

An Assessment of Research Consultation Practices

Lucinda Johnston and Megan Kennedy
University of Alberta Library, Canada

Topics/keywords: Research consultations, surveys, focus groups, evidence-informed decision-making

Introduction

In June 2021, the University of Alberta Library (UAL) established a new operational team, the Assessment and Insight Team (AIT). This team was developed to foster a greater culture of assessment at UAL and build capacity to support assessment projects at the library. One of the first projects the team undertook was an inventory of the assessment practices for each unit in UAL, including a description of and purpose for each assessment activity. With this information, AIT hoped to identify what, if any, gaps there were in current assessment activities and where AIT might provide assistance and/or in-depth support. The inventory data showed that in units where individuals interact directly with professors, instructors and students, e.g. Faculty Engagement, Library Publishing, Research Data Management, Repository Services, teaching and consulting activities were significantly variable, as were the means by which the units and their staff (primarily Librarians, but also assistant staff and other professionals) assessed these activities.

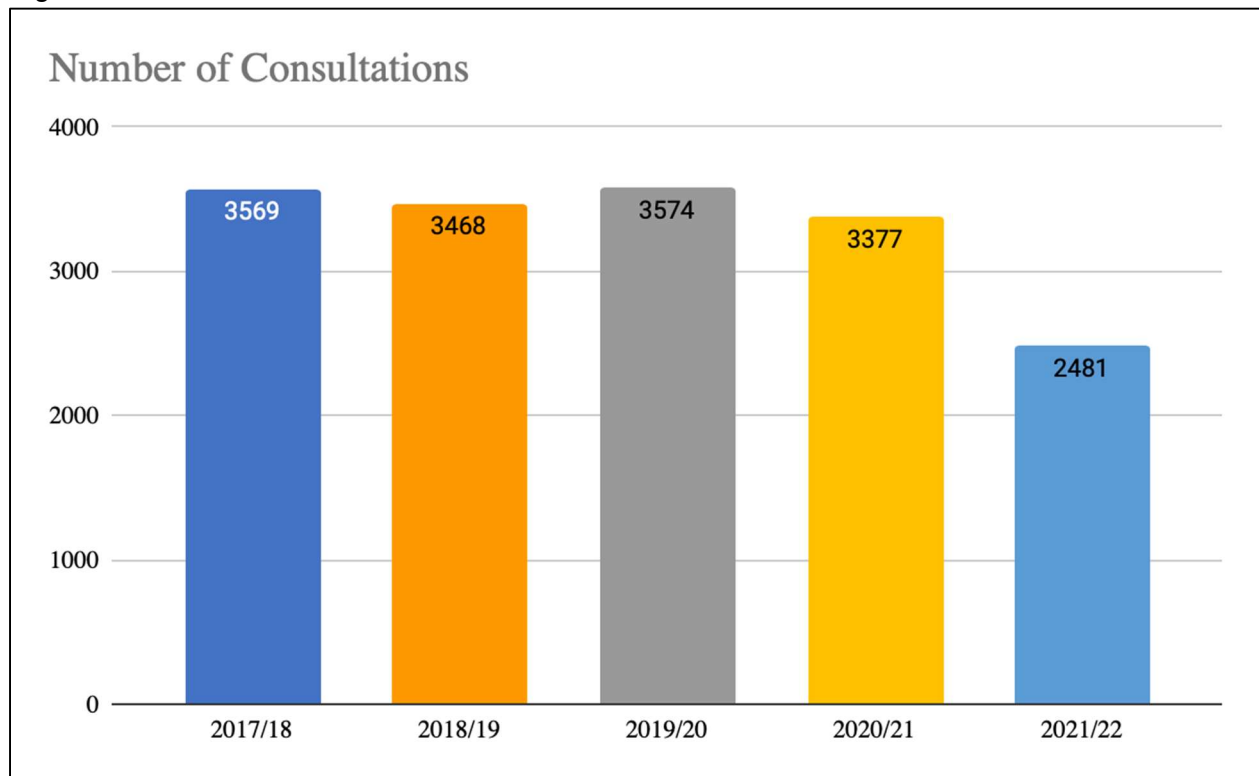
AIT already knew that teaching and consultation formed a substantial portion for many in UAL's library community. Figures 1 and 2 provide a partial picture of the total number of consultations, as well as their total duration and required prep time for the five year period 2017-2022, for library staff at seven service points within the UAL system (Augustana, Bibliothèque Saint-Jean, Cameron, Coutts (closed 2020), Weir, Rutherford and Scott (now Sperber) Libraries) and several functional units e.g. publishing, institutional repository. It does not capture any consultations offered by Special Collections, Digital Scholarship Centre or the University of Alberta Archives. With this knowledge, AIT decided to develop logic models for both teaching and consultation, in an effort to coordinate practice and assessment activities for these integral functions.

