FINAL REPORT

Team Name:

Team Ice Skates (Research Consultations)

CARLI Counts Participants and Team Mentor:

Sierra Campbell, Research and Instruction Librarian - STEM, Nursing and Health Sciences, Lewis University

Valerie Neylon, Associate Professor, Library, Richard J. Daley College/City Colleges of Chicago

Edward Remus, Assistant Professor, Social Sciences Librarian, Northeastern Illinois University

Rebecca Yowler, Assistant Librarian for Research and Instruction, Knox College

Mentor: Kris Veldheer, Director, Paul Bechtold Library, Catholic Theological Union

Project Title:

Research Consultations and research confidence at a diversity of academic libraries

Abstract:

We used a ten-question survey to learn how library users rated their research confidence after participating in a research consultation with a librarian, and our research is ongoing.

Motivation(s) for Project:

Each member of the Consultation team had a different motivation for doing this project. Primary motivations were:

- Re-evaluating Reference Desk services
- Expanding reference offerings
- Increasing student engagement
- Demonstrating library impact on student success

Bradley et al. discuss students' perception of learning objectives within a research consultation and discuss the measurement of confidence and success. [1] Their work includes a Likert scale that we used a model for some of our survey questions. Butler and Byrd also

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[1] Bradley et al., "Advancing the Reference Narrative."

discuss student research confidence as well as how both students and librarians assess the success of consultations.[2] Although Faix et al. specifically discuss first-year and senior undergraduate students, they use surveys to measure research consultation effectiveness.[3] Gale and Evans use a survey including a Likert scale to measure research consultation services at Missouri State.[4] While their institution is considerably larger than any institution in our group, they provide a valuable discussion of the gap between instruction and the reference desk. Magi and Mareduz define the research consultation as, "a form of reference service in which the librarian meets individually with a student (or several students who are working together on a group project) in a scheduled session away from the reference desk."[5] We coupled this definition with the READ scale[6] to define Research Consultations for the purpose of our study. We also drew upon work from Martin and Park[7] and Kwon [8] to understand "confidence" in relation to library services and library anxiety.

Combining the motivations of the various group members and the information from the literature led us to our own definition of a research consultation and the development of a survey to assess student research confidence before and after a research consultation.

Partners and Stakeholders:

This project included many partners and stakeholders. The most important stakeholder is the student population. They are the reason why we undertook this project: to determine if our research consultations are effective, and if not, why? What can be modified to ensure that students feel more confident following a research consultation, leading to better student outcomes? Students were also our partners in this research insofar as they agreed to participate in the survey so that we could collect and analyze data.

Along those same lines, faculty are stakeholders. Faculty want to see student success, so evaluating our work shows faculty that encouraging students to connect with a librarian for research assistance is a way to support student success. Additionally, our evidence can be used to market and promote the library to faculty who may be resistant or unaware of the services.

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[2] Butler and Byrd, "Research Consultation Assessment."
[3] Faix, MacDonald, and Taxakis, "Research Consultation Effectiveness for Freshman and Senior Undergraduate Students."
[4] Gale and Evans, "Face-to-Face."
[5] Magi and Mardeusz, "Why Some Students Continue to Value Individual, Face-to-Face Research Consultations in a Technology-Rich World | Magi | College & Research Libraries," 605.
[6] Gerlich and Berard, "Testing the Viability of the READ Scale (Reference Effort Assessment Data)©."
[7] Martin and Park, "Reference Desk Consultation Assignment."
[8] KWON, "A Mixed-Methods Investigation of the Relationship between Critical Thinking and Library Anxiety among Undergraduate Students in Their Information Search Process."

Each of our libraries were also stakeholders in this project. Our libraries vary in size and scope, as do our institutions. As noted elsewhere, each library had different motivations for participating in CARLI counts, but also each library had different levels of participation and buy-in.

Inquiry Question:

To what extent do librarian-led research consultations (as defined by levels 4 and above on the READ scale) impact library users' perceptions of their research confidence?

Study Participants/Population:

Participants in research consultations at all four participating institutions. While the primary participants were students, anyone who participated in a research consultation was eligible to participate.

