

# A new role in systematic review support: Collaborations between health and social science librarians

**Jackie Stapleton**, Liaison Librarian for Kinesiology, Public Health  
**Sarah Brown**, Liaison Librarian for Philosophy, Sociology & Legal Studies, Women's Studies  
University of Waterloo Library, Waterloo, ON

## BACKGROUND

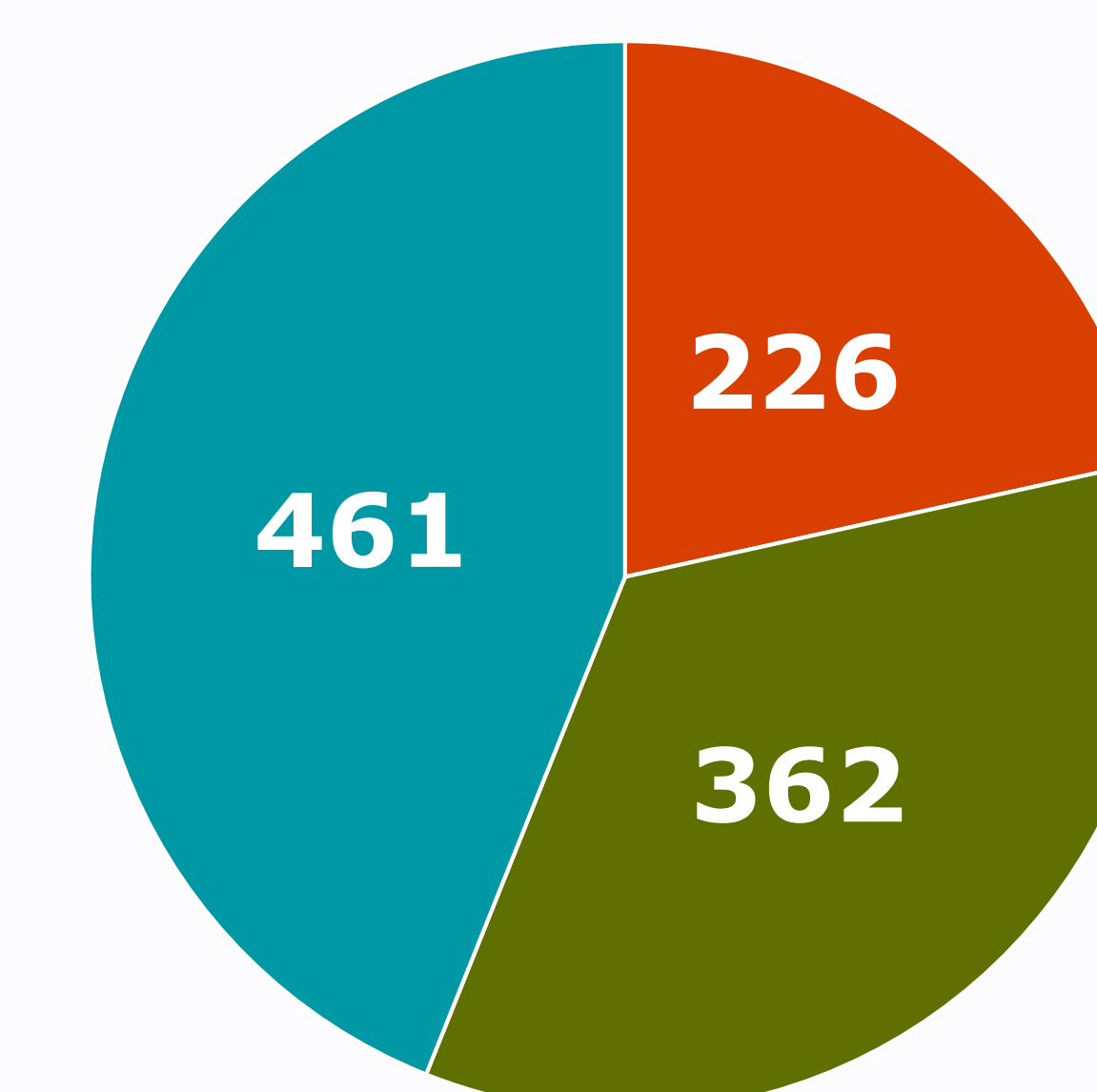
### What is the interest for systematic review support for social science researchers?

The growing nature of interdisciplinary research and collaborations between researchers across academic faculties are expanding the role of systematic review support in the academic library.

Beginning in 2014, University of Waterloo librarians noted a growing number of consultations and questions from social science faculty and graduate students interested in conducting systematic reviews (SRs) to answer their research questions.

From these discussions it quickly became clear that there was a need to provide social science researchers with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with SR methodology.

In Fall 2017, a health librarian and social sciences librarian teamed up to develop a systematic review workshop targeted towards social science researchers to address the knowledge gaps identified.



**Number of University of Waterloo social science graduate students**

Faculty of Arts  
Faculty of Environment  
Faculty of Applied Health Sciences

## WORKSHOP

### Workshop details

We delivered 1 60 minute workshop and 1 90 minute workshop (extended due to class feedback) using ppt and hands on activities. The content included a high level introduction to systematic review techniques with a focus on search methods and highlighted issues relevant for social science research questions.