Logic models, in use since at least the 1970s, are intended to describe both the factors that contribute to a particular service program as well as the intended outcomes, and sometimes include information about the target audience (e.g. customers) and external factors that may affect the service program.¹ Originally used primarily in social services, government, and not-for-profit sectors, CARL developed their logic models to reflect "the arc of influence of our libraries' programs, resources, and services."²

AIT had intended to develop logic models from the *Library Instruction* logic model exemplar³ developed by the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) as a part of the *CARL Library Impact Framework*.⁴ However, as they worked to adapt the exemplar for UAL purposes,

the leads for this project (the authors) soon realized that there was a conflation of practices and ideas related to consultation and instruction. With the goal of delineating the two functions and also of exploring the needs of the librarian community regarding the assessment of consultations, AIT decided to conduct an investigation of consultation practices in order to answer the question: "How do we conduct and assess consultation?". The intention was to gather data that would allow us to develop a comprehensive logic model which we hoped would standardize consultation practices across UAL; we were not assessing the impact or effectiveness of consultation from a user perspective.

Figure 1

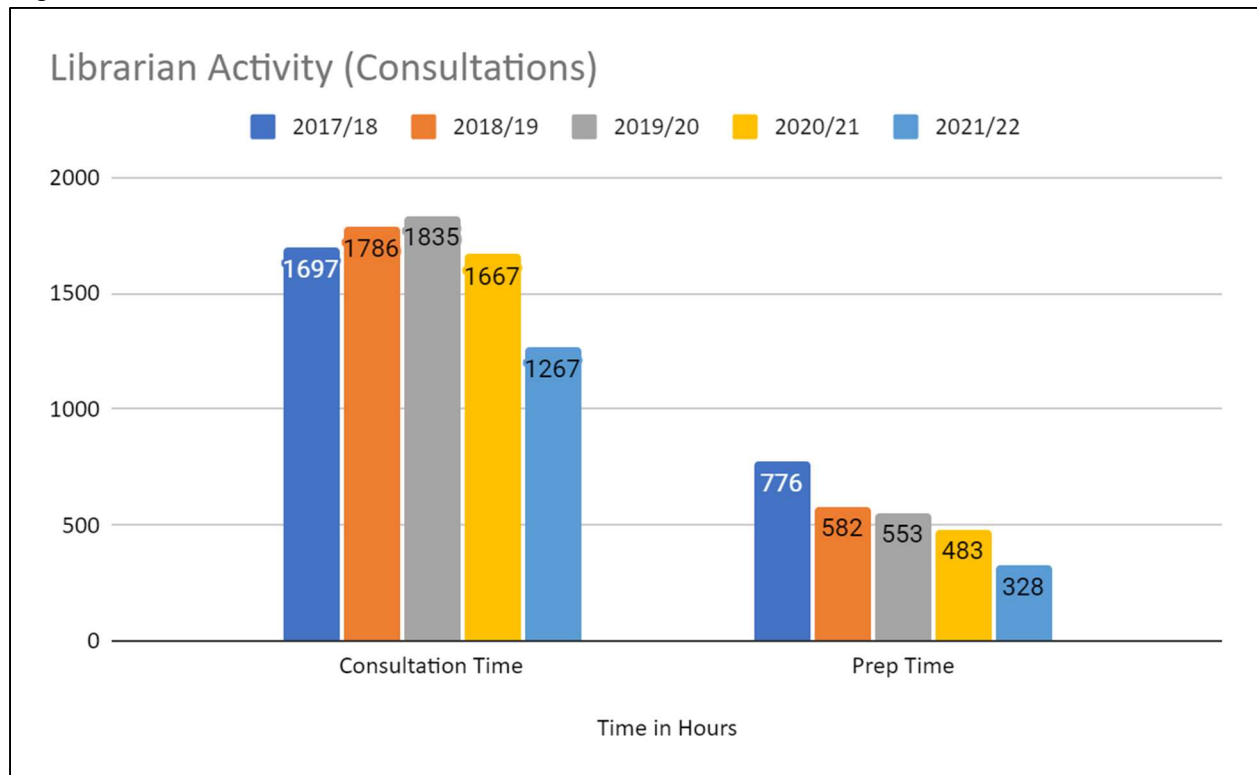


Number of consultations for seven UAL service points (Augustana, Bibliothèque Saint-Jean, Cameron, Coutts (now closed), Weir, Rutherford and Scott (now Sperber) libraries), and several functional groups, from 2017-2022.

This investigation was intended to be informal in nature, and we believed that a survey followed up with a focus group would suit the needs of the project. However, after analysing the initial data from the survey, AIT realized that while these two data collection methods would indeed provide us with valuable information, it was not the information we expected! The initial survey results told us that i) consultations conducted at UAL were highly variable in terms of purpose, audience and process, and ii) individual attitudes and practices related to consult evaluation were not only variable but uniquely personal. It became apparent to us that an attempt to standardize practices through a logic model would likely meet significant resistance. With this data, AIT decided to change their original course of action and our research question "How do

we conduct and assess consultation?" evolved to "How do we support consultation practices at UAL?".