Method(s) of Data Collection and Analysis:

The method of data collection was through a web survey administered through LibWizard, which is part of the LibApps suite of products from Springshare LLC. The survey was hosted specifically through Lewis University's LibWizard instance since they subscribe to the product. Sierra Campbell created the survey and was the only member of the team who had access to the survey and its responses while the survey was live, although updates on survey responses were shared in weekly meetings with team members. The team had discussed other options, such as Google Forms, but we decided on LibWizard since it would make the overall data analyzation easier as the data can be exported easily into a spreadsheet.

The survey was open to students, faculty and staff at member institutions and was completely voluntary with only one required question, that being the informed consent question. All other questions were completely voluntary and survey participants could exit at any time. We asked about their confidence level before having a consultation, how and when the consultation took place, the length of the consultation and whether they had prior experience using the library. We then asked what they felt like after having a consultation, and finally which institution they were affiliated with.

Solicitation was done through various methods, email after the appointment was completed, through virtual chat, and also in-person solicitation. We had a canned message that was prepared for both email and virtual chat, and a bookmark with a QR code that was used for in-person solicitation and then given to the participant. After the participants consented, they were given a link to the survey. If they did not consent, they were not given a link, and no email responses were received if a participant was contacted via that method.

As we are still in the process of collecting data, we do not yet know how we will visualize it in its final form.

Findings:

We learned the intricacies of IRB as it applies to four different colleges. We learned that it is not easy, or speedy, to get approval. We made edits throughout, based on feedback from our college IRBs and based on the way the project needed to be changed, as the timeline and scope of the project evolved. We found challenges in working within our own institutions in trying to include all librarians in the data collection. Some colleagues had questions about the methodology and some required further training, and some declined to participate at all.

From our data, we learned that students generally feel more confident in their research abilities after meeting with a librarian. However, we thought deeply about the nuances of our results and saw that often it is not an easy answer. We learned to look at the differences between a community college and a four-year research institution, and how to evaluate our own services and quality of service.

We have decided to continue our research since we were unable to meet the goals set in the time frame we set, due to IRB delays.

Use of Findings:

We expect the results of the surveys to show that students feel more confident after a research consultation with a librarian. This is what our data is showing so far, but we will continue to collect data. If the results remain consistent with students expressing a higher level of confidence after a research consultation, we can use this data to advocate for more library services. Those enhanced or additional library services can vary, college by college, but can include additional hours of operation for the library, both in-person or remotely, and hiring more librarians. We can also advocate to faculty to add library instruction to their courses so that students can get better acquainted not only with the services, but also the library staff/faculty.

Next Steps and Other Results:

We will be presenting our trials and tribulations of working together at the Illinois Library Association Conference in October. We will focus on the difficulties of working with the IRB parameters at each of our different colleges. We will also discuss the challenges of scope and scale with each of our different environments.

Additional Reflections (Is there additional context that would help others make sense of the project and/or be able to replicate it? Issues or challenges that were overcome? Resources/budget needed to carry out the study?)

Sierra:

We all worked well on this project, which was great for us, but the greatest challenge for us was the IRB process. I personally had never gone through it before, but even though it took a long time for all of us to receive approval we were eventually able to start our data collection.   This was an interesting project to work on since it needed to work across our institutions.

Since I was primarily tasked with creating the survey, this was also a challenge for me. I had never created a lengthy survey in LibWizard before, but seeking input from my team members helped a lot in formulating the right questions to ask.

I personally did not have problems seeking buy-in from others since another member of my library had already participated in CARLI Counts Cohort 2. She was invaluable in being able to talk about the mechanics of CARLI Counts and also what to expect as I went through this project.

Valerie:

A strong team and good sense of teamwork is a big asset to this project. The challenges we had were with the IRB process and we worked through it together. Being adaptable is necessary to find success in this project as our original goals shifted.

Scaling the project per different institutions is also important when learning to manage expectations. We assumed that this would be easy and everything would go off without a hitch, but that was not the case. We originally planned to gather 300 responses, but with the delay in IRB and with the different levels of engagement at each school, our number of responses was much lower. At my institution, I was unable to get buy-in from the adjunct librarians, so I was the only person collecting data, unfortunately. This, coupled with our different semester schedules, led to a lower response rate than expected and guided us to lengthen our project timeline.

