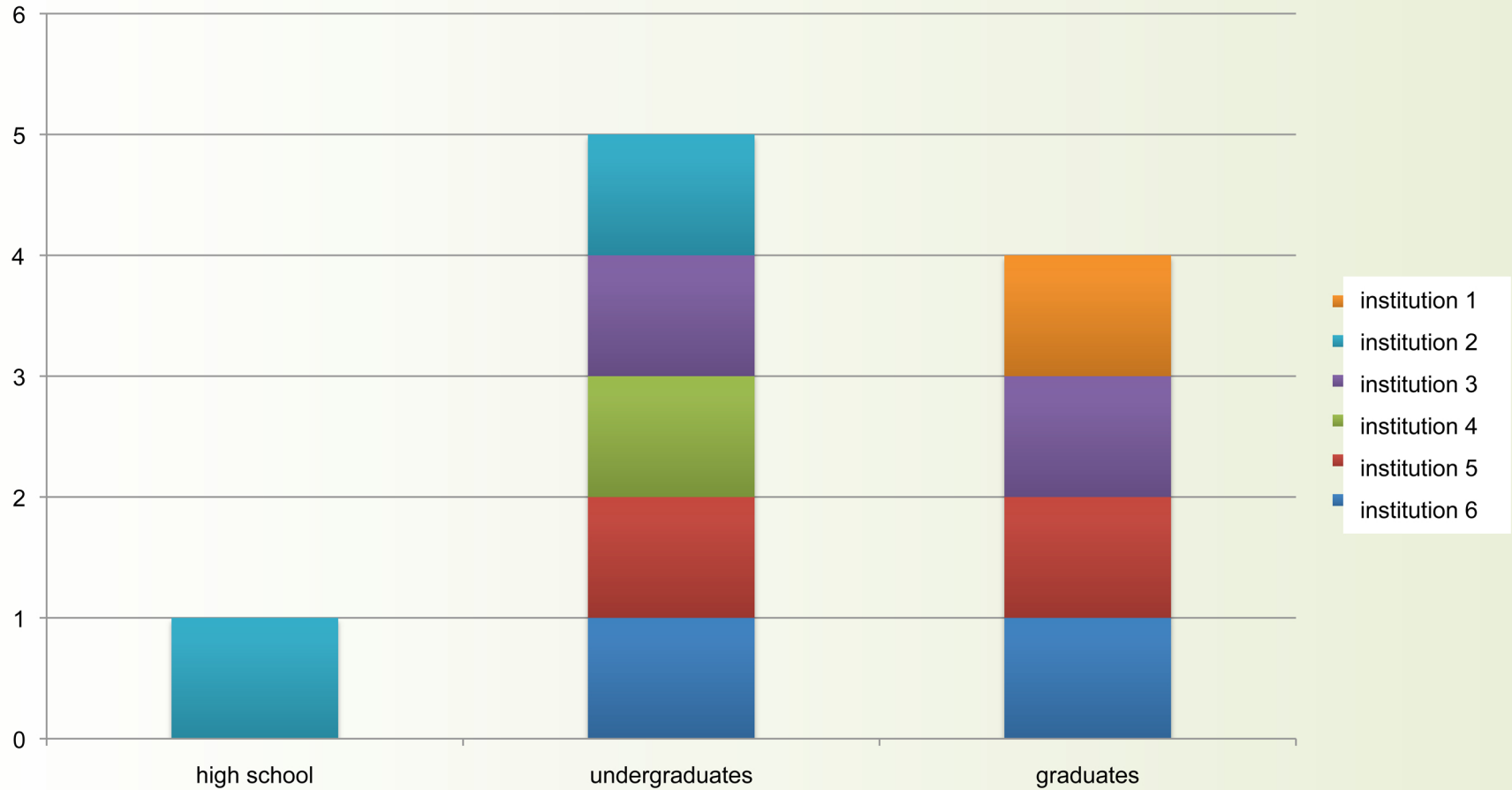


Subject Areas

for Courses with Embedded Librarians

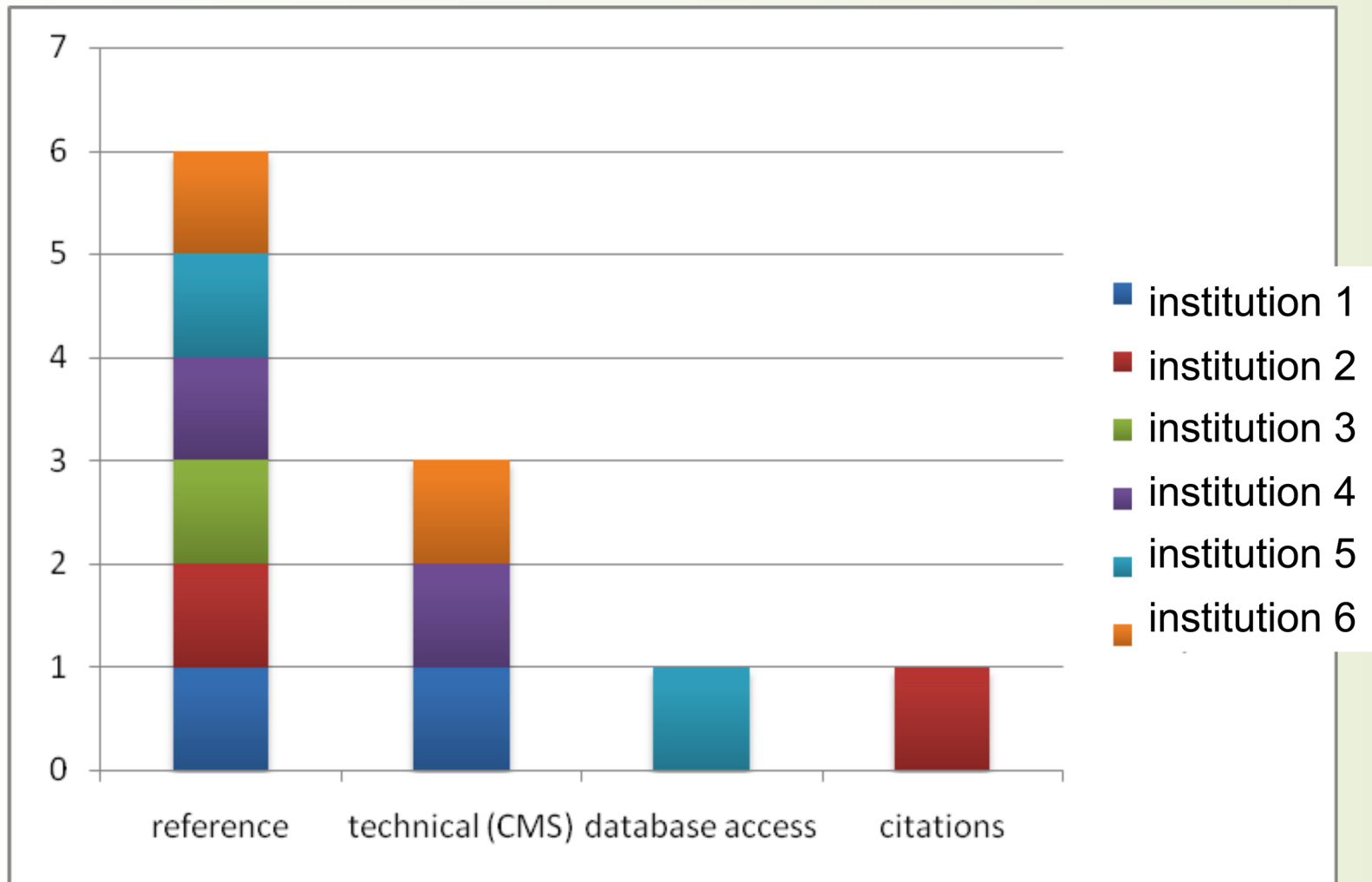


Level of Students in Courses with Embedded Librarians

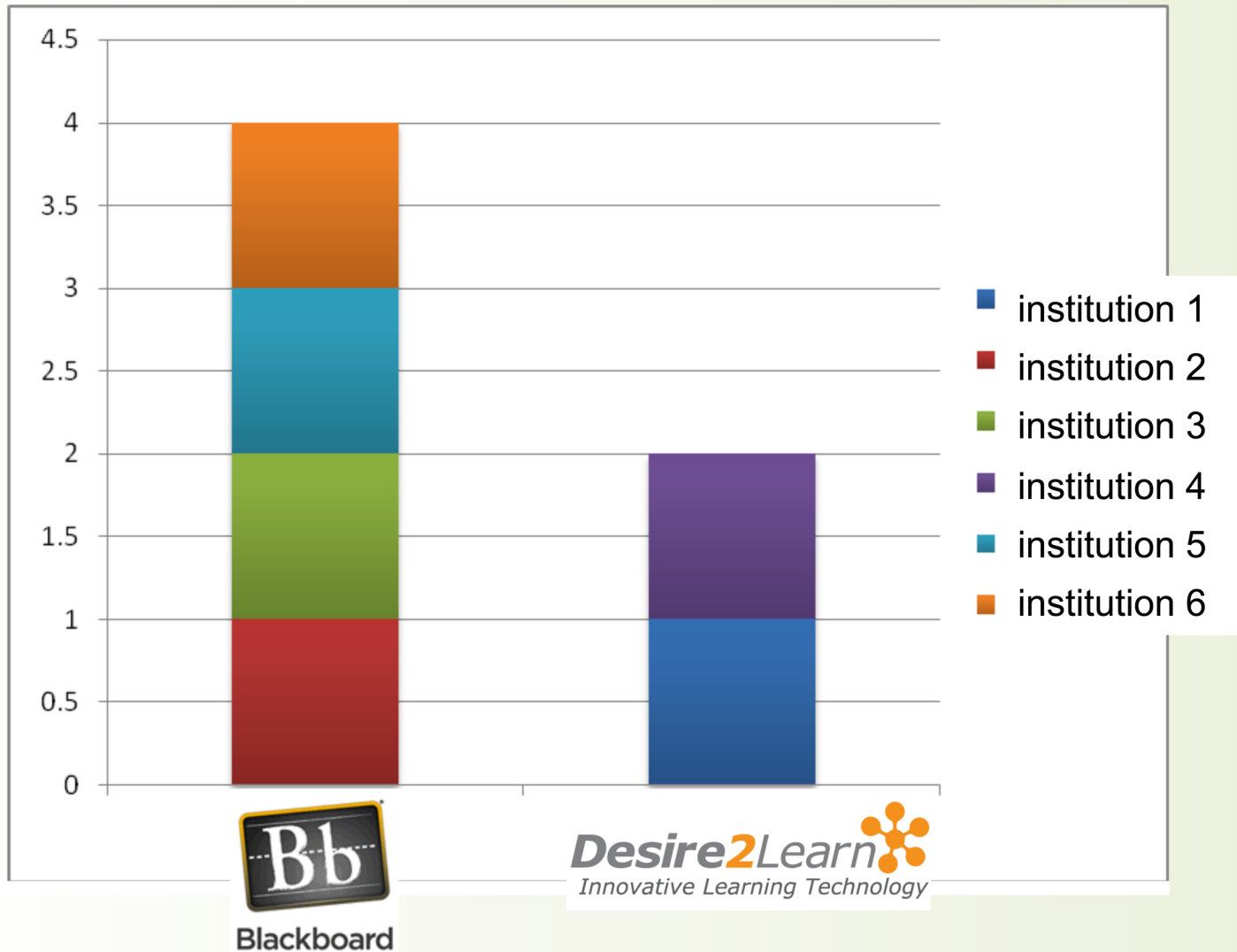


Types of Questions

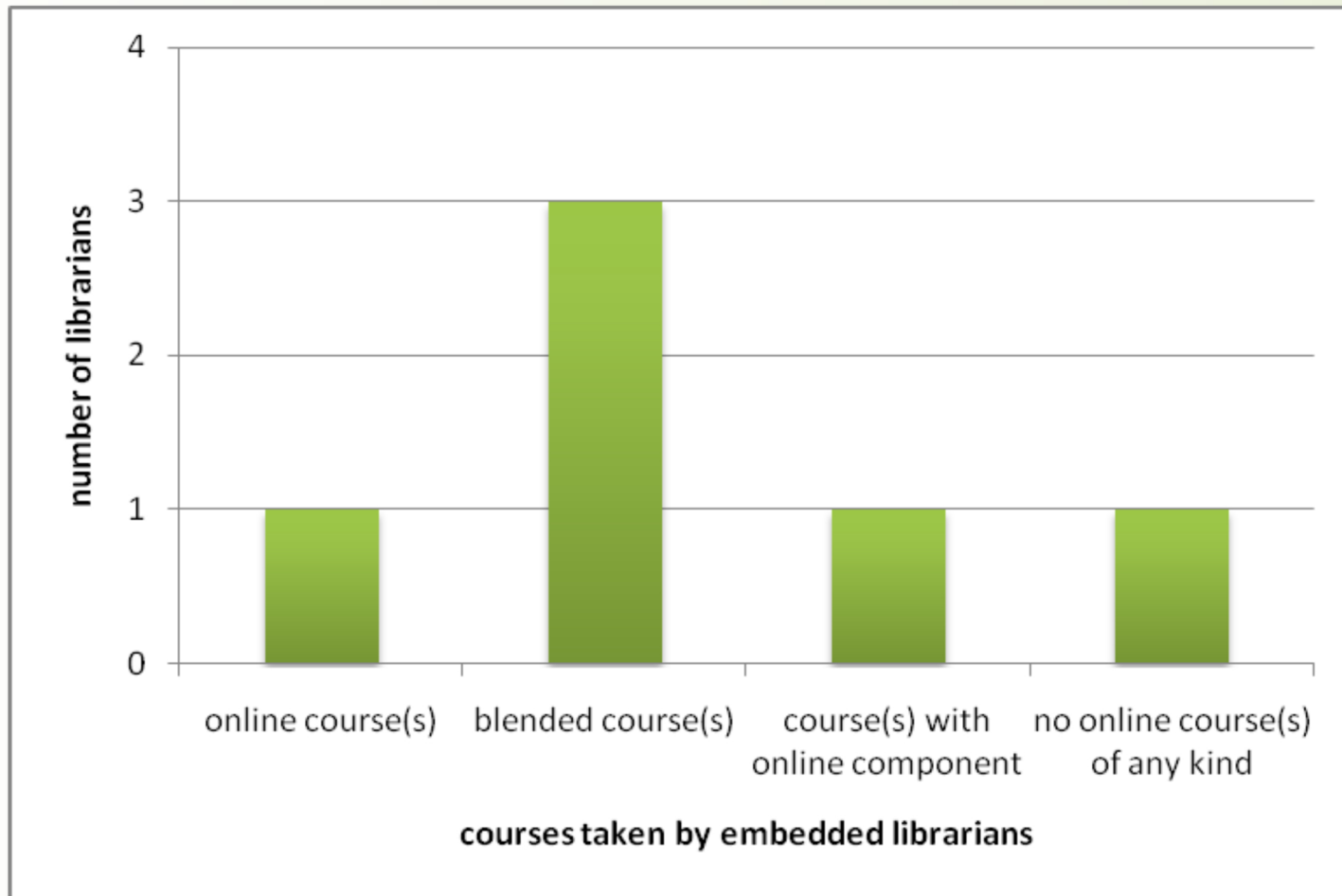
Received from Online Students



CMS Platforms



Online Education Experiences of Embedded Librarians



Discussion: Findings

- General Findings:
 - prevalence of term “embedded librarian”
 - difficulty defining embedded librarian role

- Surprising Finds:
 - prevalence of proactive email
 - time wasn't an issue for most

Discussion: Best Practices

- Best Practices:
 - involve other librarians
 - create library module (or “course”)
 - email online faculty about service
 - define embedded librarian’s role
 - post in a single, library-specific discussion board
 - monitor discussion board (RSS)
 - save email/discussion board posts
 - check courses at set times
 - plot assignment deadlines
 - proactively post information at point-of-need

Directions for Future Research

- purpose
 - why were these services created?
 - what are they designed to do best?
- efficacy
 - do they perform that purpose effectively?
 - is there a discernable difference for students?
- motivation
 - why do librarians decide to offer this service?
- expectations vs. realities
 - after the experience, did the purpose change?
 - was the service continued or abandoned?

Any Questions?

Starr Hoffman, MLS, MA

- ▣ Librarian for Digital Collections
 - ▣ Government Documents Department
 - ▣ UNT Libraries
 - ▣ PhD student, Higher Education, UNT
 - ▣ starr.hoffman@unt.edu
-
- **find my presentations & CV here:**
 - ▣ <http://geekyartistlibrarian.wordpress.com>

