HOWARD UNIVERSITY 1867

Howard University's use of Credo in First-Year Experience Workshops resulted in 36 times the number of searches and 13 times the number of entries viewed

First-Year Experience Librarian, Niketha McKenzie successfully increased information literacy awareness and transformed their research experience through a Credo inspired workshop. The two-part workshop, used a combination of Credo Online Reference Service and Credo Instruct, fostering a dynamic and collaborative process with faculty while engaging students in a tried and true four-step process. Positive faculty responses have allowed the library to increase the number of sessions, resulting in significantly higher usage of library resources and improved student research.

Preparing First Year Students for the Rigors of Academic Research

Academic research can be overwhelming and daunting for first year students. Instructional librarians and staff noticed common areas where freshmen experienced the most difficulty with the research process. The first area was keyword development in support of creating successful search strategies. Students also needed a process to help them find resources to support their research queries.

	FYE Workshop Sessions Delivered	Searches in Credo	Entries Viewed in Credo
Year 1	487	130	319
Year 2	1152	901	1595
Year 3	3244	4753	4206

Pre-search to Research: Credo as Academic Google

McKenzie and Reference team crafted a two-part library instruction workshop entitled, "Pre-search to Research", which broke down the research process while targeting gaps in students' information literacy skill development. In the Pre-search phase, students were introduced to Credo Online Reference Service and features like its Mind Map brainstorming tool. This feature encouraged students to enhance their academic word selections while providing additional background information about their topics.

The Research phase focused on educating students about the library's resources. Knowing most students used Google as their primary research search engine, she described Credo's databases as "Academic Google" to connect with students to a platform they were comfortable navigating. This analogy helped redirect and refine students' previous research behaviors.

> " **Students have been less frustrated during the process once Credo became our background research platform.**"
>
> — *Niketha McKenzie, First Year Experience Librarian*

The Credo Effect

The Pre-search to Research workshop yielded benefits for students, faculty, and librarians alike.

- Students said the research process made more sense, and that they felt more comfortable using the tools they were introduced to.

- Professors noticed a difference in the way their students approached research and the quality of resources they cited. After years of trying to increase scholarship in first year student research and writing, faculty now had vetted and appropriate sources to refer to first year students.

- Collaboration with faculty is frequently listed as one of librarians' primary obstacles to reaching students, and this program helped to strengthen lines of communication and open up new partnerships across the campus. As more faculty requested the workshop, McKenzie saw an uptick in usage of library resources, especially Credo searches and articles viewed.

> " I am so glad that the library is moving in a direction that meets our students where they are and moves them to understand the need for critical thinking and a step-by-step process for researching."
>
> — *Joyce Camper, Professor, English Department*

ABOUT HOWARD UNIVERSITY
- Located in Washington, DC
- Private HBCU
- Total Enrollment: 9,392

ABOUT NIKETHA MCKENZIE

McKenzie was hired as Howard University's first FYE librarian. She provides programming and instruction for first year students and coordinates the Libraries' outreach program.

ABOUT CREDO ONLINE REFERENCE SERVICE

Credo Online Reference Service enhances the research experience through authoritative reference content and a one-stop exploratory search platform that drives usage of all trusted library resources. Features like Research Quick Tips, Mind Map, and Real-time Reference make this the ideal place for students starting their research or learning about the research process.

ABOUT INSTRUCT

Instruct offers standards-aligned videos, tutorials, and assessment tools for librarians teaching foundational skills like information literacy and critical thinking. Use Instruct in-class, online, or embedded within Learning Management Systems, LibGuides, or websites.