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TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

3420 Executive Center Drive, Suite 301, Austin, TX 78731

512.328.1518 www.txla.org




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# TLA 2021 Contributed Papers

Every year, the Texas Library Association's Contributed Papers subcommittee provides a Scholarly Forum to present at the TLA Annual Conference and an opportunity to publish in *Texas Library Journal*. This is a great opportunity for academic and special librarians to participate at the conference, but any library type is welcome! This year, papers addressing a wide variety of research conducted in academic, public and special libraries were selected.

Contributed Papers will be back in 2022! To be considered, a 200-word (maximum) abstract will be due in early 2022. Watch for exact dates to be announced soon. Submission guidelines will be posted on the **Presentation Opportunities** page of the TLA website.

TLA 2021

APRIL 22 – 24

CELEBRATE DIFFERENCES
EMPOWER VOICES

# Facility and Collection Usage at an Upper-Level Academic Institution During a Pandemic

By Margaret Dawson

Texas A&M University - Central Texas is the only upper-level only institution in Texas, and one of the few public upper-level only institutions across the country. This model was formerly more popular, but currently there are very few. As an only upper-level institution, all of the students are transfer students and both Bachelor and Master's degrees are offered. The average age of our students is roughly 34 years old and the student body is around 2,600 students. Many of our 2,600 students are considered non-traditional: aged 35-45, employed, and have families. The student body demographic is 60% female, 23.5% Hispanic and 26.9 % African American. Furthermore, all students are commuters as there are no dormitories on campus. The university is located in Killeen, which is also the home to Ft. Hood, one of the largest military bases in the country. As a result, 40% of the students are current, former or military related in nature (TAMUCT 2018). These students have taken their lower-division classes from a variety of sources and often many years ago.

The library has 27,000 square feet and is located on two floors of Warrior Hall, and was built in 2014. The library shares the building with a computer lab, a multipurpose meeting room and offices and classrooms. The library was designed with the input of library staff and students and has features that both students and library staff deemed important such as nine study rooms and a large children's area with computers adjacent to it so parents can work while their children play in the dedicated area. The library has zones for students that delineate the areas where they can engage in group work or silent study. The second floor was made a quiet zone due to the students requesting an area where they could study and work in a quiet atmosphere. Computers and printers are located on both floors, with the majority of computers located on the first floor. The 96,000 print volumes are split between the two floors with P-Z located on the second along with the oversize books. Students, faculty and staff have access to Wi-Fi throughout the campus but there is no guest access to it.

### COVID-19 INITIAL RESPONSE

As the pandemic strengthened it became clear that the campus was going to take action towards modifying operations in order to protect students, faculty and staff. Spring break was extended for a week and that allowed time to put classes online and put plans in place for closure. The library closed on March 24, 2020 but the campus did have the computer lab stay open for the students that did not have Internet or a computer at home. Printing was made available in the foyer area of the library also and the Wi-Fi signal was strengthened to include the parking lot. The library posted physical and virtual signs of the library's closure and where to get help across campus and social media. With input of library faculty, I designed a Springshare LibWizard form that allowed students, faculty and staff to request materials. The library also loaned out eleven laptops to students with the help of our IT department.

The library designated two employees, myself and the Head of Technical Services and Assistant Dean, to work on campus during this time. We both chose the on-campus duty due to our own poor Internet connections. Our main duties consisted of filling the material requests and emptying the book drop. One of our most popular collections of physical materials is the textbook collection and the form allowed for textbooks, along with other materials, to be requested and we filled those requests Monday-Friday. The library continued to have a strong virtual presence in our virtual chat for reference which we all staffed during our former regular hours, ensuring help was available. Materials could also be requested through our catalog.

### CIRCULATION NUMBERS DURING CLOSURE

We checked out a total of 976 items while we were closed and renewed 1,876. Fines were also waived for most items during this time. However, textbooks did incur fines to help them be returned in a timely manner. Textbooks were checked out for a seven-day period with unlimited renewals, as long as there were no requests pending for it. Formerly, the textbooks were checked out for a four hour in-library only use. All materials could be renewed through the catalog or by contacting the library. There were 119 users of the form and it was almost evenly split between undergraduate and graduate students: 48 undergraduate and 60 graduate. Eight faculty also used the form but most emailed the library directly with their requests. A few staff, three, also used the form but like faculty, preferred to email us with their requests. The average number of items per form was seven and Friday was the most common pickup time requested. This was surprising since our in-person library usage is the lowest on that day. Tuesday and Thursday also had a good number of requests.

## CIRCULATION BY CALL NUMBERS

| Call number | Items | Subject |
|---|---|---|
| B | 60 | Psychology, Philosophy and Religion |
| D-F | 183 | History: Europe, Asia, Africa, America |
| H-L | 161 | Social Science, Law and Education |
| P | 401 | Language and Literature |
| Q-S | 106 | Science, Medicine and Agriculture |
| T-Z | 65 | Technology, Military Science, Naval and Library Science |
| Total | 976 | |

**Figure 1 Physical book circulation by call number**

As the table shows, literature was by far the most popular subject. This number included our young adult and children's collection fiction also which were very popular checkouts. During a regular semester, History and Literature are close to even in the amount that gets checked out.

## E-BOOK USAGE DURING CLOSURE

| Call number | Items | Subject |
|---|---|---|
| B | 323 | Philosophy, Psychology and Religion |
| D-F | 523 | History: Europe, Asia, Africa, America |
| H-L | 1,376 | Social Science, Law and Education |
| M-N | 34 | Music and Art |
| P | 973 | Language and Literature |
| Q-S | 707 | Science, Medicine and Agriculture |
| T-Z | 211 | Technology, Military Science, Naval and Library Science |
| Total | 4,147 | |

**Figure 2 E-Book Circulation by call number**

E-Books had a higher total for the same period: 4,147. The call number breakdown was also slightly different in that Literature and languages were not the highest call number checked out, but the Social Sciences, Law and Education were the highest number. Music and Art also had checkouts in e-book format. Our e-book collection has fewer fiction titles, and very little young adult or children's fiction in this format which is one reason for the lower number.