Ed:

One obstacle we faced was institutional differences in recruitment patterns. Across our institutions, our research consultations vary by factors including: 1) Whether the consultation takes place at a reference desk, via chat, virtually, and/or via email; 2) Whether the investigator-consultant is the sole or primary consultant, or one consultant among many; and 3) Whether investigator-consultants can recruit participants on behalf of

non-investigator consultants. In the face of this obstacle, we embraced a "flexible" model of data collection to address differences in recruitment patterns across institutions. We created a survey option for in-person participants (ideally suited to the reference desk); we recruited some participants retroactively (in some cases, up to two months after they received a consultation); and, when possible (thanks to TutorTrac, a student tracking software), we delegated the investigator to recruit on behalf of other consultants.

Our 'flexible' model of data collection proved well suited to the specific demands and requirements of CARLI Counts. Nevertheless, it raises questions about the quality of our data: Is the in-person survey comparatively inconvenient for respondents, and would this affect responses? Does retroactive recruitment affect response quality? Does delegated recruitment affect response quality? And, if we were to replicate an improved version of this study, could we design it so as to be able to generate a sample size? None of these issues ultimately prevented us from securing approval from the NEIU IRB (despite a months-long, back-and-forth approval process), but they could become an obstacle if we were to attempt to publish our findings in a scholarly journal.

Becca:

Overall, the process was a positive experience. The biggest frustration was the IRB process, particularly with the varied requirements at different institutions. It would be really helpful to gather the IRB processes from various institutions ahead of time and designate them as complex, streamlined, or in-flux (as described in our poster, for example) so that groups know ahead of time what they are getting into. As far as the project itself, I was disappointed in our response rate, but I know that was impacted by our late start on data collection. I was pleased with Knox's level of participation in recruiting participants for the survey. It would be interesting to administer this survey to a larger group of participating institutions to see if the results are comparable.

I do not question the quality of our data or our data collection. I feel strongly that each library recruited appropriately and that our methods of collection were sound. Retroactive collection would not have been necessary had we been able to secure IRB approval earlier and if we had had immediate buy-in from the rest of the library staff at NEIU.

Timeline:

- Began CARLI counts 10/21

- Survey completed and launched in December 2021

- IRB submission dates for all schools:

- January 20th, 2022 - Submitted IRB to Northeastern Illinois University
- February 23rd, 2022- Submitted IRB to Knox College
- February 23rd, 2022 - Submitted IRB to Lewis University
- February 25th, 2022 - Submitted IRB to Richard J. Daley College
- February 28th, 2022 - Received IRB approval from Lewis University
- March 1st, 2022 - Received IRB approval from Knox College
- April 4th, 2022 - Received IRB approval from Richard J. Daley College
- April 6th, 2022 - Received IRB approval from Northeastern Illinois University

- April - began data collection

- October 18-20, 2022 - ILA presentation

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Appendix

A copy of our survey questions is attached in PDF form.

Research Help Survey

You are receiving this short two minute survey because you received research help from a librarian at your institution. This survey is being conducted for a research project facilitated by CARLI Counts. All responses submitted through this survey are kept anonymous. Your data will not be shared outside of this research project. You must be 18 years of age or older to complete this survey.

For more information about this project, please visit: https://www.carli.illinois.edu/products-services/prof-devel/carli-counts

Click the "Begin" button below to start.

Begin

Research Help Survey

1. The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether to be a part of this study. Information that is more detailed is listed later in this form.

- The purpose of this research is: This research study investigates whether a research consultation provided by an academic library to a student library user affects the student's self-reported research confidence.
- You are being invited to participate because you have participated in a research consultation provided by the library.
- You will be asked to do the following: participate in a survey
- We expect you to be in this study for the time it takes to complete this survey (approximately 2 minutes)
- Participation in this study poses no direct risk and you can leave the study at any time.

Additional Information about this research study:

PROCEDURES INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY:

1. Co-Investigators: Rebecca Yowler (Assistant Librarian for Research and Instruction at Knox College), Valerie Neylon (Library Faculty at City Colleges of Chicago), and Sierra Campbell (Instruction and Research Librarian at Lewis University).
2. Research will be completed online through a survey. The participant pool will come from investigators' institutions. Estimated timeline of completion – calendar year 2022.
3. The target study sample size is 300 participants but is dependent on the number of research consultations provided.
4. Survey results from across participating institutions will feed into a common spreadsheet of survey results. The first survey question will filter out library users who are younger than 18 years of age. Otherwise, the only demographic information gathered about library users will be the university/institution from which they received research assistance and their status at the institution (i.e. undergraduate student, graduate student, faculty, or staff). The survey asks users about their level of research confidence before and after a research consultation.
5. Research consultations are a standard practice in academic libraries and are therefore a customary educational activity.
6. No audio or video recording will be conducted on survey participants.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS: Participating in the study is not expected to be of direct benefit to you, but the information you provide will help the researchers understand the importance of a research consultation in an academic setting.

