

# Better Together:

## Combining Research and Writing Support for Student Scholars

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### Objective

The University of Maryland (UMD) Libraries sought to increase its impact on student scholarship by creating information literacy workshops that better met the needs of students, after low attendance at a series of Research and Writing Bootcamps. To accomplish this, the UMD Libraries and the UMD Graduate School Writing Center investigated the effectiveness of a suite of instructional programming, which presented *research and writing as linked and iterative components of a process* rather than *distinct stages of scholarship*.



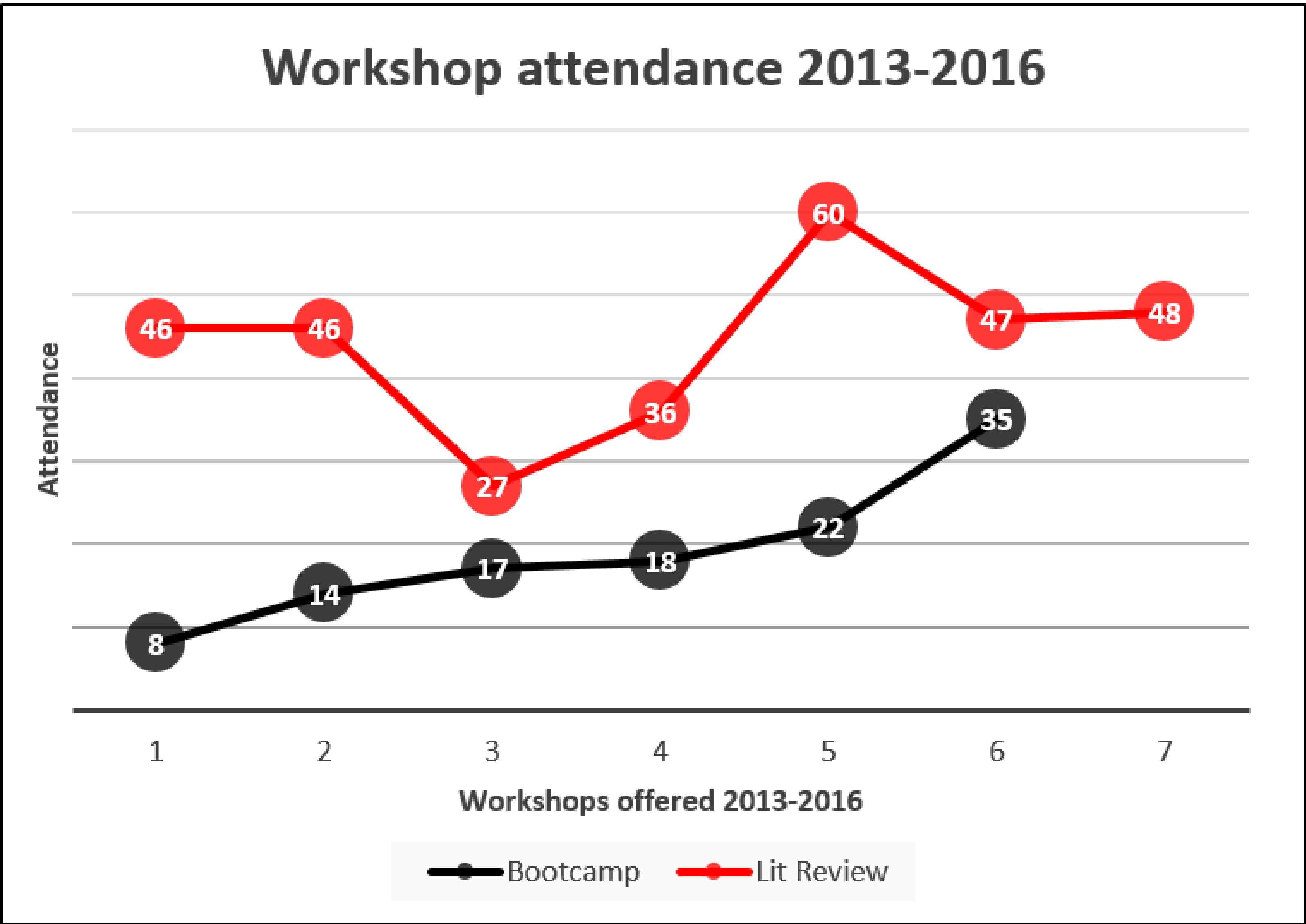
### Methods

To demonstrate to students the iterative process of finding and using evidence, library and writing center staff developed programming on how to write a literature review for a thesis or dissertation. Staff from both departments designed instructional content on how to *find, access, store, and use evidence effectively when writing*. These sessions also introduced students to the concept of *scholarship as a conversation*, how to apply the *stasis theory of composition*, and explained *the rhetorical purpose of conducting a literature review*. The initial session was titled "How to Write a Literature Review," and no reference was made to the previous Bootcamp series. Attendance and session evaluations were used to measure effectiveness.

### The Bottom Line

As reflected by the high levels of student attendance and positive assessment results, programming built around creating literature reviews addresses an area of need for graduate students across disciplines. These results also suggest that libraries can be effective facilitators and hosts for workshops on aspects of research that are outside of librarians' areas of expertise. Further investigation is warranted to determine what other areas of need exist, and whether libraries are an appropriate partner to address those needs.

### Results



From Fall 2014 Lit Review Evaluation:  
How likely are you to recommend this workshop to a colleague in your department?

Responses		
Answer	Response	%
Very Unlikely	5	8%
Unlikely	2	3%
Undecided	6	9%
Likely	25	39%
Very Likely	26	41%

Analysis	
Statistic	Value
Mean	4.02
Variance	1.35
Standard Deviation	1.16
Total Responses	64



### Discussion

Offering information literacy instruction to graduate students through an integrated, combined literature review session is novel, and provides several benefits over the traditional workshop approach.

#### Novelty

- While the literature documents numerous examples of libraries collaborating with writing centers, most focus on early career undergraduates.

#### Pedagogical advantages

- Explains the mechanics of how to search the literature AND the rhetorical justifications for why.
- Integrates library services and tools into an authentic context

#### Practical advantages

- Optimizes resource allocation
- Experts focus on teaching what they know



### Next Steps

- Discipline specific breakout sessions: liaison librarians offer focused training on specific resources and writing techniques for subject disciplines.
- Librarian office hours in the writing center: provide point of need research assistance
- Oral communication workshops: transforming a research paper into a compelling presentation

**For Further Reading:**  
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