Figure 2



Duration of consultation and prep time of consultations for seven UAL service points (Augustana, Bibliothèque Saint-Jean, Cameron, Coutts (now closed), Weir, Rutherford and Scott (now Sperber) libraries), and several functional groups, from 2017-2022.

Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to map the current themes related to library research consultations. The literature confirmed many of our initial hypotheses and related concerns: 1) research consultations are complex and highly individual; 2) consultations are an important facet of student learning within post-secondary education; 3) little research exists on the skills and knowledge needed to conduct and evaluate effectiveness of research consultations.

Research Consultations are Complex and Highly Individual

Almost all studies consulted for this literature review noted that research consultations are complex and highly individual. As such, the information needs of users varied greatly but some common topics were covered during research consultations. Studies also noted that research consultations serve a wide variety of users, varied by discipline, year of study, and research experience. Traditional librarian knowledge such as choosing databases, choosing keywords for searching, using different search interfaces was called upon, but librarians also provided help interpreting assignments, refining or expanding research topics, evaluating search results for relevance and credibility, writing papers and organizing sources.⁵ Yi suggests that research

consultations are an excellent supplement to classroom instruction given that a librarian's time in the classroom is often limited to one-shot instruction sessions, which often only scratches the surface of a topic.⁶ This idea is reinforced by Gale and Evans, who suggest that research consultations are one of the best ways to offer personalized information literacy instruction.⁷

While the topics of research consultations may vary wildly by discipline, many studies referenced similar practicalities to their research consultation formats. Several sources indicate that one-on-one consultations usually lasted 20-60 minutes, were available to undergraduate, graduate, staff, and faculty, and were requested electronically through some kind of intake form found on the library website.⁸ Librarians were responsible for contacting patrons, usually by email, to set up a time to meet and clarify any initial questions. New technologies, especially during and post-COVID, have prompted discussions of virtual delivery of consultations and even the effect of sharing screencast recordings consultations to support retention and application of information literacy skills and research processes covered in the research consultation.⁹ Many studies also agreed that it was helpful for librarians to have time to prepare for these consultations in order to feel like they effectively met the needs of users.¹⁰

Consultations are Important to Student Learning

Student learning and development of information literacy skills were highlighted as important outcomes of research consultations. One advantage of research consultations over group instruction or teaching is that students get individualized attention that services them are their point of need.¹¹ As well, research consultations play an important role in information literacy programs for students and have the potential to greatly impact student learning.¹² Further, Gale and Evans posit that the role of librarians in research consultations has evolved over time to move beyond simply providing sources to users, and now much more emphasis is placed on information literacy skill development in complex information environments.¹³ However, several studies discuss the evaluation of "impact" or "effectiveness" of consultations on student learning would be extremely difficult to complete due to their varied nature and limited resources within the library to evaluate students' learning outputs, such as assignments and grades.¹⁴

One surprising theme emerged in the literature on the impact of research consultations on student learning: the impact of this service on their mental health, particularly anxiety and stress. Several studies noted that following their research consultation with a librarian, students felt more capable, confident, and ready-to-work.¹⁵ Further, Guth and Dennis suggest that librarians are well suited to quell "library anxiety" during one-on-one research consultations by creating a safe, welcoming environment for students to develop their library-use skills, and overcome feelings of inadequacy and shame, which are hallmark features of library anxiety.¹⁶ They also note that this is an important outcome of research consultations, although extremely difficult to measure, as the mental health of students is a vital contributor to student retention and their academic success.

Skills and Knowledge Needed to Conduct and Evaluate Effectiveness of Research Consultations

Several studies noted that despite the increasing demand for one-on-one research consultations in recent years, little research exists on evaluation of the effectiveness of research consultations or the impact on student learning.¹⁷ Types of studies related to evaluation of research consultations often focused on service planning employing usage statistics, citation analysis,¹⁸ or user experience satisfaction data collected through surveys.¹⁹ Much of this literature also comes primarily from the perspective of users or students,²⁰ or the perspective of students and librarians.²¹ This might be expected as much of the literature on the topic of research consultations in a library environment focuses on evaluating models of service delivery, marketing and promoting,²² or the efficiency of service delivery from the perspective of the librarian as it relates to their workload capacity.²³ However, Butler and Byrd suggest that a focus on user satisfaction as a metric for effectiveness is not necessarily problematic, "because the purpose of a research consultation is guidance and instruction, there is no right or wrong answer to measure accuracy or effectiveness".²⁴ However, they do agree that evaluation of research consultations is under researched from the perspective of the librarian and their perception of successful teaching. Schobert suggests that meaningful or objective evaluation of the impact of an individual research consultation would be nearly impossible as service models, topics, and resources vary so wildly.²⁵ Bradley et al. collected data from students and librarians to demonstrate that research consultations are an effective means to meet student learning expectations, but formal analysis of impact on learning outcomes (e.g. grades, assignments) was not conducted.²⁶ Several studies suggested that research consultations are highly valuable but their assessment remains difficult.²⁷

