

# READ: All About It! Reimagining Reference Stats to Demonstrate Value and Guide Public Services with the READ Scale

Nancy Noe ~ Marcia Boosinger ~ Juliet Rumble Auburn University Libraries

## Our story begins

"The READ Scale (Reference Effort Assessment Data) is a six-point scale tool for recording qualitative statistics by placing an emphasis on recording effort, knowledge, skills, and teaching used by staff during a reference transaction."

Bella Karr Gerlich and G. Lynn Berard.  
 "Testing the Viability of the READ Scale (Reference Effort Assessment Data):  
 Qualitative Statistics for Academic Reference Services."  
 College and Research Libraries 71.2(2010): 116-137

### READ Scale Levels:

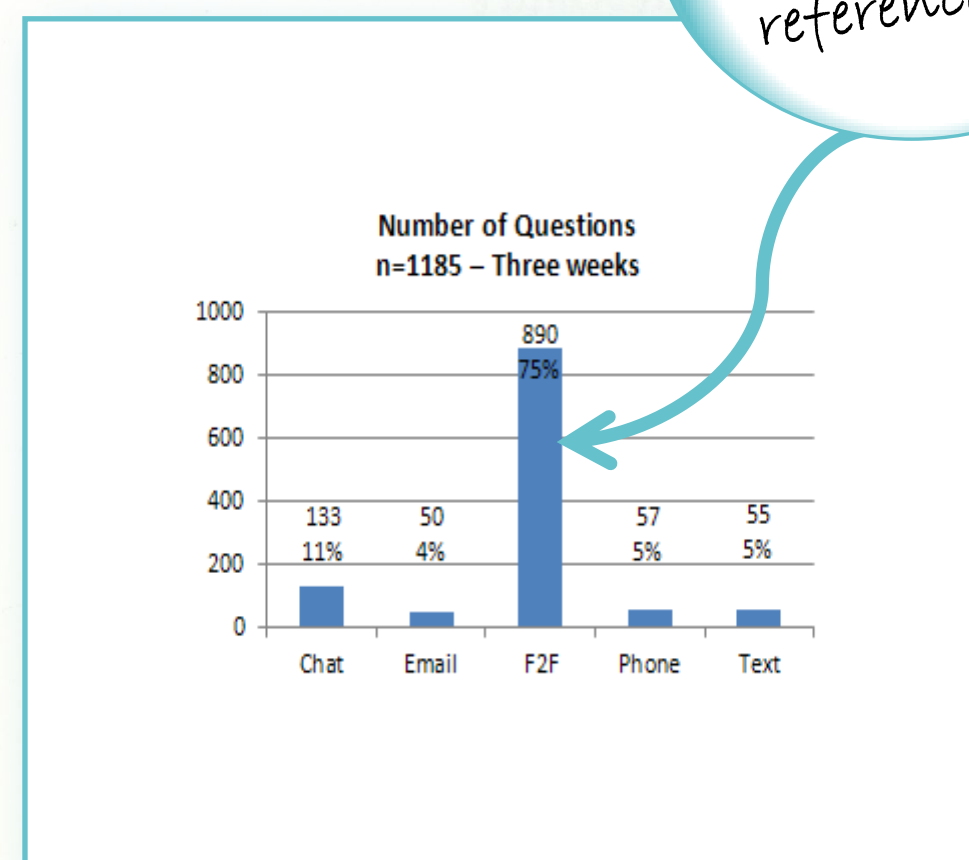
1. Directional; No consultation of resources; requires no specialized knowledge or expertise
2. Informational; requires only minimal specific knowledge; nominal resource consultation
3. Reference knowledge & skills come into play; consultation of ready reference materials; minimal instruction in catalog, databases, etc.
4. Reference exchange is more supportive of user & more instruction-based; multiple resources consulted; subject specialists may need to be consulted
5. Extensive user instruction; subject specialists need to be consulted; consultative appointments w/user may be scheduled; "back and forth" dimension to reference dialogue; multiple resources
6. Very extensive user instruction; inquiries can't be answered on the spot; primary and secondary resources may be used; covers "special library" type research services