Streaming video usage through the two platforms of Kanopy and Swank also saw a large increase in the time of the closure. Professors that had previously used physical video had to switch to streaming options for the best student access. Kanopy had 485 plays and Swank had 875 plays. In contrast, in the Fall 2019 semester, Kanopy had 32 plays and Swank had 392. This shows the substantial increase seen during this time. E-reserve, which is also a Springshare product, also has seen a large increase, with 375 courses with items on reserve. There were 4,127 views of items which is almost double the amount seen in Fall 2019 with 2,337. The faculty have embraced the e-reserve module and our Technical Services staff does a great job of working with them and promoting it.

However, there was one electronic item that did not see an increase during this time and that was our homepage LibGuide, the Springshare product that functions as our homepage. There were 25,879 views during the time that we were closed but during the Fall 2019 semester it received 28,225. One reason could be that students went directly to the catalog to search for items or through a link that their professor provided.

## RE-OPENING FALL 2020

The library opened for the Fall 2020 semester with physical changes to the desks with a Plexiglas shield enclosing the upper portion of both desks. The second floor was closed and quiet study was now part of the first floor. Study rooms allowed for one person only instead of the groups that were allowed in the past. The hours were also shorter with afternoon hours of 12-6pm, Monday-Thursday and 12-4pm on Friday and no weekend hours. Reference was virtual and programming moved to goody bags instead of the large in-person programming done in previous semesters. The computers and seating areas were spaced out for social distancing and hand sanitizer stations were installed along with sanitizing wipes available at each desk. All students, faculty and staff were required to wear masks. Library staff regulated mask usage and counted the people inside the library every thirty minutes via a Springshare form. Children were not encouraged and all games, toys and manipulatives were removed from the children's area. Children were not prohibited but students were not encouraged to bring them to the library. The tutoring program for 1-5th grade students was now online instead of in-person. Public and alumni computer use was also not allowed but TexShare and community users could still come to checkout books. Students were not encouraged to stay all day as they had in the past and could drink but not eat while at the library.

The gate count for Fall 2020 was 6,649 people and the students used the study rooms and general study areas more than the computers. As Olsen found at the HumSam library, students prefer group study rooms and other places to study in groups (Olsen 12). Linn also found that students prefer more study rooms to be available (2013). The study rooms were filled almost all day and most days of the week. General seating areas were also popular. This is in contrast to the regular semester where many students are at computers. This could be due to students' usage of the computer lab since it was open during the time the library was closed and therefore they became accustomed to going there instead of the library. In contrast, Fall 2019 had a gate count of 19,022.

## CONCLUSION

Our students do actually checkout and use physical books but e-book usage is also strong. When the library is physically open, students like the quiet study areas and study rooms. However, they do want to have the option to work in groups while using those rooms. Computer usage was lower than previous semesters possibly due to the computer lab being open in the evening when the library was not. For the current semester, hours have been expanded to include weekend and mornings and for the upcoming Summer semester, the second floor will open. The second floor will be the quiet floor and the second floor study rooms will also be open. Students have asked for these changes and the current waning state of the pandemic allows for it. In-person programming will hopefully resume in the future but will not occur during the Summer semester.

*Margaret Dawson is the Outreach and Instruction Librarian at Texas A&M University - Central Texas.*

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# CRITICAL DIGITAL LITERACY IN A PUBLIC LIBRARY IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

By Lorin Flores, Daniel González, Cynthia DeLeon and Marcella McGowan

**WIDESPREAD CLOSURES, STAY AT HOME ORDERS, AND THE MASS ONLINE MIGRATION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY** during the extended pandemic year brought many challenges for libraries of all types forced to rapidly pivot to new approaches to extend library services to users at a distance. At the same time widespread national and professional awareness of the issue of information disorder, a construct encompassing mal-, mis-, and disinformation (Wardle and Derakhshan 2017) had been gaining attention for several years. Public libraries' potential to serve as community learning centers teaching critical literacies had been recognized years before the onset of the COVID-19 crisis (Curtis 2017; Irving 2020). This paper examines efforts of a group of library staff located in an urban branch of a large library system working to develop critical digital literacy programs for adults delivered in a variety of online formats during the pandemic year. The group formed organically as a byproduct of an informal e-community of practice established in response to library building closures and subsequent rapid migration of library services online.

Our institution experienced a COVID-19 related closure due to shelter in place orders beginning in mid-March of 2020 and extending through gradual resumption of limited services until mid-2021. An abundant and vibrant selection of in-person programs for children, teens, and adults existed at all library branches pre-pandemic. During the time of closure and limited contact-free services the need to extend library programs online and library staff's desire to continue offering programs was balanced by awareness of digital inclusion and access issues in our community. Library staff also experienced digital inclusion issues of their own in some cases. For many library staff the rapid pivot online necessitated acquisition of new technology skills to carry out professional duties. An empirical study examining the use of social media for library staff professional development in the areas of acquisition and maintenance of technology skills (Luo and Hostetler 2020) noted social media's potential for use in places with limited means for internet access and perception as a more democratic medium.