Studies also suggested that a lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of research consultations could stem from a lack of knowledge and experience on the part of librarians conducting this evaluation, and additionally, that lack of time to meaningfully assess results was noted as an obstacle to evaluation of research consultations.²⁸ Magi and Mardeusz suggest that systematic and structured reflection by librarians after consultations with students is one way assessment might take place.²⁹

Methods

AIT developed a survey that asked broadly about individual consultation practices, including how consultations are evaluated, and challenges to doing so. The questions were first drafted by the authors, and after several iterative rounds of asynchronous and synchronous discussion, were finalized by AIT (see Appendix 1). The survey was built in Qualtrics, a subscription-based online survey software. Our main target audience included librarians, archivists and other professionals working with data in UAL, however, in order to capture any and all consultation activity at UAL, it was distributed via a Google Group email to all library staff, which includes paraprofessionals such as library assistants but does not include administrative staff. It was sent out in early July 2022 and it remained open for one month; responses were recorded anonymously.

The survey was fully completed by 25 respondents, which, with approximately 172 members in the email list, constitutes a 15% response rate. However, although we sent it to all library staff,

when we began analysing the responses, it was evident that most of the responses were in fact from librarians, archivists or other professionals (of which there were approximately 67), which indicates a much higher response rate from the main target audience (approximately 37%). Of the 25 survey respondents, 14 volunteered to participate in a follow-up focus group. The survey responses were subjected to an informal thematic analysis conducted by Johnston and Kennedy.

Due to the number of focus group volunteers, AIT offered two groups and respondents were free to choose which focus group they wanted to attend. The focus groups were scheduled for Oct 19 and Oct 25, 2022 in hybrid format, as many library employees were still working from home at this time. We had five unique participants in each. Four volunteers were unable to attend either session. The focus groups were hosted by Johnston and Kennedy, and questions consisted of engagement and discussion type questions (see Appendix 2), which were drafted and finalized in the same way as the survey questions. Focus group responses were also subjected to an informal thematic analysis conducted by Johnston and Kennedy.

Results

Survey Results

The results from our survey showed that consultations are highly variable in terms of purpose, audience and process, though some generalities did emerge. The most common reasons for consultations were related to student coursework or research, though many finer facets of these activities were identified. As well, although most respondents described a similar approach to their consultations, practices varied depending on the consultation purpose or audience, and in regards to follow up and assessment.

Regarding assessment, many respondents felt that they lacked the time to meaningfully assess their consultations and that, due to several factors, larger scale feedback surveys or forms distributed to students or researchers after their consultation would not be useful or feasible and could be a burden for patrons to complete. However, they did stress that knowing they were being effective during their consultations was important. Self-evaluation was identified as the most common form of assessment, but many respondents felt they lacked the time to thoughtfully review the results and implement changes. Additionally, not only were there concerns about burdening students and low response rates, it was generally expressed that Librarians typically "know" if a consult was effective or not.

Focus Group Results

With our new research question "how do we support consultation practices?" guiding our focus groups, the goal was to gather additional information to create a toolkit to support ongoing consultation practices at UAL, including flexible self-assessment options for librarians to qualitatively evaluate their consultation sessions for the purpose of improving their consultation effectiveness.

Participants identified several reasons for attending a focus group, mostly related to supporting sustainable and effective consults, skills development, and knowledge sharing. Focus group discussions highlighted the differences between consultation and teaching, and reinforced (again) that consultation practices are diverse and unique across the library portfolio. Participants also noted that their experience of a successful consultation might differ from their patrons; however, it was stressed that overall it was important for everyone to have a good experience. Concerns about the efficacy of consultations continued to come forward, as well as the sustainability and quality of this service. It was stressed that consultations should not be evaluated simply for the sake of it; given that time is always in short supply, any evaluation should be meaningful and generate positive changes in librarians' skill sets and student experience.

Regarding a toolkit, participants noted that tools should be easy to access, learn and follow-up on, and should be simple to add into their individual workflows to reduce the "extra" things that librarians need to do. It was also suggested that we test a future toolkit with Library/Information Studies students and/or new career librarians.

Discussion

Based on our findings, the authors wrote a report for library leadership and several recommendations were brought forward, including for AIT to develop a toolkit that could be used for training, onboarding, and general professional development for librarians who deliver consultation services. A Consultation Toolkit was therefore subsequently developed (with additional authors) and it contains i) a checklist of general best practices for conducting consultations, ii) a list of select relevant training resources, and iii) a mix of supportive and self-assessment strategies and resources which includes multiple options to suit the needs of highly variable and individual consultation practices. Additionally, there are links to a reading list of relevant literature (hosted on Talis Aspire) and to a feedback form for users (to permit future improvements). The toolkit has been assigned a Creative Commons License (CC BY-NC 4.0) to allow for future adaptations.