Training to norm on question levels

Development of Google Docs statistics form

Data collection began 2.19.12

## Analysis of Data



Continuing value of F2F reference

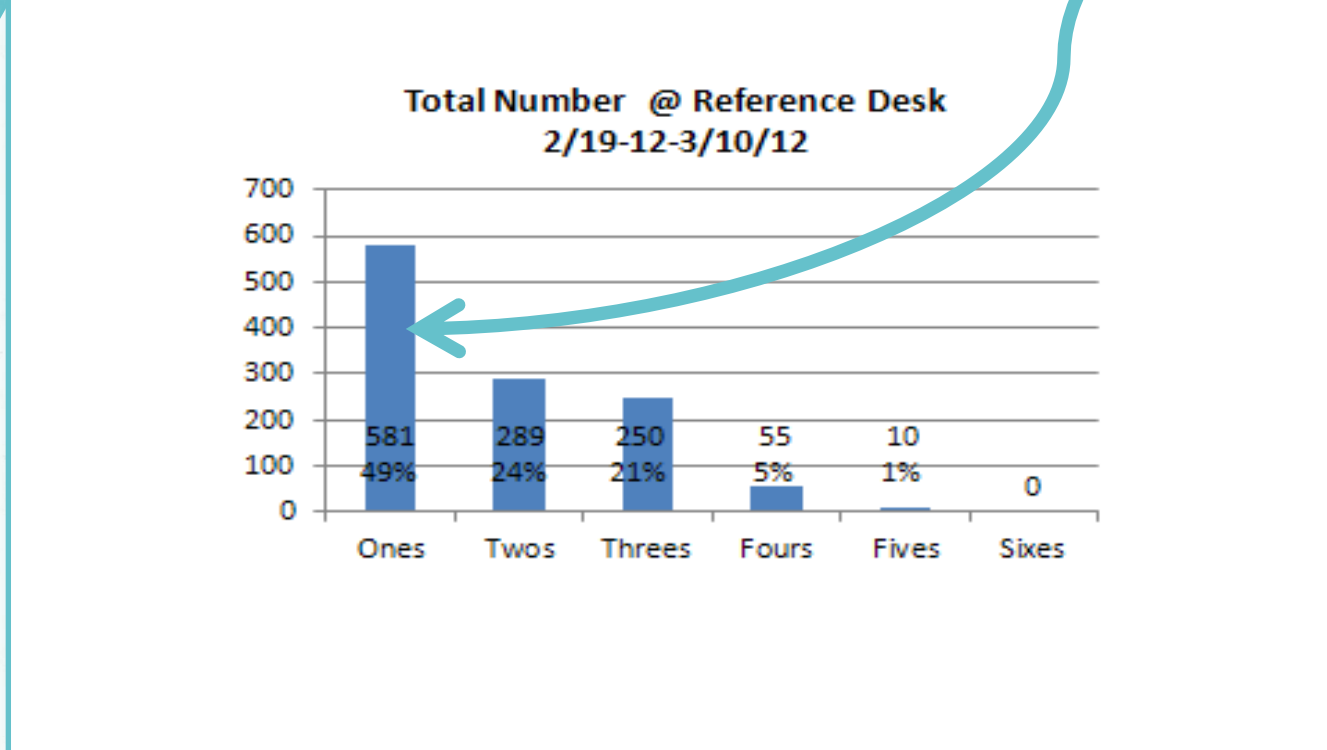


Figure 2: Number of reference questions at the reference desk by READ SCALE level for 3 week period