### Promotional strategies

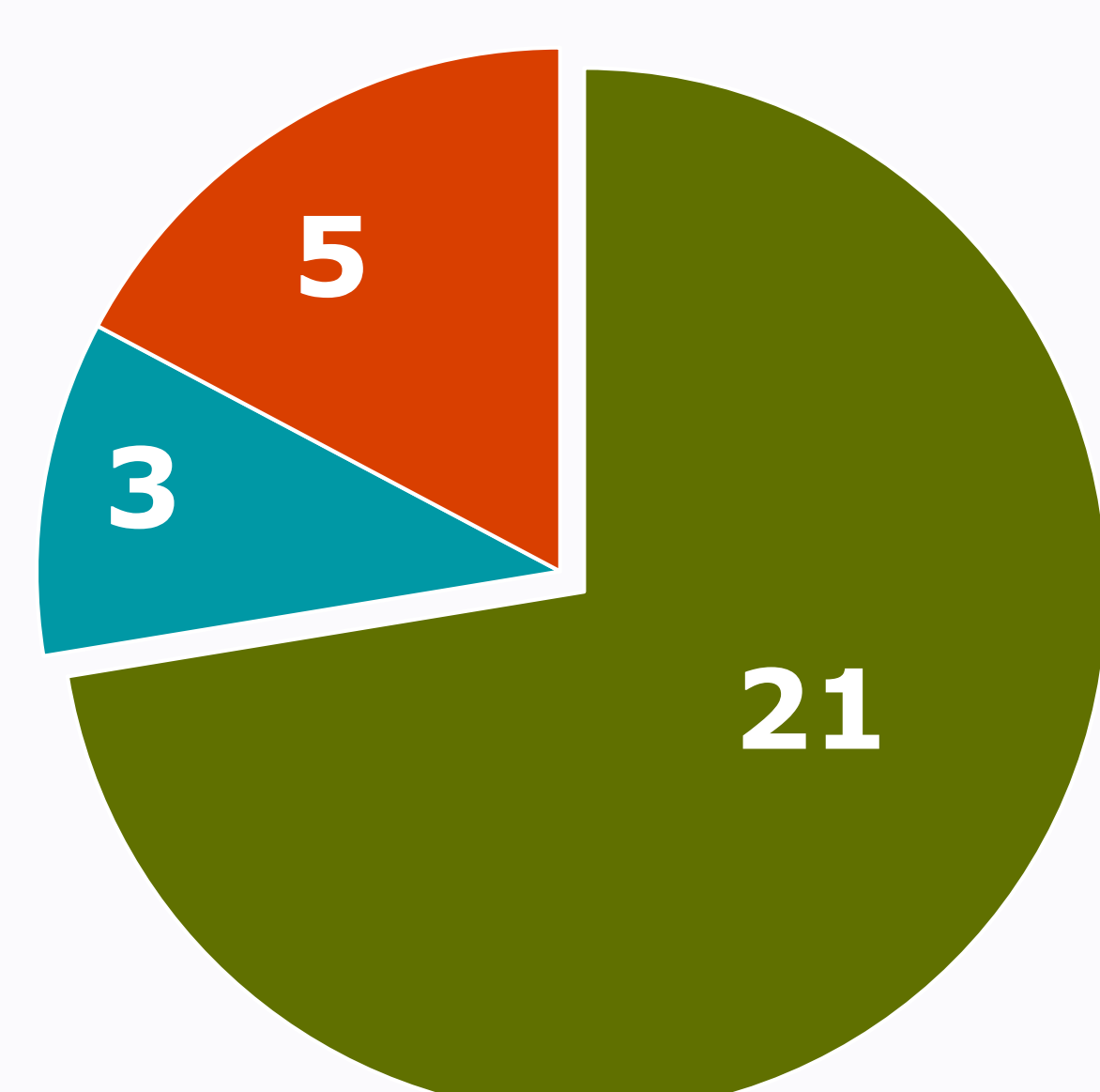
Based on student feedback, students learned about the workshop through the following methods:

- Targeted distribution to social science graduate student emails: 81%
- Grad E-Newsletter: 9%
- Librarian recommendation: 9%
- Library website: 0%

**0% Library website**

### Attendance

Registration exceeded capacity within days of promoting the workshop (25 students registered per session)



### Number of workshop participants

Faculty of Environment  
Faculty of Arts  
Sociology (3)  
Psychology (1)  
Philosophy (1)  
Faculty of Applied Health Sciences

## ASSESSMENT

### In-class feedback form results

Students indicated the most useful parts of the workshop included:

- How to develop a systematic search strategy
- The outline of the stages of a SR
- How to distinguish between a SR and other review types
- The hands-on activity (assessing the quality of a published SR search strategy)

### Follow up survey results (9 responses)

A Survey Monkey questionnaire was sent to all participants a few months after the workshop.

**2/3**  
of respondents

- used content taught in class in their everyday practice after the workshop
- identified the workshop influenced their decision to conduct/not conduct a SR

### Student comments

*I did not understand the difference between a systematic review and literature review until this workshop. After learning the difference, I could see the value of a systematic review and plan to use this methodology in an upcoming research project.*

*I have learned from this workshop that systematic review won't suit my coming project*

## OUTCOMES

### Findings

- Strong interest from Faculty of Environment
- Low attendance from other departments
- Students enjoyed practice exercises
- Clear that students were unfamiliar with systematic review methods

### Next steps

- Continue to offer the workshop on an ongoing basis
- Consult with Liaison Librarian for Faculty of Environment to discuss possible collaborations and continuing education
- Explore ways of increasing awareness of workshop among social science researchers in the Faculty of Arts

**Jackie Stapleton** is the Liaison Librarian for Kinesiology and the School of Public Health and Health Systems at the University of Waterloo Library. Jackie's research interests include the role of the librarian in supporting systematic review teams and the application of systematic search techniques to the grey literature.



**Sarah Brown** is a Liaison Librarian at the University of Waterloo currently supporting departments in the Social Sciences and Humanities. As an expert in social sciences information resources, Sarah has collaborated with researchers on campus as an information specialist to support the systematic review process.

