# Developing a "One Size Fits Most" Library Instruction Assessment Tool

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# Instruction Assessment at Chicago

- Limited assessment of library instruction programs
    - Focused on instruction statistics (number of sessions, students, etc.)
    - No standard assessment tool
    - Evaluations focused on our teaching rather than learning outcomes

# New Program, New Possibilities



- In 2009, Library Board members from the Departments of History and Anthropology expressed interest in integrating Library instruction programs into their courses

- The Library submitted a proposal to the Board for a pilot instruction program, which included a commitment to assess our efforts

# Developing a New Assessment Tool

- Our criteria for the instrument:

  - Outcomes-based

  - Quick and easy to complete

  - Can be distributed in paper or online

  - Reusable (in other sessions)

  - Easy to tabulate results

# Our First Attempt

- Pre- and post-test matrix (to measure learning outcomes)
- Two open-ended questions (to measure student perceptions)
- Open comments (for everything else)

| Task | Library Resource | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Lens | WorldCat | Indexes | Full-Text Databases |
| Use to identify books owned by the Library | | | | |
| Use to identify books at other libraries | | | | |
| Allows for Boolean searching (AND OR NOT) | | | | |
| Use to find articles from academic journals | | | | |
| Allows for searching using controlled vocabulary | | | | |
| Includes Find It! icons | | | | |
| Uses relevancy ranking | | | | |
| Provides call numbers for books | | | | |
| Use to determine if the Library owns a journal, newspaper or magazine | | | | |

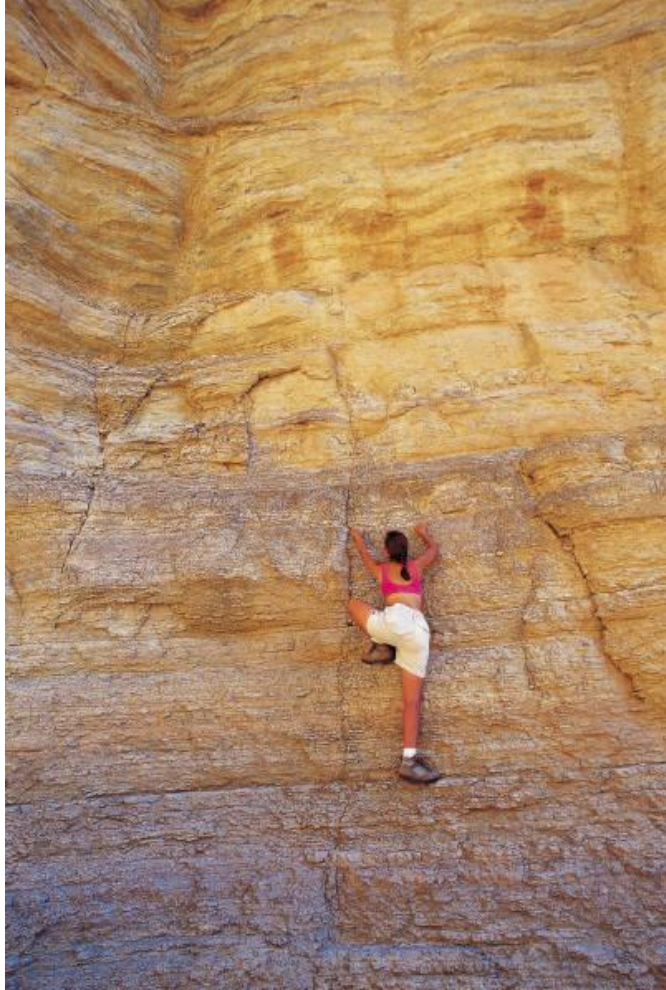# Evaluating the Instrument

- Successes:
  - High return rate
  - Easy to tabulate
  - Engaged students in the instruction session
  - Great comments



- Failures:
  - Unclear terminology (too much library-speak)
  - Mixing catalogs and article databases confused students about the purpose of each research tool
  - Did not measure some key research skills, such as search techniques or reading a citation