The third section: Strategies for Improving Consultation Practices has five sub-sections:

1. *Recognizing Student Learning and Cognitive Load*. This section utilized Cognitive Load Theory to break down the cues that could indicate student learning or student overwhelm. We worked to provide practical advice such as simple assessment activities that could be employed by librarians during a one-on-one consultation and real-life examples (with solutions) that can contribute to cognitive overload. For example, we noted that distractions, such as cell phone notifications and background noise/conversations can contribute to cognitive overload. The solution is to ensure that your physical or virtual environment is conducive to learning by muting your phone (and asking the student to do the same), turning off computer notifications, and finding a quiet space to meet.
2. *Asking Effective Questions*. This section looked to the worlds of education and business to collate tactics that could be used to ask questions in meaningful ways in order to elicit

better responses from students. In this section, we provided conversational scenarios with strategies for responding to the particular problem presented in the scenario. The strategies included questions not to ask, as well as ways to better phrase a question for a productive response.

3. *Collecting User Feedback*. This section was developed using literature from business and user experience. Results from our survey and focus groups indicated that survey was the most commonly employed method of follow up after a consultation so that is where we put our efforts when developing this section. We provided several best practices for survey question development and provided scenarios with questions to ask and type of question to use. For example, if librarians wanted to know how satisfied users were after a consultation, they could ask "what part(s) of the consultation did you find the most useful?". This question could be answered using an open-ended response option or the librarian could provide a list of multiple-choice options for the user to select from, likely with the option to select more than one response. This section also includes a quick checklist librarians can use to frame their collection of user feedback.
4. *Conducting Effective Self-Assessment*. This section draws on literature from psychology and education where self-assessment, or reflective practices, are commonly used. The results of our survey and focus group indicated that there was an appetite for self-assessment, but many respondents felt they did not have the appropriate knowledge and tools to complete this action. In this section, we provided tips on the practice of self-assessment, such as when to do it, how frequently, for how long, and what methods could be used. We also developed lists of questions that could be adapted by librarians to assist with their reflection. The lists were broken down by theme: backward looking, inward looking, outward looking, and forward looking. As with other sections, a quick reference checklist was included so that librarians could efficiently develop a plan for their self-assessment practices.
5. *Turning Feedback into Actions (for Improved Service Delivery)*. This section was difficult to develop, as little literature was available to guide its development. As such, this section was developed using our own knowledge of service delivery improvement within a library context. Themes explored in this section included considering the context of feedback, identifying patterns in feedback, asking for external feedback to confirm potential actions, and analyzing feedback to help narrow down a focus for improvement. For example, consultation content (was the consultation useful to the learner?), library customer service (was it easy to request a consultation?), consultation promotion and outreach (how widely used are consultations by different learners?).

Use of the toolkit is optional, and assessment tools are intended for the purpose of personal reflection and improvement of consultation effectiveness. The data generated by these tools is for librarians' personal use and professional development only and is not intended to inform librarian performance reviews or system-wide practises. However, librarians may choose to use their evaluation or reflection activities and any related professional growth in their annual reporting. They may also use the tools provided to identify professional development needs related to consultation services. In addition to improved consultation practices, we hope that this

toolkit will help to foster a greater culture of assessment, which is still developing at our institution.

Another recommendation that came out of our focus groups was to establish a community of practice (CoP) dedicated to consultations. This recommendation has yet to be implemented at a system-wide level; however, many library units have internal discussion groups and they have been encouraged to discuss consultation practices regularly, e.g. once per term, as part of their regular meetings.

Conclusion

This is an example of a multifaceted assessment project that engaged a large portion of the professional librarian community at a single institution. This assessment was unique in that we assessed a library service, research consultations, from the perspective of the population delivering the service, rather than the perspective of the users of the service. This paper highlights the significant role that research consultations play within UAL and the critical need to support and enhance these practices through targeted assessment tools. The work conducted by AIT showcases the variability and personal nature of consultation practices across UAL, underscoring the challenges of standardization in such a diverse environment. By shifting our focus from formal evaluation to supporting individual practices, AIT has created a more sustainable approach to consultations that centres on professional development, skill enhancement, and user experience.

The development of a flexible, self-assessment toolkit serves as a vital contribution to library assessment, addressing gaps in current methods while empowering librarians to reflect on and improve their consultation effectiveness. This initiative not only supports individual growth but also fosters a broader culture of assessment within UAL. The toolkit's focus on practical, actionable feedback ensures that consultation services continue to meet the evolving needs of students and researchers, aligning with the larger goals of academic libraries to support teaching, learning, and research. Further, the toolkit will be used to educate future library professionals as it is to be integrated as a core resource for a course on reference and information services with the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta.

This project offers a valuable model for improving the assessment of research consultations, positioning UAL as a leader in developing supportive, assessment-driven tools for librarians' professional growth. Initial concerns about resistance to assessment were mitigated by framing the initiative as a supportive endeavor rather than peer evaluation, illustrating the potential for successful participation in similar projects.

This assessment project evolved organically in response to the data collected, highlighting the importance of flexibility in project planning. The findings informed evidence-based decisions to support consultation practices and led to the development of a practical resource to aid librarians in delivering effective research consultations.