During the early days of the pandemic stay at home order, library staff primarily communicated online via Microsoft Teams to accomplish work tasks. In the absence of in-person professional development due to restructuring in progress, a group of reference department staff created a small informal online community of practice outside Teams using a Discord server. Although in the past Discord tended to be used mostly for gaming, topic-based communities and esports, use in other fields such as libraries, schools, institutions of higher learning, and gaming grew appreciably during social distancing measures put in place during the pandemic (Brooks 2021). The community of practice model for learning applied to professional development training for library staff recently noted in Dowdy (2020) recommended adopting communities of practice as a possible alternative to formal professional development training for library staff learning technology. In our experience, the Discord-based community of practice provided the setting for a supportive environment to experiment with different platforms, and different pedagogical approaches using voice and video. Members drew on their respective funds of knowledge brought to the community of practice to build a group of supportive collaborators who took on interchangeable roles of teacher, learner, leader, and technical supporter as needed.

In addition to supporting members' acquisition of new technology skills, the e-community of learning consciously practiced application of Freirean pedagogy and praxis. This proved useful to address teaching anxiety during planning educational online programs addressing information disorder during the closure. Increasingly, public librarians are taking on instructional roles apart from facilitating educational programs (Curtis 2017). Like their academic library colleagues, public library staff may feel anxiety about taking on teaching or training roles (Lundstrom et al. 2021).

Several concepts, sources, and frameworks strongly influenced the collaborative group's approach to creating the three online critical digital literacy programs related to information disorder during the pandemic year. Although various authors advocate for modified definitions of information, media, news, and other related literacy constructs in the professional literature, the group felt that Darvin's critical digital literacy construct allowed for flexibility in designing and describing programs incorporating elements of various related literacy families in a public library environment (Feerrar, 2019; Irving 2020; Leaning 2019; McDougall 2019; Vamanu 2019). Darvin's critical digital literacy construct also includes elements of critical discourse analysis (Darvan 2017; Irving, 2020; Leaning 2019).

Elements of applied Freirean pedagogy and praxis used intentionally included ideas such as approaching teaching as conversation, flattening student-teacher hierarchies in the classroom, and rejecting the banking model of education (Freire 2018). Freire's suggestion of the importance of education to instill within learners a disposition for democracy in *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters for those who dare to teach* (Freire 2017) appeared relevant to the group's objectives for the planned programs. The group was aware of Freire's influence on critical librarianship, critical information literacy pedagogy, and the Association of College and Research Libraries' Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education in academic libraries although he is not commonly cited directly (Wilkinson 2016). Although the ACRL framework remains much less used in public libraries despite recognition of the potential utility of the framework, it was a useful additional framework for planning the group's programs (Ireland et al. 2017; Irving 2020). Wade's (2019, 2020) application of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989) to academic library information literacy instruction discourses to further critically examine discourses in content assisted the group's thinking about the language used approaching various topics in the planned programs. Lastly, Parra and Woodley's (2019) discussion of collaborative and co-constructive teaching methods along with two group members' experiences attending online classes with both professors suggested ways to make the planned educational programs more interactive for attendees.

The first product of the group collaboration was *5 in 25: Essential News Vocabulary*, a thirty minute program streamed live on the library's YouTube channel every month. The inspiration for this program arose from observing the public's regular calls to the library's telephone reference line requesting definitions for words they had heard in the news. Group members collectively suggested and chose five relevant terms in the news at the end of each month. Group members then created streaming presentations using Open Broadcasting Software (OBS) studio to integrate images, video, and websites in the discussion. Group members took turns alternating presenter and moderator roles. Presentation content included discussions of each word's definitions and the context of the use of each word in current news within a five minute segment. Moderators used a voice channel within the e-community of practice Discord server to communicate questions and commentary to the presenter during the stream to avoid delayed reactions due to lag. Although the program is very brief, live streams are captured and stored on YouTube for later viewing. Possible directions for this program could include integration into class discussions designed for English language learners, or to enhance other educational programs focused on language or media literacy.

The second product from the group collaboration was a series called *Misinformation in the 21st Century* series containing four one-hour episodes. The initial session featured the presenters from the three topic-specific workshops that were to follow and a library staff moderator. This first overview session was streamed on YouTube in the hopes of getting a wider audience for the upcoming one-hour Zoom workshops focusing on deepfakes, propaganda, and health information. Although Zoom can be challenging for instructional purposes, presenters attempted to include activities with attendees during the session to encourage interaction and build up to a group discussion at the end. While the topic of misinformation continues to be a concern, future directions for this one-time series could be future updates related to topics currently prevalent in the news.

The last program the group collaborators developed presented during the pandemic period was an adaptation of the creative commons licensed *Check, please!* curriculum designed originally for undergraduate college students (Caulfield 2019). Unlike previous methods for evaluating information based on checklists, the steps represented in the SIFT acronym central to Check, please! use methods like lateral reading and other fact checking behaviors and tools. The presenters pared down the original five modules into four sessions organized in a LibGuide. The initial two sessions took place within the library's Discord server. Attendees met in the designated voice channel to watch and interact with the presenters streaming the content. The last two sessions were held on Zoom following requests from attendees. The presenters attempted to include the attendees in all steps of the presentation, such as asking the attendees to choose which topics they wanted to engage with first. Caulfield's contextual approach to teaching misinformation combined with Freirean-style discussions and presenter recognition and encouragement for attendees to contribute their funds of knowledge to the discussion (Gonzalez et al. 2005) allowed presenters to draw on participants' expertise and build a sense of community at the end of each session. Although Discord may not be as commonly used as Zoom for educational purposes, it possesses certain advantages such as the ability to continue conversations in threads that might assist in building more interactive library programs even when normal operations return to in-person programming.

It remains to be seen how gradual re-opening to the public and the transition to the new normal will affect demand for online library educational programs. Public libraries hold a unique place in American society, providing more than just information access. Unlike academic libraries that are explicitly tied to a school or institution of higher education, public libraries occupy a somewhat more ambiguous position as learning spaces (Curtis 2017; Irving 2020). Public libraries may seem unlikely learning sites, but formal and informal learning occurs within library physical and online spaces, and public librarians were beginning to incorporate instruction in various forms in their work with the public. The application of Freirean pedagogy and praxis along with informal communities of practice based in social media for librarians has the potential to facilitate library staff professional development and also transform library educational programs for the better.