# Try, Try Again…

- Complete revision of the instrument

- Grouped questions about catalogs and article databases/indexes
  - Compare catalogs: Lens, Library Catalog, and WorldCat
  - Compare article databases: JSTOR and key subject index

- Added three multiple-choice questions about key research skills
  - Reading a citation
  - Boolean searching
  - Truncation

**BEFORE the Library presentation, please fill out this side.**

| 1. Which Library research tool lets you (select all that apply): | Lens | Library Catalog | WorldCat |
|---|---|---|---|
| Search in non-roman languages | | | |
| Search tables of contents, summaries, and reviews of books | | | |
| Search for phrases | | | |
| Ranks by relevancy | | | |
| Find items in other library collections | | | |
| Find the call number and availability of books | | | |
| Request items via interlibrary loan | | | |
| View Library collections alphabetically by title, author, or subject | | | |
| Limit your search to reference collections | | | |

| 2. Which Library research tool is best for (select one): | Full-Text Databases (JSTOR) | Indexes (Historical Abstracts, America: History & Life, etc.) |
|---|---|---|
| Finding book chapters, essays, and dissertations | | |
| Searching for specific keywords in the text of an article | | |
| Searching using subject terms/descriptors | | |
| Finding articles from older journals | | |
| Finding recently published works | | |
| Finding articles from journals that are not online | | |

3. In the bibliography of a book you're reading, you find the following citation:

Walton, John K. "The Demand for Working-Class Seaside Holidays in Victorian England." *Economic History Review* 34, no. 2 (May 1981): 249-265.

**What piece of information from the citation would you need to enter in the Library Catalog or Lens to find this article?**

   a.  Demand for Working-Class Seaside Holidays in Victorian England
   b.  Walton, John K
   c.  Economic History Review
   d.  Walton 1981

4. If you are searching in an index and find a citation for an article, how do you determine if the article is available online?
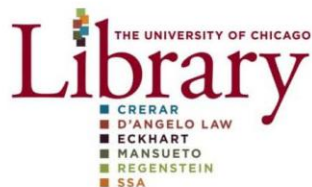
   a.  Look for the "Full-text" or "PDF" link in the record
   b.  Click on the "Find It!" icon in the record
   c.  Search the E-Journals database for the journal name
   d.  Search Lens for the journal name
   e.  All of the above

