

What Days
Do They
Have Free
Popcorn?

And I Have
No Idea
How to Find
a Book

Sticky Notes for Engagement and Assessment

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Why Sticky Notes?

Ubiquitous—

no matter your background, you've probably used one before

Low-Tech—

tools that require too much effort are often more trouble than their worth

Low-Cost—

and you probably already have a stack in your supplies

Flexible—

they can be used anywhere at anytime, in any situation

Fast—

it only takes a few minutes to get great feedback

Anonymous—

students can share questions and comments privately

The Project

In Fall 2017, librarians piloted a sticky note activity during a library orientation program. In the 18 classes that piloted the activity, almost 600 comments were collected. Two questions were asked of students using the sticky notes: (1) what did they learn and (2) what questions did they still have. Students then posted their sticky notes to a white board.

Our librarians had shared learning objectives for these orientation sessions:

By the end of this session students will be able to

- Navigate the library easily
- Identify resources within the library
- Find the Writing Center
- Locate the Office of Student Research
- Ask for help from staff and librarians

Response Examples

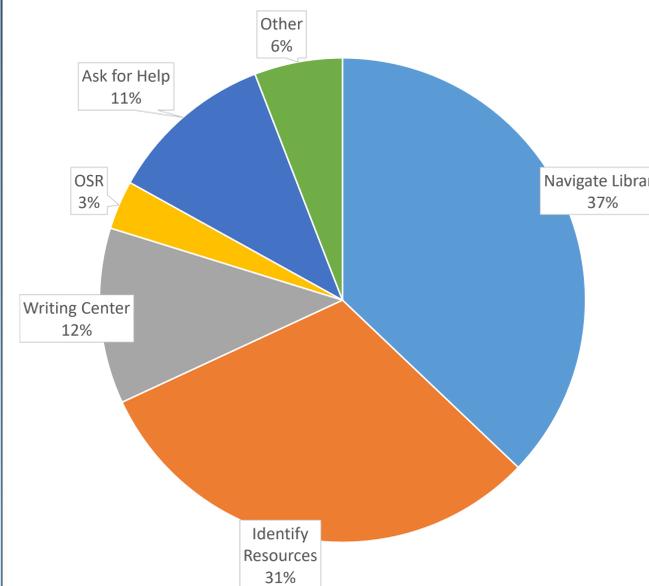
- Today I learned that there is an upstairs to the library
- The book organization still confuses me
- I'm so confused about all of the big machines
- I learned where the writing center was & also where the printers were!
- I learned not to be scared to ask for help, the librarians are very helpful
- I would like to know more about getting help from my librarians and what should I get help for?
- I found the quiet study room. I'm going to try that out later tonight when I'm doing HW
- Is the main room with the computers a quiet room or can you talk?

Findings

Comments answering the first question were coded and matched to our learning objectives to assess what students got out of the orientation activity. We could identify the topics that students were most interested in, as well. Most of the comments were about navigating the library and identifying resources.

Question 2 responses included more assessment of our learning objectives, and helped us determine what we didn't address adequately. Sometimes, questions would remind us of things that we had missed going over, or help us reiterate points that may not have been as clear as we thought. Questions from the sticky notes, when we went over them at the end of class, even encouraged students to ask verbal follow-up questions that may never have been addressed otherwise.

What Did You Learn?



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Other Ideas

- Sticky notes offer a written record of what otherwise might have been a lost or forgotten verbal exchange, but you could also have students get creative by drawing responses
- Encourage students to browse the sticky notes after they've all been put up to see if they spark any reactions and/or have them help you group post-its to create themes
- For a similar activity in an online environment, try a program like Padlet
- Outside of classroom use, use them in a public space in the library to get crowdsourced answers to questions about facilities or resources

What's one idea this poster helped spark in you?