*Lorin Flores, Librarian; Daniel González, Library Assistant; Cynthia DeLeon, Librarian; and Marcella McGowan, Adult Services Librarian at San Antonio Public Library*

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# Partnering to Publish

By Marilyn M. Goff

Librarians support the publication process, but often are not published authors themselves. Any librarian can become a published author by following a simple process to partner with others to get published as a co-author. Described here is a process to find others interested in getting published and to partner with them to cooperatively write and publish. This work is a natural extension of the provision of lists of resources or bibliographies that many librarians in public services regularly supply. The librarian can start the partnering process and offer to provide extended support of a potential co-author's work by creating bibliographies, acquiring information sources, proposing writing the history of literature, introduction, conclusion, then editing the paper for style, and finding places to publish. This paper will document practical steps for the novice author to partner to become published.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

It has always been easy to pay someone to publish your ideas or find neighborhood newsletter and blog publishing opportunities, but the librarian who aspires to professional publication will choose high quality sources in which to publish in order to help progress the profession. Banks and Dellavalle (2008) cite Eugene Garfield's 1955 proposal for a type of rating system based, in part, on citation frequency in a way similar to legal cases and their precedent establishment. Authors continue to build on this process to develop newer methods of establishing the significance of high quality published research. According to Tysick and Babb (2006) many librarians are unprepared for scholarly writing for publication. Tysick and Babb note that mentoring or similar peer support by other librarians can make the difference in getting librarians to become published authors. Jacobs, McIntosh and O'Sullivan (2018) document the process for collaborative writing, incorporating mentorship for writing and getting published in significant peer-reviewed resources. Intriguing aspects of publication are described by Demeter (2017) in that there are apparent barriers to getting published, including nationality, internationality, gender, loser versus winner countries, a Matthew effect, a Matilda effect and more to cause the librarian to very carefully consider potential co-authors. A different aspect of publication barriers is analyzed by Martin (2013) who reveals the process where work performed by students, staff or faculty who are considered junior may find that senior and administrative personnel might assume a type of ownership of a junior's work and will publish it under their name instead unless careful measures are taken.

## METHOD

The idea is simple, for the librarian to first prepare themselves for the task, overcoming the shortcomings Tysick and Babb (2006) discuss. Once ready, the librarian will then consider the people around them who have a desire, need and potential to write and be published, then select potential co-authors, and produce publications together. The process of selection involves knowing and communicating with others. Knowing coworkers and associates can reveal important data, including who is ethical, a hard worker, meets deadlines, fulfills obligations, and more qualities one needs in a co-author. Listening to others' needs and abilities during coffee klatches, in lunch rooms, in online meetings, at staff get-togethers and more provides opportunities. The librarian must evaluate the personnel, analyze any writings the person has done and then, approach them. Locating an already published co-author can be an obvious plus. Locating a person who is a subject specialist who can provide research data but who needs someone who knows how to write, search the literature, edit in style and produce a current bibliography can be an open door for the prepared librarian who wants to become a published co-author.

Depending on the environment in which the librarian is working, the co-author could be a boss, mentor, peer, student or friend. A school librarian might consider a third grade teacher, a principal or counselor, the high school shop teacher, or the biology teacher. In an academic or research library setting, a professor in the History Department, a researcher in the radiology lab, or a personnel officer might be good co-authors. The public or special library environment would provide patrons with professional or writing specialties, an active duty military or public services officer, or a librarian friend. In private life, a neighbor might be a published author, and someone you work with in a religious, voluntary or other group might be a potential co-author.

Consider the common interests you have, investigate any potential dangers proposed by Martin (2013), approach the person about a jointly written article to get published, and negotiate the duties, in writing, such as in an email. Consider the subject specialization of the potential co-author to select someone whose subject area is of interest. Be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each co-author in the division of duties, as Jacobs, et al. (2018) indicate, since co-authorship can provide subject specialists who can share in the tasks of writing and researching including setting deadlines, producing drafts, finding good places to publish, and more. The librarian might encounter teachers who have been told that they must become published authors in peer-reviewed publications. Such teachers might have wonderfully prepared subject lectures that can be revised and co-written to become a manuscript that is appropriate for publication, with help from the librarian to update the references, write the document in a certain style and help to modify that lecture material to become a welcomed journal article.

Duties for the librarian can include conducting a search of the literature, managing the writing style, writing the literature review, writing the abstract, methodology, results and conclusion, plus the reference list. The co-author can keep them both working on target dates, provide original research, findings, or other data. The librarian then can read and edit the complete document, use bibliographic resources in order to select a list of potential high quality places to publish, and then edit. The partner can work together to submit the manuscript to a mutually agreed-upon list of publishers, as needed, and work with any rewrites required.

## RESULTS AND LIMITATIONS

Finding an appropriate co-author or co-authors can be difficult, but a smart librarian usually has the researching capabilities in their personal toolkit in order to select excellent co-authors. With understanding of the need for professional publication, careful consideration, choice, documentation, commitment, and genuine cooperative practices, appropriate partnering to publish can be accomplished. Limitations and drawbacks can be encountered in any stage of the process but the librarian who works diligently is in an excellent position to find valid research that will help avoid and overcome most barriers to success. Successful publication can fulfill the co-author's requirement to become published and fulfill the librarian's hope to become a published author. Such collaborations can continue on other publication topics, can result in solo publishing, and can broaden the potential selection of partners with which to publish.