5. Which of these keyword searches should retrieve the most results in an index or full-text database?

   a.  Myanmar AND Burma
   b.  Myanmar NOT Burma
   c.  Myanmar OR Burma

6. Which search would retrieve the most results?

   a.  Immigrant*
   b.  Immigra*
   c.  Immigrant OR Immigration

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Library
■ CRERAR
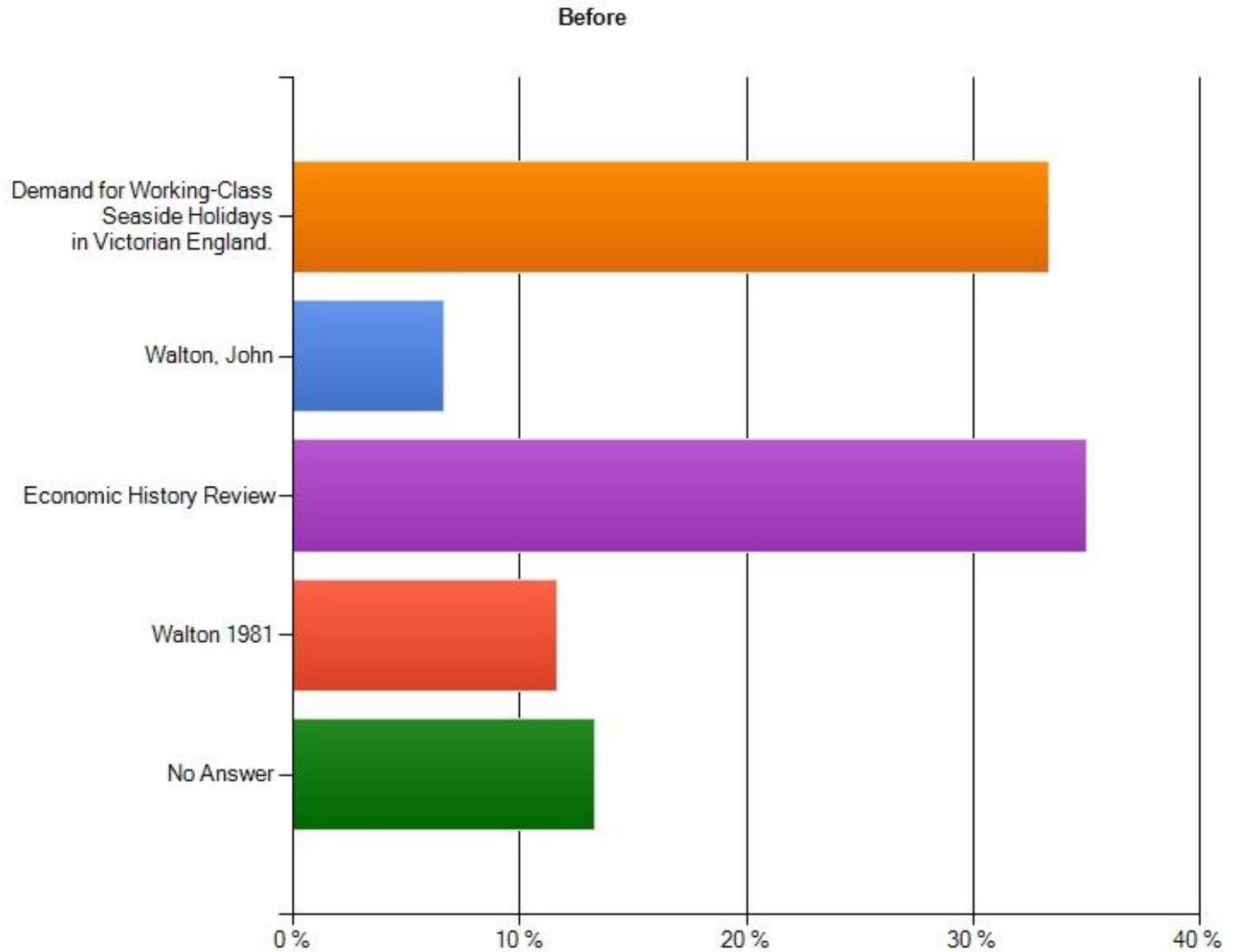■ D'ANGELO LAW
■ ECKHART
■ MANSUETO
■ REGENSTEIN
■ SSA

