Students at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) are introduced to library research when they take the required first-year writing composition course. In addition to providing students with a foundation in rhetoric, this course also requires students to do in-depth research on a topic of their choice, making it an ideal context for the introduction of information literacy concepts. Each year, librarians teach instruction sessions for this course more than any other subject.

Previously, librarians used paper handouts to help students develop research topics, construct keyword searches, and learn how to use Boolean operators as preparation for using online research tools. While the exercise was helpful, the information gathered was not recorded. Not all students filled out the handout, and some would leave it in the classroom. This felt like a waste of paper and a lost opportunity to engage the students.

Prompted by Shannon R. Simpson’s article about Google Spreadsheets in *College and Research Libraries News* (2012), librarians incorporated web-based Google Forms into instruction sessions, as an alternative to the paper handouts. Forms were used both in class for active learning, as well as out of class, as part of “flipped-classroom” pedagogical models.

Allows for real-time, data-driven adjustments to instruction sessions as needed.

Facilitates assessment & sharing of student work.

Generates student-supplied keywords for database examples.

Provides an easy way to incorporate active-learning.

Saves paper. Models sustainability.

Extremely versatile. Forms can be used for topic development, keyword searches, pre- or post-tests, evaluations, etc.