Copyright Notice

—Copyright 2024 Lucinda Johnston and Megan Kennedy
This work is licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the members of the Assessment and Insight Team, Kim Bates, Christine Brown, Connie Winther and Natasha Nunn for their valuable feedback and support throughout the surveys, focus groups and toolkit development. A great big thank you to everyone at UAL who took the time to fill out the survey and participate in the focus groups. And of course, we would also like to acknowledge and thank the additional authors of the Consultation Toolkit: Carolyn Carpan, Doris Wagner and Lydia Zvyagintseva.

Access the Consultation Toolkit

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WhKi33tUyuvNDneAn1gl7X_5crHnRuj9d_Ju5_eJcNk/edit?usp=sharing

Endnotes

- ¹ John A. McLaughlin and Gretchen B. Jordan, "Logic models: a Tool for Telling Your Program's Performance Story," *Evaluation and Program Planning* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 66, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-7189\(98\)00042-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-7189(98)00042-1).
- ² "CARL Library Impact Framework," Canadian Association of Research Libraries, accessed September 24, 2024, <https://www.carl-abrc.ca/measuring-impact/carl-library-impact-framework/>.
- ³ "Logic Model – Library Instruction," Canadian Association of Research Libraries, December 13, 2021, <https://www.carl-abrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Logic-Model-%E2%80%93-Library-Instruction.pdf>.
- ⁴ "CARL Library Impact Framework."
- ⁵ Trina J. Magi and Patricia E. Mardeusz, "What Students Need from Reference Librarians," *College & Research Libraries News* 74, no. 6 (2013a): 291, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.74.6.8959>; Trina J. Magi and Patricia E. Mardeusz, "Why Some Students Continue to Value Individual, Face-to-Face Research Consultations in a Technology-Rich World," *College & Research Libraries* 74, no. 6 (2013b): 610, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl12-363>.
- ⁶ Hua Yi, "Individual Research Consultation Service: An Important Part of an Information Literacy Program," *Reference Services Review* 31, no. 4 (2003): 348, <https://doi.org/10.1108/00907320310505636>.
- ⁷ Crystal D. Gale and Betty S. Evans, "Face-to-Face: The Implementation and Analysis of a Research Consultation Service," *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 14, no. 3 (2007): 89-90, https://doi.org/10.1300/J106v14n03_06.
- ⁸ Allison Faix et al., "Research Consultation Effectiveness for Freshman and Senior Undergraduate Students," *Reference Services Review* 42, no. 1 (2014): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-05-2013-0024>; Karine Fournier and Lindsey Sikora, "How Canadian Librarians Practice and Assess Individualized Research Consultations in Academic Libraries," *Performance Measurement & Metrics* 18, no. 2 (2017): 151, <https://doi.org/10.1108/PMM-05-2017-0022>; Gale and Evans, "Face-to-Face," 89; Deborah Lee, "Research Consultations: Enhancing Library Research Skills," *Reference Librarian* 41, no. 85 (2004): 173, https://doi.org/10.1300/J120v41n85_13.
- ⁹ Raeda Anderson et al., "Library Consultations and a Global Pandemic: An Analysis of Consultation Difficulty during COVID-19 across Multiple Factors," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 47, no. 1 (2021): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2020.102273>; Darren Flynn, "Evaluating a Recorded Appointment Service for Individual Research Consultations between Librarians and Allied Health Students," *Reference Services Review* 49, no. 3/4 (2021): 231-232, <https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-04-2021-0011>.
- ¹⁰ Faix et al., "Research Consultation Effectiveness," 14; Fournier and Sikora, "How Canadian Librarians Practice and Asses," 151-152; Gale and Evans, "Face-to-Face," 94-95; Lee, "Research Consultations," 173.
- ¹¹ Fournier and Sikora, "How Canadian Librarians Practice and Asses," 153; Yi, "Individual Research Consultation Service," 346.
- ¹² Gale and Evans, "Face-to-Face," 96; Magi and Mardeusz, "What Students Need," 290-291.
- ¹³ Gale and Evans, "Face-to-Face," 90.
- ¹⁴ Kathy Butler and Jason Byrd, "Research Consultation Assessment: Perceptions of Students and Librarians," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 42, no. 1 (2016): 86, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2015.10.011>; Krista M. Soria et al., "The Impact of Academic Library Resources on Undergraduates' Degree Completion," *College & Research Libraries* 78, no. 6 (2017): 812-823, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.78.6.812.e>
- ¹⁵ Fournier and Sikora, "How Canadian Librarians Practice and Asses," 153; Gale and Evans, "Face-to-Face," 92-93; LuMarie Guth and Bradford Dennis, "Student Stress and the Research Consultation: The Effect of the Research Consultation on Project Stress and Overall Stress and Applications for Student