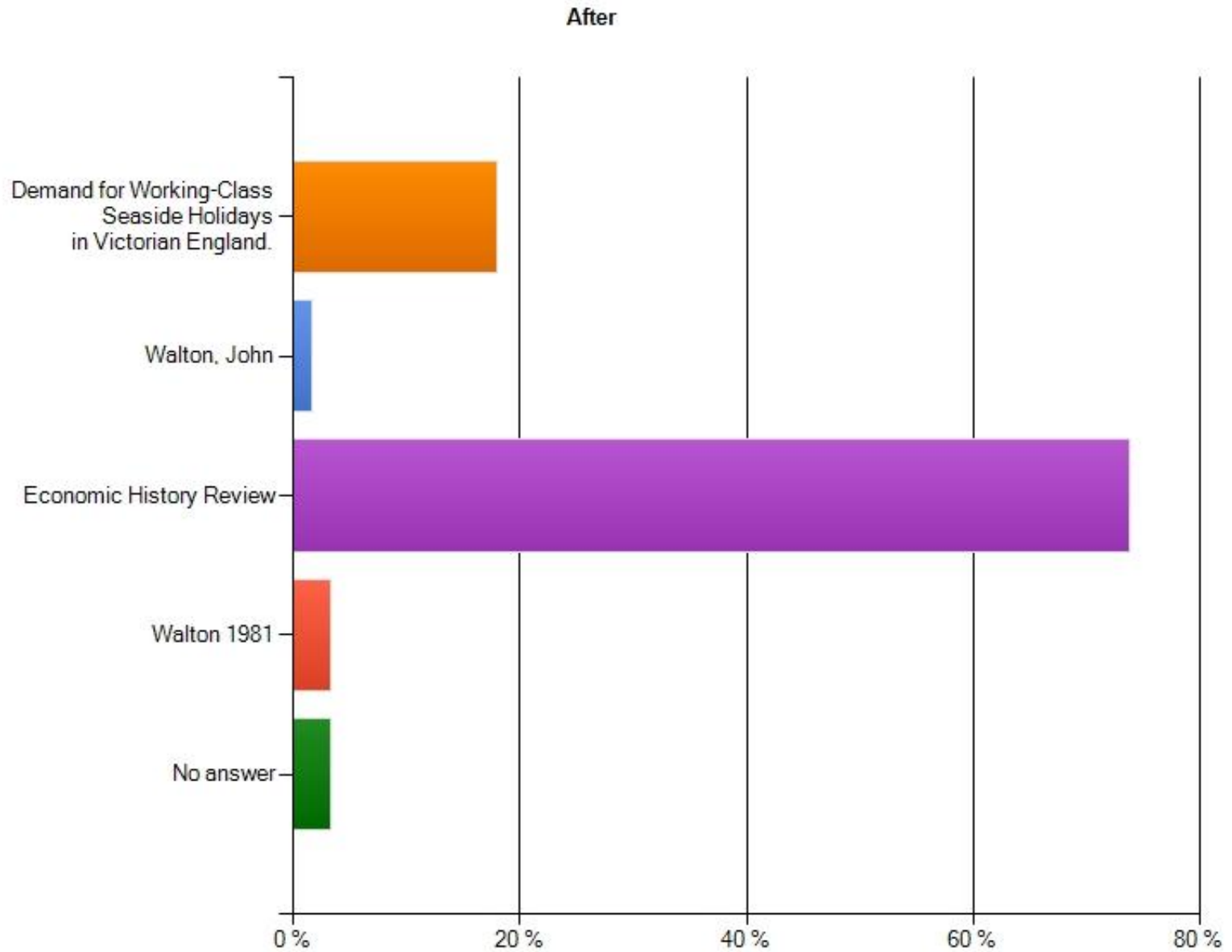# Assessment Findings

• Sample Question:

**What piece of information from the citation would you need to enter in the Library Catalog or Lens to find this article?**