## CONCLUSION

The librarian who wants to become a published author can accomplish this with careful attention to detail, building on basic librarian skills. With consideration, appropriate co-writers can be selected for a collaborative writing and publishing effort. Partnering to publish can foster collaboration, provide mutual support, draw on differing skills, and produce great publishing success.

*Marilyn M. Goff is the Library Manager at the Texas Woman's University Institute of Health Sciences-Houston Center.*

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# Accessibility and Inclusion in a Library eMentorship Program

By Daniel Alejandro González, Lorin Flores, Cynthia DeLeon, Marcella McGowan, and Jordan Torres

**EARLY 2020 BROUGHT MASSIVE UNREST, INSTABILITY, AND A MASSIVE MIGRATION INTO DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS.** Prior to this time, our team had been serving library patrons through standard brick and mortar mediums and traditional titles as library assistant and librarians. As a library assistant, I did most of my work through in person service desks, computer labs, and through telephone reference hours. My colleagues and co-writer librarians had similar responsibilities in their respective departments and branches. As the pandemic policies took place in early spring, we closed our library doors to patrons and stopped face to face services. Established approaches to library service have been challenged and enhanced by the internet era. "[T]his is a new global library environment, and it is one in which librarians are still finding their way… The role of librarian as both user-educator and intermediary is prevalent in this environment".[1] The transition from hardcover and paperback books to electronic ones has been happening from the beginning of the internet era, this paper to plastic, in person to digital migration became more urgent and pronounced during the pandemic.

## DIGITAL TOOLS & COMMUNICATION

Our first move was to find a way to communicate with departmental colleagues and each other since we would no longer have time to work desks together, time to continue ongoing dialogues from our shared office spaces, or time passing through the building and collaborating in committees, workshops, programs, or other in person communications. We were able to follow up with general information through work email accounts and could share ideas one step at time in the way that emails allow. Researchers have found certain challenges with online work relationships and email communications, noting that "the characteristics of email increase the likelihood of conflict escalation among those communicating by email".[2]

Email, like any other type of communication provides benefits and challenges that touch on communication styles, cultural backgrounds[3], and relaying of context.[4] While our email communications were fairly clear and collegial, it did not help us make progress towards our goals to serve the community. As we were focused on providing effective services and tools for patrons, we needed spaces and practices to have meaningful collaborative work sessions.

Our first efforts focused on ways to directly communicate with patrons. To this end, we moved through a few familiar apps and services. There were announcement boards where we could post current information about library services, pandemic updates, and vaccine news. Some of these provided a space for the audience to respond and post questions or other messages. None of these were in real-time and provided a stagnant communication flow that was more of a one-way declaration than a way to have conversation and dialogue, nor a way to have productive collaboration sessions.

Our directive to serve patrons was also adjusted at this time with the system emphasis being placed on a single LibGuide. This format has become a widely used way for organizing and disseminating information due to its layout and low cost. It also sits within the current contexts where "[c] ommunication in twenty-first century libraries is a challenge that is made complex by organizational

[1] Sharp, Kate. "Internet Librarianship: Traditional Roles in a New Environment." (2000).

[2] Byron, Kristin. "Carrying too heavy a load? The communication and miscommunication of emotion by email." (2008): 309-327.

[3] Holtbrügge, Dirk, Abigail Weldon, and Helen Rogers. "Cultural determinants of email communication styles." International Journal of Cross Cultural Management 13, no. 1 (2013): 89-110.

[4] Byron, Kristin. "Carrying too heavy a load? The communication and miscommunication of emotion by email." (2008): 309-327.

cultures, legacy practices and workflows, staff personalities, and ongoing technological changes".[5] In the current tradition of LibGuides, this was set up as a curated site for organized material with links, digital materials, and other related information. The structuring of this LibGuide focused on providing pertinent information about the pandemic, social services, and educational alternatives. The information that we had gathered fit well into this space, yet our goal of reaching people directly and in live time was still not met.

For us to find each other online, we started to communicate through a Discord channel that we created. This was useful at the beginning because we could communicate instantly. We were afforded the usual online options of messaging, writing text, sharing documents, but also having instant verbal or video conversations that did not require setting up a meeting time nor a video room with links and passwords and such. We had not researched it formally at the time, but the services were user friendly for our levels of digital literacy. The layout allowed us to share information with everyone and provide space for everyone to share with each other, both publicly within the group, and privately through the variety of communication options.

We moved to set up the layout to have standing private rooms available, and other areas designated for specific projects and content. Our communication began moving towards a more effortless practice and we experienced the benefits that educational communities had also experienced with it, "increase[d] engagement and [fraternization] between everyone involved due to it being very similar to currently popular social media system."[6] From our productive work sessions and the increased sense of community, our efforts seemed better aimed at serving colleagues across our library system.

Although Discord was designed for video game communities, we were quickly able to connect as a collective that had now expanded to four library assistants, and three librarians. We named our group the Digital Reference Services Collective and began inviting colleagues to work and collaborate with us. Colleagues from other parts of our library system began requesting more workshops from us, mostly on digital tools. These included live streaming, digital presentations, moderating online, and other digital literacy issues that were arising. Lorin Flores and Cynthia DeLeon took on many of these requests and created a variety of workshops.

A regular telephone reference (TelRef) patron inspired one series of workshops. He is affectionately referred to as the definition guy. He calls to ask for definitions of words and terms. These calls often take a little bit of time because he genuinely wants to understand the essence of the words and the context they are situated in. Considering this frequent request and community need, we created the 5 in 25 workshop series where we explain 5 commonly used terms in a 25-minute session. We look for terms being used in current media and social discourses.