POSSIBLE RISKS: We do not predict distressed participants as part of this study. However, if at any time you find yourself uncomfortable, you may skip a question or exit the survey. Should distress continue, participants should know that they can exit the survey at any time by closing their browser.

YOUR PARTICIPATION AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT: Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Refusal to participate or a decision to discontinue participation will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study records.

1. Data will be collected anonymously using LibWizard software and aggregated into a common database to which only the investigators have access.
2. The data will be collected and stored through the end of 2022.
3. The data will be stored in a password-protected Google Drive folder.
4. The data will not be shared with anyone outside of the study team.
5. Data will be anonymized through LibWizard and no identifying information will be collected in the survey.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS: If you have any questions regarding your participation, please feel free to contact the researcher at your institution, Ed Remus (Social Sciences Librarian at Northeastern Illinois University – email: e-remus@neiu.edu), Rebecca Yowler (Assistant Librarian for Research and Instruction at Knox College – email: rayowler@knox.edu), Valerie Neylon (Library Faculty at City Colleges of Chicago – email: vneylon@ccc.edu), and Sierra Campbell (Instruction and Research Librarian at Lewis University – email: scampbell5@lewisu.edu). If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you can contact the Institutional Review Board at (773) 442-4674 or at IRB@neiu.edu.

PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT: If you would like to participate, please read the statement below and sign the consent form.

I have read the above information about the study and have been able to express questions and concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the research investigator. I believe I understand the study.

By checking YES below, I am confirming that I am at least 18 years old, and I am providing signed consent to participate in this study. (required)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Next   Page: 1 of 9

Research Help Survey

2. At which institution did you receive research help?

○ City Colleges of Chicago - Richard J. Daley College

○ Knox College

○ Lewis University

○ Northeastern Illinois University

Next   Page: 2 of 9

Research Help Survey

3. How confident were you using the library to find supporting materials for your assignments? (Please rate your confidence on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being "Most Confident" and 1 being "Least Confident.")

Least Confident   Most Confident   Clear

Next   Page: 3 of 9

25% complete

Research Help Survey

4. How confident are you now in being able to find supporting materials for your assignments after meeting with a librarian? (Please rate your confidence level on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being "Most Confident" and 1 being "Least Confident.")

Least Confident   Most Confident   Clear

Research Help Survey

5. How did the meeting with a librarian take place? (check all that apply)

☐ Video Conference (Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, etc.)

☐ Virtual Chat

☐ In-Person

☐ Phone

Next   Page: 5 of 9

Research Help Survey

6. How long was the meeting?

- ( ) 0-5 minutes
- ( ) 6-15 minutes
- ( ) 16-30 minutes
- ( ) 31-60 minutes
- ( ) Over 60 minutes

[Next]   Page: 6 of 9

50% complete

Research Help Survey

7. What is your previous experience with the library, if any? (Check all that apply)

☐ I have visited the library building.

☐ I have visited the library website.

☐ I have attended a librarian-led instruction session with my class.

☑ I have had a one-on-one meeting, chat, or email with a librarian.

☐ I have never used the library.

☐ My professor referred me to the library for help.

How would you describe your previous experience? (Check all that apply)

☐ The librarian was so helpful that I asked for help again.

☐ I didn't get what I needed last time so I asked for help again.

[Next]   Page: 7 of 9

If participants select the answer shown on the screen, an additional question will appear, prompting them for more information.

Research Help Survey

8. What is your current status at your institution?

○ Undergraduate Student

○ Graduate Student

○ Faculty

○ Staff

Next   Page: 8 of 9

78% complete

Research Help Survey

Thank you. We are sorry you do not meet the requirements to take our survey at this time.

Click to Submit Survey   Page: 9 of 9

If participants select "No," to the informed consent question, they will see this screen.

0% complete

Research Help Survey

Thank you for completing this survey. Your responses have been recorded.