Walton, John K. "The Demand for Working-Class Seaside
    Holidays in Victorian England." *Economic History
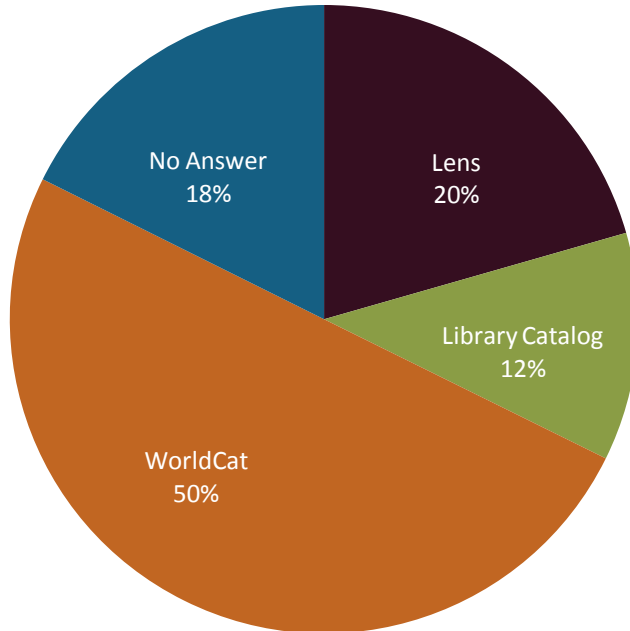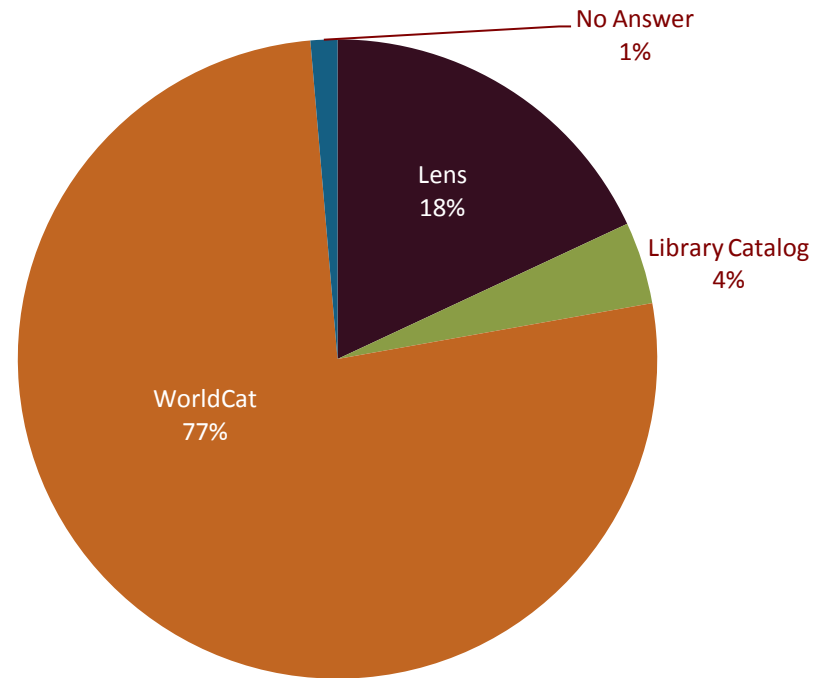    Review* 34, no. 2 (May 1981): 249-265.