## CRITICAL REFLECTION & BUILDING THE COLLECTIVE

At this point, we were able to step back and consider what services we could offer effectively, and what routes we wanted to take to get there. We were spending a good amount of time working formally and informally in our online Discord spaces. We began taking a course about online professional teams together and offered this to new and potential members. The course was presented by the Vlerick Business School. When we approached the modules of the course, some of them were familiar concepts about work and communication styles, connecting everything to digital spaces and practices. What we found was that when we took the modules together in real time, we were able to learn meaningful information about each other. We could see quickly how members of the collective embraced certain ways of organization, particular communication styles and rhythms, and were seeking specific outcomes for each initiative. Had we not gone through this process, we may have fallen back into some of these differences as both conflict and obstacle. We were able to become more inclusive and offer people the spaces and elements that better supported and appreciated them.

With more members of our team being recognized and appreciated, some of our roles and limitations became obsolete. Those who had aversion or limited experience with digital literacies were open with the team about it, and members with experience and expertise in these areas stepped in to help and guide others, regardless of working professional titles. Our team took on an engaged communication style and an empowered energy focused on achieving outcomes and not on living up to roles and titles that were previously a centered part of our work efforts.

This achievement inspired us to look at how we were doing that directly and consider the practice of critical reflection across more of our spaces and efforts.

The University of Waterloo defines "[a] Critical Reflection [as] a process of identifying, questioning,

[5] Bazeley, Jennifer W. "Using LibGuides to Promote Communication Between Public and Technical Services." 2019.

[6] Fonseca Cacho, Jorge. "Using Discord to Improve Student Communication, Engagement, and Performance." (2020).

and assessing our deeply-held assumptions – about our knowledge, the way we perceive events and issues, our beliefs, feelings, and actions”.[7] With our challenges and changes from the pandemic, we had the opportunity and permission to reflect on many of our efforts and do what worked best to achieve them.

### TRADITIONAL ROLES & TITLES

The opportunity to revisit titles, skill sets, educational and formal training also presented itself as an option when we were starting from scratch with only the community and current challenges in mind. Recent and current national discourses have involved challenges to assumptions and labels involving gender, social identities, and power relationships broadly. We watched videos and read articles about it and discussed these issues together.

A local LBTQ community center had shared a list of demographics that were underserved in our city. We merged our discussions to focus on both of these groups and tried to consider how we could create meaningful work products and more importantly, how we could create meaningful work practices and spaces. For us to do that we had to consider what type of outreach and practices we would employ, how information and programs would be delivered, and what principles we operated out of internally. If these were only outward efforts then internally, we would still be exclusive and be practicing, creating, and promoting negative power relationships that led to the issues that these groups face.

To perpetuate those power issues internally may serve our individual needs, but at the cost of others both internally and externally; “professional groups engage in a process of ‘closure’ to establish a monopoly over specific areas of knowledge and expertise in order to effectively secure economic reward and status enhancement”.[8] For us to engage in this practice would both maintain the problems for patrons and colleagues and would limit even the short term effectiveness and meaningfulness of certain outreach efforts. When looking at the simplistic binary perspective on gender, “people might agree that women should enjoy personal freedom or individual power but remain more negative toward women’s direct power over others in political or occupational settings”.[9] We expanded on this intersection of power to include genders and identities communicated to us from the LGBTQ community center as well as our own institutional titles and labels.

To be more purposeful, we considered how enacting this in our collective would make our efforts meaningful, inclusive, and accessible. “Although most work on stereotyping focuses on how stereotypes function to preserve the status quo, the belief that a group is changing might actually undermine the status quo.”[10] We did not want to provide basic announcements but create a scaffolding for colleagues in the collective to share, contribute, and grow. This was also part of our consideration for patron focused products and services. To address the problems shared in the community center document we wanted to engage with it directly to work towards a positive resolution which is lasting and material for everyone, as “[t]he perception that a relatively powerless group is gaining power can have important implications for the group’s future possibilities, particularly if there is widespread consensus about the change”.[11] This had implications for our daily collaborations and we began sharing roles of leadership and creation of workshop materials.

Participants in the collective expanded to nonbinary colleagues and the focus on our working titles waned while our production and quality of work improved. Our collegiality and professional respect for each other also grew and helped incorporate new members. The inhibitions of our required social and professional power roles were being removed from our workload, and we became more efficient and focused. We continued to discuss these issues conceptually and how they were present in our professional efforts. We continued to work on this from a perspective of community, productivity, and service, “to the extent that observers perceive these social roles and gender stereotypes to change, they might also project the gendered power differentials to erode.”[12] The research speaks to power differentials according to a binary gender sensibility. For us, we wanted to expand that focus onto nonbinary and other social identities, as well as professional roles, titles, and practices.

With this ongoing reflection, we were more committed to calling our working group a collective. As we were now presenting training mostly to staff,

[7] https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/critical-reflection

[8] Baker, Lindsay, Eileen Egan-Lee, Maria Athina Martimianakis, and Scott Reeves. “Relationships of power: implications for interprofessional education.” Journal of interprofessional care 25, no. 2 (2011): p. 202.

[9] Diekman, Amanda B., Wind Goodfriend, and Stephanie Goodwin. “Dynamic stereotypes of power: Perceived change and stability in gender hierarchies.” Sex Roles 50, no. 3 (2004): 201-215.