- Wellness," *College & Research Libraries* 85, no. 5 (2024): 744, <http://doi.org/10.5860/crl.85.5.739>; Magi and Mardeusz, "Why Some Students," 611.
- ¹⁶ Guth and Dennis, "Student Stress and the Research Consultation," 739-740.
- ¹⁷ Karine Fournier and Lindsey Sikora, "Individualized Research Consultations in Academic Libraries: A Scoping Review of Practice and Evaluation Methods," *Evidence Based Library & Information Practice* 10, no. 4 (2015): 255-256, <https://doi.org/10.18438/B8ZC7W>; Fournier and Sikora, "How Canadian Librarians Practice and Asses," 154-155; Lee, "Research Consultations," 179; Magi and Mardeusz, "What Students Need," 288; Magi and Mardeusz, "Why Some Students," 608.
- ¹⁸ Thomas L. Reinsfelder, "Citation Analysis as a Tool to Measure the Impact of Individual Research Consultations," *College & Research Libraries* 73, no. 3 (2012): 263-264, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl-261>.
- ¹⁹ Fournier and Sikora, "Individualized Research Consultations," 261-265.
- ²⁰ Emily Rogers and Howard S. Carrier, "A Qualitative Investigation of Patrons' Experiences with Academic Library Research Consultations," *Reference Services Review* 45, no. 1 (2017): 18–19 and 22, <https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-04-2016-0029>.
- ²¹ Butler and Byrd, "Research Consultation Assessment," 84; Gale and Evans, "Face-to-Face," 91.
- ²² Michelle Dalton, "How Individual Consultations with a Librarian Can Support Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences," *Journal of Information Literacy* 13, no. 2 (2019): 169, <https://doi.org/10.11645/13.2.2621>; Rogers and Carrier, "A Qualitative Investigation," 35.
- ²³ Faix et al., "Research Consultation Effectiveness," 4-5; Rogers and Carrier, "A Qualitative Investigation," 35.
- ²⁴ Butler and Byrd, "Research Consultation Assessment," 85
- ²⁵ Tim Schobert, "Term-Paper Counseling: Individualized Bibliographic Instruction," *RQ* 22, no. 2 (1982): 149, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25826898>.
- ²⁶ Doreen R. Bradley et al., "Advancing the Reference Narrative: Assessing Student Learning in Research Consultations," *Evidence Based Library & Information Practice* 15, no. 1 (2020): 12-14, <https://doi.org/10.18438/ebliip29634>.
- ²⁷ Bradley et al., "Advancing the Reference Narrative," 14; Faix et al., "Research Consultation Effectiveness," 14; Gale and Evans, "Face-to-Face," 96; Guth and Dennis, "Student Stress and the Research Consultation," 751-752; Magi and Mardeusz, "What Students Need," 290-291.
- ²⁸ Fournier and Sikora, "How Canadian Librarians Practice and Asses," 152.
- ²⁹ Magi and Mardeusz, "What Students Need," 290.

Bibliography

- Anderson, Raeda, Katherine Fisher, and Jeremy Walker. "Library Consultations and a Global Pandemic: An Analysis of Consultation Difficulty during COVID-19 across Multiple Factors." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 47, no. 1 (2021): Article 102273. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2020.102273>.
- Bradley, Doreen R., Angie Oehrli, Soo Young Rieh, Elizabeth Hanley, and Brian S. Matzke. "Advancing the Reference Narrative: Assessing Student Learning in Research Consultations." *Evidence Based Library & Information Practice* 15, no. 1 (2020): 4–19. <https://doi.org/10.18438/ebliip29634>.
- Butler, Kathy, and Jason Byrd. "Research Consultation Assessment: Perceptions of Students and Librarians." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 42, no. 1 (2016): 83–86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2015.10.011>.
- Canadian Association of Research Libraries. "CARL Library Impact Framework." Accessed September 24, 2024. <https://www.carl-abrc.ca/measuring-impact/carl-library-impact-framework/>.
- Canadian Association of Research Libraries. "Logic Model – Library Instruction." December 13, 2021. <https://www.carl-abrc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Logic-Model-%E2%80%93-Library-Instruction.pdf>.
- Dalton, Michelle. "How Individual Consultations with a Librarian Can Support Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences." *Journal of Information Literacy* 13, no. 2 (2019): 163–72. <https://doi.org/10.11645/13.2.2621>.
- Faix, Allison, Amanda MacDonald, and Brooke Taxakis. "Research Consultation Effectiveness for Freshman and Senior Undergraduate Students." *Reference Services Review* 42, no. 1 (2014): 4–15. <https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-05-2013-0024>.
- Fournier, Karine, and Lindsey Sikora. "Individualized Research Consultations in Academic Libraries: A Scoping Review of Practice and Evaluation Methods." *Evidence Based Library & Information Practice* 10, no. 4 (2015): 247–67. <https://doi.org/10.18438/B8ZC7W>.
- Fournier, Karine, and Lindsey Sikora. "How Canadian Librarians Practice and Assess Individualized Research Consultations in Academic Libraries." *Performance Measurement & Metrics* 18, no. 2 (2017): 148–57. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PMM-05-2017-0022>.
- Flynn, Darren. "Evaluating a Recorded Appointment Service for Individual Research Consultations between Librarians and Allied Health Students." *Reference Services Review* 49, no. 3/4 (2021): 231–49. <https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-04-2021-0011>.