# Before the Session



Before

# After the Session



After

# Which Library research tool lets you find items in other library collections?



Pre-Test

- No Answer 18%
- Lens 20%
- Library Catalog 12%
- WorldCat 50%

Post-Test

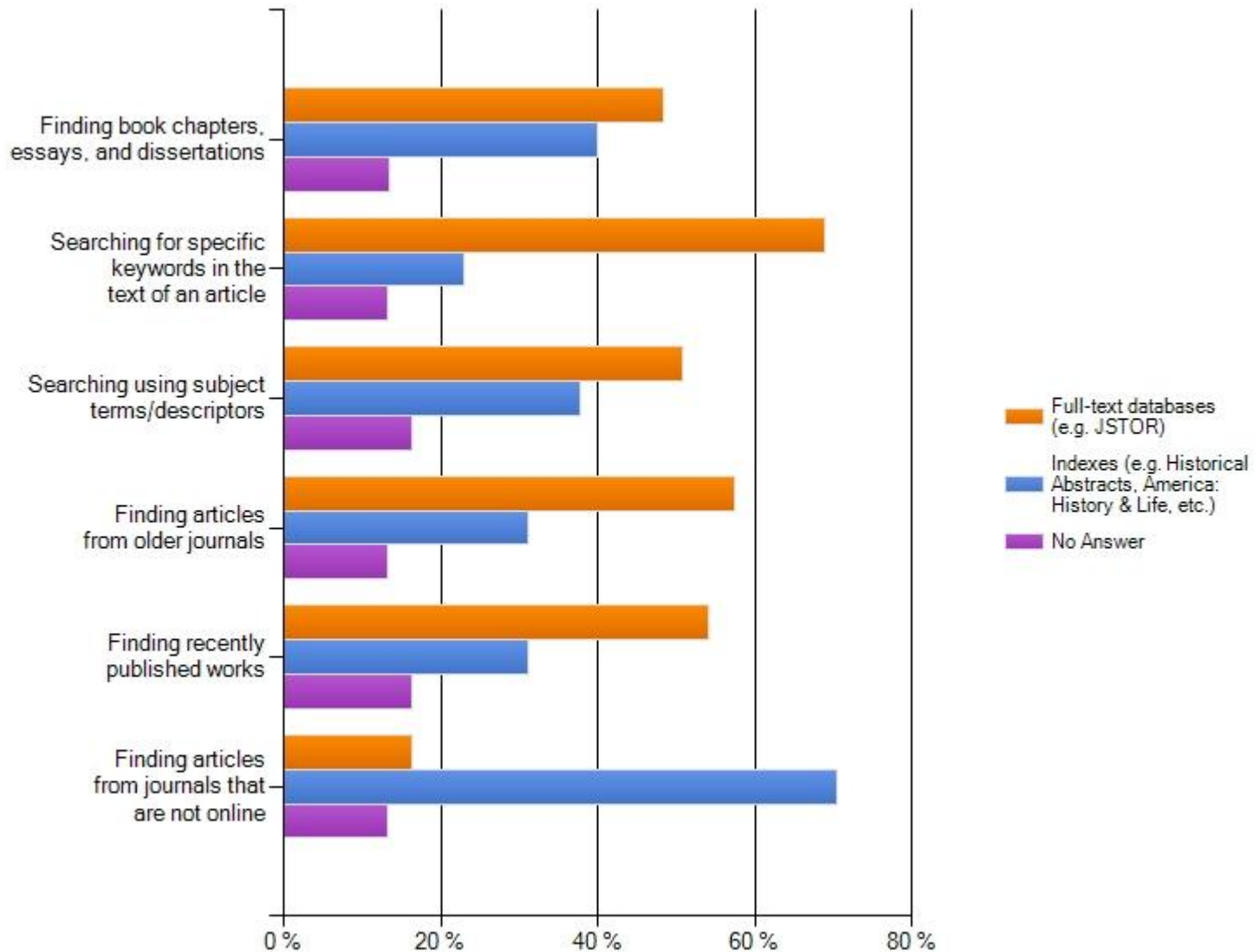- No Answer 1%
- Lens 18%
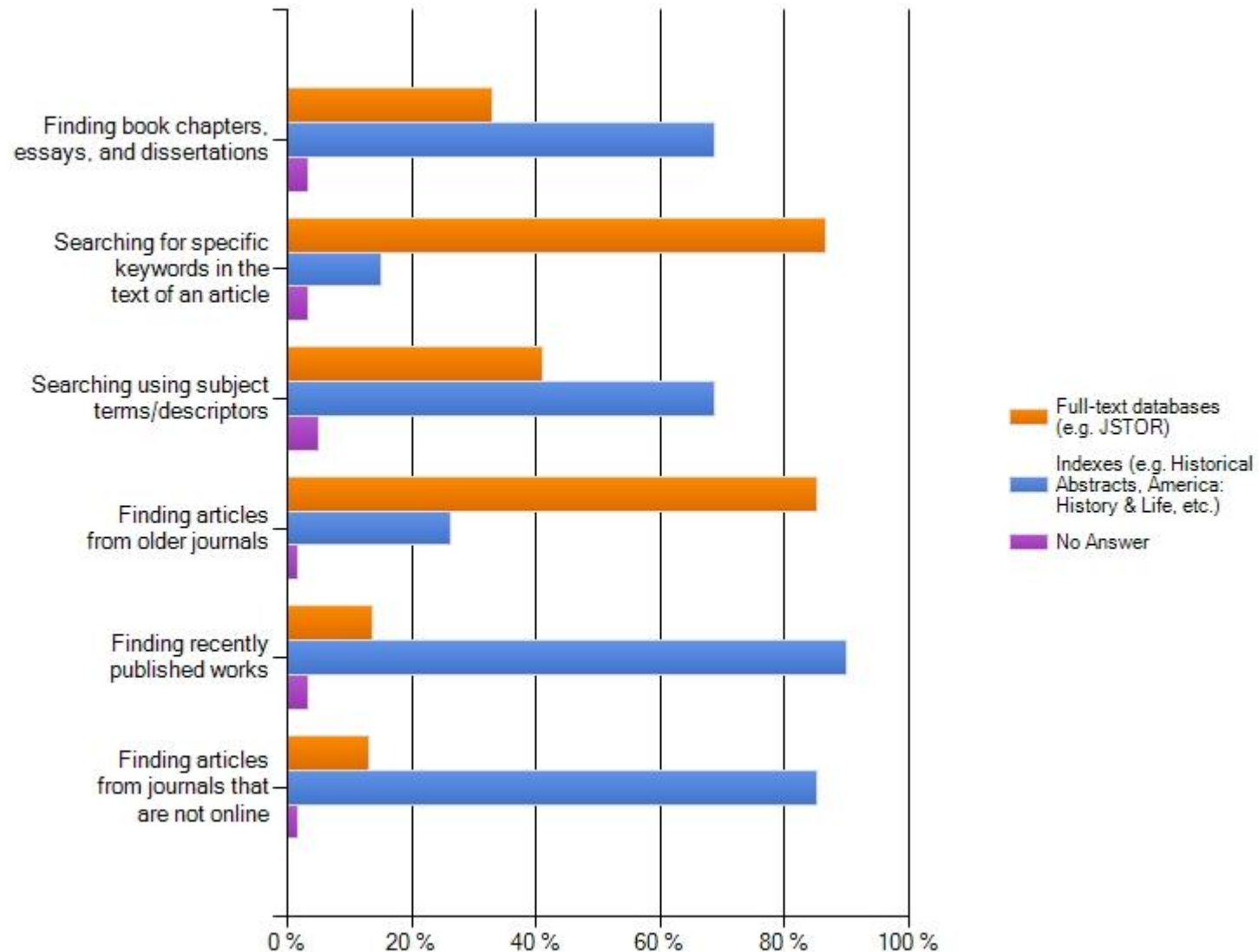- Library Catalog 4%
- WorldCat 77%

