

## **Creating Engaging Learning Experiences through “Research Minis”**

Teaching research methods offers a unique opportunity to empower students in an area that often seems daunting to them. In keeping with the recommendations of the American Library Association, students develop research competencies through a semester-long series of assignments culminating in a research proposal. These assignments help students demonstrate their critical thinking skills for conducting an analytical literature review and selecting an appropriate research design comprising of qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approach.

Students also participate in some collaborative research projects known as “research minis.” These “research minis” are designed to provide students with hands-on experiences by exposing them to various research methods (e.g., self-completion questionnaire, interview, content analysis, etc.) in order to get a basic familiarity with planning, designing and conducting research, analyzing the results, and presenting a research report. Moreover, these “research minis” help students develop a deeper understanding of sampling techniques and their importance in research; improve their understanding of the ethical issues as relevant to their study; understand the strengths and weaknesses of various data collection methods; and reflect on the challenges they encountered, successes they had, and lessons they learned through analysis of these short exercises. Overall, students highly appreciate these “research minis” and their value in helping them gain the needed confidence, expertise, and perspective in applying research methods to the types of real-world issues they might encounter in their professional career. This talk demonstrates how a learning experience involving “research minis” can be utilized in making a research methods course engaging regardless of course delivery and learning modalities (face-to-face, blended, online).

### **Brief Bios**

**Rajesh Singh** is an Associate Professor in the Division of Library and Information Science (DLIS) at St. John’s University in New York. His research projects have been in the areas of information marketing, branding, and knowledge sharing in organizations. He has published and presented his work internationally in peer-reviewed library and information science journals and scientific conferences. He teaches courses in research methods, cultural competencies, management and leadership, project management, marketing, and related management areas.

Rajesh has a Ph.D. in Information Studies from Åbo Akademi University, Finland. He has previously worked at Emporia State University and the University of British Columbia. His professional website is [lisrajesh.com](http://lisrajesh.com), and he can be reached at [singhr1@stjohns.edu](mailto:singhr1@stjohns.edu).

**Kevin Rioux, PhD** is an Associate Professor of Library and Information Science at St. John's University, New York, where he teaches online courses on academic and public librarianship, collection development, and information use and users. In his teaching and research, Rioux uses social justice metatheory, information behavior frameworks, and integrated human development models to explore issues related to information access and ICTs as tools of social development. He has written articles and contributed book chapters on social justice stances in the information professions and in LIS education. Rioux did his graduate work in LIS at the School of Information, University of Texas at Austin.