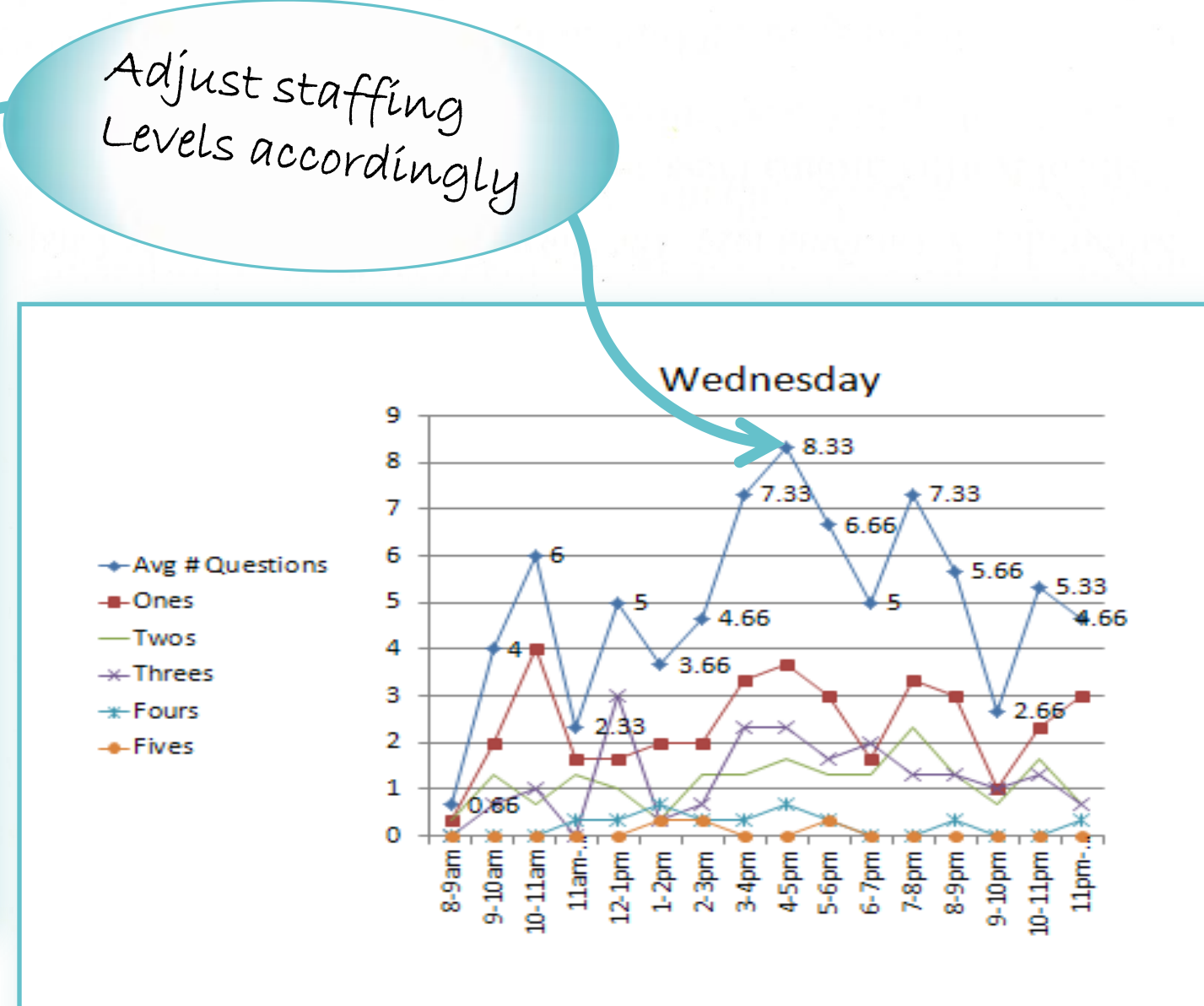


Figure 3: Average number of reference questions by hour and READ Scale type over 3 Wednesdays

Adjust staffing Levels accordingly

## Reading between the lines to tell the Public Services story

- Usability and Interface Issues:** I can't view the catalog on my cellphone. Could you look up a book for me?
- Way Finding:** Where is Special Collections?
- Mapping Questions to Info Lit Outcomes:** Can you help me find a scholarly article about parking on campus?
- Collection Development Needs:** Do you have the new SOM (Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill) journal?
- Value of Subscription Databases:** I need to know how to install SciFinder Scholar for a lit review.
- Document Off-Desk Subject Reference:** I would like to include in my manuscript a portrait of the magazine publisher James Dunwoody Brownson De Bow. Can you help me locate a public domain image of him?
- Supporting Faculty Instruction Needs:** I need peer-reviewed articles for a paper and my instructor said there was a section in the library where I could find all that.
- Community Outreach:** I'm an Auburn resident and I was wondering how I can check out books from the University.
- Marketing and Public Relations:** Need your textbook to study but forgot it at home? Check out core-curriculum textbooks from the Textbook Reserve Circulation Desk, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor. Visit our website: catalog.lib.auburn.edu/textbooks/
- Identifying Development Opportunities:** Do you have a collection of Civil War newspapers?
- Providing Feedback to Library Partners:** Is Caribou Coffee still out of oatmeal?
- Improve Interlibrary Loan Document Delivery:** I need help filling out an ILL request.

Data like these can be used to guide staffing patterns and develop training and continuing Education, but there can be much more to this story...