# Which Library research tool is best for:
## *(Pre-test)*

# Which Library research tool is best for:
## *(Post-test)*

# Revising the Assessment Tool

- Several librarians volunteered to use the assessment instrument for their instruction programs

- More revisions:
  - Enhanced instructions
  - Clarified language
  - Caught typographical errors
  - Removed redundant or unnecessary information

- Result: An adaptable, standard assessment instrument

**BEFORE the Library presentation, please fill out this side.**

*If you are not familiar with the resources listed, please complete to the best of your ability.*

| 1.Which Library research tool lets you (select all that apply): | Lens | Library Catalog | WorldCat |
|---|---|---|---|
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| Search for phrases | | | |
| Rank by relevancy | | | |
| Find items in other universities' library collections | | | |
| Find the call number and availability of books | | | |
| Request items via interlibrary loan | | | |
| View a hierarchical listing of subject headings | | | |
| Search in non-roman languages | | | |

| 2. Which Library research tool is best for (select one): | JSTOR | Indexes |
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| Finding book chapters, essays, and dissertations | | |
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- ECKHART
- MANSUETO
- REGENSTEIN
- SSA

# Goals for the Future

- Encourage broad use of the instrument within the Library

- Utilize assessment data to compare instruction programs for different courses and user groups

- Identify research trouble-spots and alter our instruction as needed

# Challenges for Implementation

- Focuses on secondary source research

- Appropriateness for different teaching styles

- Fears over "teaching to the test"

- Limited class time

- Reluctance to be evaluated

# Next Steps

- Instrument available for staff use on our library instruction wiki

- "Train the Trainer" program this summer for library staff on using the instrument in instruction programs

- Continue to make alterations based on staff feedback and user needs

- Encourage use of the instrument and demonstrate benefits of assessing our instruction

**Thank you!**

Questions or comments?

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