[10] Ibid, p. 212

[11] Ibid, p. 213

[12] Ibid, p. 210

our larger effort took on the structure of a digital mentorship. This would include development opportunities for collective members as well as any staff we worked with or collaborated with. Being familiar with the critique of terms such as history and mentorship, we discussed what other assumptions we might be missing or could improve on. A conscious centering of women in apprentice type relationships was the use of the word femtor. "In the spirit of fostering trust and acknowledging the racial and gendered inequalities that women in academia face, the concept of 'femtorship,' where intersections and feminist ideologies are at the center of the guiding relationship..."[t]

To account for other possibilities and to be mindful of the communities mentioned by the LGBTQ community center we reflected on the approach and terminology of our eMentorship effort. We revisited the wording and power relationships within this structure and looked to address this in the title. We settled on calling it the 'Virtual Creators Program'. Virtual for the medium where we were collaborating virtually and creating mostly virtual work products. We chose the role of 'Creators' to designate the action participants will be focused on as well as their creativity and productivity. While the Creators' role is not changed fundamentally from that of a mentee, there is a move away from the banking system concept where traditional concepts of mentors and masters provided most of the valued and official knowledge. In some related relationships, the banking model has often been the starting point. In the banking model approach, the mentee, apprentice, or 'the student in this system [is seen] as a 'container' to be filled by the all-knowing teacher',[14] At the time of our presentation, we changed the roles of mentor and mentee to 'Creators' and 'Advisors'. We wanted to change the space for participants so that they were not compelled to perform power and other gender stereotypes when working together. Our collective was already employing this conceptually and it has been useful so far to other participants. We continue to critically reflect on our efforts and look for ways to improve.

*Daniel Alejandro González, Library Assistant; Lorin Flores, Librarian; Cynthia DeLeon, Librarian; Marcella McGowan, Adult Services Librarian; and Jordan Torres, Library Assistant at San Antonio Public Library*

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# Wearing Your Masks and Keeping Your Distance

## An Analysis of Library Patron Compliance with COVID-19 Guidelines in an Academic Library

By Edward Kownslar

When the library at Stephen F. Austin State University re-opened in August 2020, the staff noticed that not all of the students in the building were complying with the university's COVID-19 requirements (wearing facial coverings/masks and practicing social distancing). This paper will focus on: (1) the data collection methods to verify that a problem was occurring; (2) the library's preliminary research to discover why some students were reluctant to wear facial coverings/masks; and (3) planning an enforcement strategy. This article is intended for all types of audiences and libraries.

### INTRODUCTION

Stephen F. Austin State University restricted access to all buildings, and switched to online-only classes, between March and August 2020 to comply with the COVID-19 guidelines. The university re-opened in the Fall 2020 semester with full access to all campus buildings. However, everyone on campus was still required to follow the university's COVID-19 rules, including wearing masks/facial coverings and practicing social distancing.

The library complied with the university's requirements about posting signs to follow these practices. The staff also made hourly announcements on the public intercom to remind everyone to wear masks to cover their mouths and noses while they were in the building.

However, after implementing these procedures, the library staff received complaints that many patrons were still not wearing masks/facial coverings in the building. We first needed to confirm that the problem was occurring, so the library conducted head counts during November 2020 to record the number of patrons who were not wearing masks and facial coverings.

### DATA COLLECTION METHODS: PRELIMINARY PLANNING

The Ralph W. Steen Library (**https://library.sfasu.edu**) has four floors. Each floor has areas dedicated to study and research.

The <u>third and fourth floors</u> are completely reserved for study, and most of the print collections are also located on these floors. In addition to tables, these floors also have study rooms, study carrels, and enclosed individual study areas ("pods").

The <u>first and second floors</u> have tables and study carrels. However, these floors also have the library's circulation desk, the offices for the library staff, and the offices for several other university departments, including: (1) the tutoring/writing center; (2) the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL); (3) the "one-stop shop" for student services; (4) three computer/instruction labs; and (5) the assistance/support desk for campus technology services.

We decided to collect data on all four floors. When we received approval from the Library Director to collect the data, we established:

1. a <u>schedule</u> to collect the data;
2. the <u>locations</u> where we would collect the data; and
3. <u>how frequently</u> we would collect at each of the locations.

### DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE

The schedule for collecting the data covered November 1, 2020, through November 17, 2020, on the following days and times:

<u>Sundays</u>: 3 p.m., 9 p.m.
<u>Mondays - Wednesdays</u>: 11 a.m., 3 p.m., 9 p.m.

**NOTE:** We did not collect data Thursdays – Saturdays because, according to the library's statistics, fewer students enter and use the building on these days.

### DATA COLLECTION LOCATIONS

We collected data in the following areas:

| Location | Area Where the Library Collected Data |
|---|---|
| First Floor | The study area and the general access computer lab |
| Second Floor | All of this area except for the Center for Teaching and Learning |
| Third Floor | All of this area except for the study rooms (which were still closed in November 2020 because of the COVID-19 restrictions). |
| Fourth Floor | All of this area, including the study rooms that were available to a small group of students from another campus program. All of the other study rooms on this floor were closed because of the COVID-19 guidelines. |

**NOTE:** The library did not collect data in the tutoring/writing center, the tech support area, the "one-stop shop" and the Center for Teaching and Learning because these departments are not under the library's supervision.

### DATA COLLECTION FREQUENCY BY LOCATION

Every time we conducted head counts on a floor, we collected two types of data:

1. the number of people who were not wearing masks/facial coverings;
2. the total number of people on that floor.

Therefore, we walked around each floor twice each hour to collect data. This way, we could calculate the percentage of people who were not wearing masks on, for example, the third floor at 3 p.m. on November 2.

Also, when we collected the data on each floor, we first counted the number of people who were not wearing masks/ facial coverings. Next, we counted the total number of people on that floor. We used this approach to collect more accurate data; we noticed that several of the patrons who were not wearing masks in the first count had put on their masks when we took the second count (and they noticed us collecting data).

### OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE PRELIMINARY PLANNING

While we were taking head counts, we did not approach or talk to anyone. Also, we did not film or photograph anyone or record anyone's names or other personal information. Because we did not engage anyone during the data collection, the library director confirmed that we did not need approval from the campus' Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subjects to conduct this study.