- Gale, Crystal. D., and Betty S. Evans. "Face-to-Face: The Implementation and Analysis of a Research Consultation Service." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 14, no. 3 (2007): 85–101. https://doi.org/10.1300/J106v14n03_06.
- Guth, LuMarie, and Bradford Dennis. "Student Stress and the Research Consultation: The Effect of the Research Consultation on Project Stress and Overall Stress and Applications for Student Wellness." *College & Research Libraries* 85, no. 5 (2024): 739–54. <http://doi.org/10.5860/crl.85.5.739>.
- Lee, Deborah. "Research Consultations: Enhancing Library Research Skills." *Reference Librarian* 41, no. 85 (2004): 169–80. https://doi.org/10.1300/J120v41n85_13.
- Magi, Trina, J., and Patricia E. Mardeusz. "What Students Need from Reference Librarians." *College & Research Libraries News* 74, no. 6 (2013a): 288–91. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.74.6.8959>.
- Magi, Trina, J., and Patricia E. Mardeusz. "Why Some Students Continue to Value Individual, Face-to-Face Research Consultations in a Technology-Rich World." *College & Research Libraries* 74, no. 6 (2013b): 605–18. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl12-363>.
- McLaughlin, John, A., & Gretchen B. Jordan. (1999). "Logic Models: A Tool for Telling Your Program's Performance Story." *Evaluation and Program Planning* 22, no. 1 (1999), 65–72. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-7189\(98\)00042-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-7189(98)00042-1).
- Reinsfelder, Thomas L. "Citation Analysis as a Tool to Measure the Impact of Individual Research Consultations." *College & Research Libraries* 73, no. 3 (2012): 263–77. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl-261>.
- Rogers, Emily, and Howard S. Carrier. "A Qualitative Investigation of Patrons' Experiences with Academic Library Research Consultations." *Reference Services Review* 45, no. 1 (2017): 18–37. <https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-04-2016-0029>.
- Schobert, Tim. "Term-Paper Counseling: Individualized Bibliographic Instruction." *RQ* 22, no. 2 (1982): 146–51. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25826898>.
- Soria, Krista M., Jan Fransen, and Shane Nackerud. "The Impact of Academic Library Resources on Undergraduates' Degree Completion." *College & Research Libraries* 78, no. 6 (2017): 812–823. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.78.6.812>
- Wholey, Joseph, S. *Evaluation--promise and performance*. Urban Institute, 1979.
- Yi, Hua. "Individual Research Consultation Service: An Important Part of an Information Literacy Program." *Reference Services Review* 31, no. 4 (2003): 342–50. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00907320310505636>.

Appendix 1 - Survey Questions

1. For what purpose(s) do you usually provide consultations? E.g. Course assignments, research projects, using software, learning about collections, etc. Put in as much detail as you can.
2. What does a standard consultation “look like” for you. Be as descriptive as possible.
3. How do you evaluate your consultations? Select as many as apply:
 - a. I do not evaluate my consultations
 - b. User feedback via a Google form
 - c. User feedback via an email
 - d. User feedback: in-person
 - e. Asking colleagues for feedback/tips
 - f. Self-reflection
 - g. Other
4. What are some challenges to evaluating your consultations? Select as many as apply:
 - a. Time constraints
 - b. Availability of assessment tools
 - c. Familiarity with assessment tools
 - d. Motivation
 - e. Usefulness of results
 - f. Other
5. Whether you currently evaluate your consultations or not, what would you hope to learn from the evaluation of consultation activities? Select as many as apply:
 - a. Student learning (e.g. search strategies, complete assignment, citations)
 - b. Student satisfaction (e.g. ease of scheduling, happiness with results, relationship with library)
 - c. Your teaching effectiveness (e.g. communication, concepts, strategies)
 - d. Other
6. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about the evaluation of your consultation work?
7. If you are interested in attending a focus group to help us answer additional questions about the evaluation of consultation work, please provide your email address. We expect the focus group to take place in October or November.

Appendix 2 - Focus Group Questions

1. What motivated you to participate in this focus group? What is it about the evaluation of consultations that is important to you?
2. How is consultation different from teaching in your mind?
3. Many survey responses indicated that "you know" when a consult has been effective, i.e. successful. Is this true for you? How do you know this (or not)?
4. Do you think that your interpretation of "success" is the same or different from your clients
5. If you were talking to a new librarian :
 - a. What would you tell them about how to conduct consultations and how to evaluate them?
 - b. What tools or training would you recommend to them?
6. As an experienced librarian, what are your needs for support to conduct and evaluate consultations?
7. In regards to the tools and training you have identified [Q5], what are there potential barriers that would prevent you from using/taking advantage of these resources?
8. How might/could you use self-evaluation data to make actionable changes?
9. Anything to add to our conversation from today?