Second, we collected the data individually (alone). Two or more people taking head counts together would have looked more conspicuous. Also, to remain discreet, we carried clipboards to record the data (usually at our sides or in bags), but we recorded numbers mentally and then walked frequently into a place out of view (such as the stacks) to record the numbers.

### FACTORING IN THE MARGINS OF ERROR WITH HEAD COUNTS

Determining percentages required us to take two head counts: (1) the total number of people on a floor and (2) the number of people on the same floor who were not wearing facial coverings/masks. We discovered that the numbers can change between the counts for several reasons, including:

(1) People sometimes moved or went to a different floor between the two counts.
(2) Someone might be away from a desk or table for the first count and then return for the second.
(3) People might work in places that can be missed in the counts.

Therefore, head counts have built-in margins of error that should be factored into the analysis.

Second, while we collected the data, we followed the university's social distancing guidelines and practiced common-sense privacy with the library's users. For example, if someone was sitting and facing away from us (such as in a study carrel or a "pod"), and we could not easily determine from a distance if they were wearing facial coverings/masks, we did not approach them. Instead, we assumed that they were wearing facial coverings and moved on.

### DATA RESULTS: ANALYSIS BY BUILDING TOTALS

Between November 1 and November 17, we conducted a combined total of 240 headcounts on all of the floors in the library. The highlights include:

(1) For all the days/times in our observations, **more than 50 percent** of the people in the library building were not wearing facial coverings/masks.
(2) Except for a few days/times, the total number of people who were not wearing facial coverings/masks increased and decreased **in the same direction** as the total number of people in the building.
(3) The **highest number** of people who were not wearing facial coverings/masks for each week included:

Week 1: Tuesday at 3 p.m. (228 people)
Week 2: Tuesday at 3 p.m. (201 people)
Week 3: Monday at 3 p.m. (192 people)

(4) The **lowest number** of people who were not wearing facial coverings/masks for each week included:

Week 1: Tuesday at 9 p.m. (73 people)
Week 2: Sunday at 9 p.m. (64 people)
Week 3: Sunday at 9 p.m. (89 people)

### DATA RESULTS: ANALYSIS BY LOCATION/FLOOR

(1) For all days/times, the majority of the people who were not wearing facial coverings/masks were on the **third floor**.
(2) In nearly all of the cases when the data were collected, **more than 50 percent** of the total number of people not wearing masks/facial coverings were on the **third floor**.

(3) For all days/times, the **largest total head counts** (patrons wearing masks and not wearing masks) in the building were on the third floor.
(4) The location for the second-highest number of people not wearing facial coverings/masks varied evenly between the **second** and **fourth** floors.
(5) For all days/times, the **first floor** had the lowest number of people who were not wearing facial coverings/masks.

### NEXT STEPS: PLANNING FOR A STRATEGY TO INCREASE COMPLIANCE

After collecting the data for nearly three weeks, we confirmed that a significant problem with not wearing facial coverings/masks was occurring in the library. We also identified the locations in the building where the problem was occurring the most frequently.

We discussed several possible strategies to reduce the number of library users who were not wearing facial coverings/masks. However, we encountered numerous challenges in our planning, including:

(1) The library had reduced staffing in the building because several staff members continued to telecommute full time. Other staff members telecommuted part-time or when their circumstances required. At the same time, the library was open for regular hours during the Fall 2020 semester.
(2) Patrolling four floors to enforce the COVID-19 safety policies with reduced staffing would take longer, and the staff members would have less time to perform their regular job duties.
(3) Several staff members had safety concerns about entering areas in which a large number of people had not worn masks or practiced social distancing.
(4) The general situation with COVID-19 safety practices, which has changed several times since March 2020, made policy-making and enforcement more challenging.

Despite these challenges, we recommend the three following strategies for the Summer and Fall 2021 semesters and then evaluating those strategies during the Spring 2022 semester.

### STRATEGY ONE: MOVE (OR REMOVE) THE FURNITURE TO ENFORCE SOCIAL DISTANCING

To accommodate social distancing, tables in the library should be at least six feet from each other, and each table (or work area) should have only one chair. In February 2021, the SFA library staff members moved many of the chairs into temporary storage (including several of the vacant study rooms). We also moved 20-25 tables into areas that were cordoned off from use. For the tables that remained, we put signs on those tables that asked people not to move the furniture.

We received some negative feedback about moving the furniture from some of the library's users. However, other library users, as well as the campus administrators, commended the library's social distancing strategy. The library will continue to maintain the new furniture layout until the university provides new guidelines and rules.

### STRATEGY TWO: PROVIDE CLEANING SUPPLIES BY LOCATION AND ON DEMAND

The library re-opened several of the study rooms during the Spring 2021 semester. Because those rooms are enclosed areas, the library staff members put cleaning supplies in the rooms, and we asked the people who have used those areas to clean the table surfaces before they leave. Many library users have used those supplies. We have also started keeping cleaning supplies at the Circulation Desk, and we provide them to any patron who requests them (as well as masks if people would like to "double-mask").

### STRATEGY THREE: CONTINUE OBSERVING AND DOCUMENTING

Statistically, we have proven that a significant percentage of the library's users are not wearing facial covering/masks in the building. To determine if the situation has changed, options for Summer 2021 could include taking head counts again and comparing those results to November 2020. In that case, we would probably select different times on different days so that the library's users would not see an obvious pattern.

Other options include observing and documenting the behaviors about wearing facial coverings/masks only in specific and targeted areas, such as the locations where we observed the largest number of violations.

### SUGGESTIONS/OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER

(1) Observing people who are not following COVID safety guidelines 2-3 times a day can psychologically wear down the people who are collecting the data. We suggest alternating the observations with the staff members to avoid burnout. For example, for a specific hour, one person could collect data on each floor (with a total of four people collecting the data for that hour). However, include only staff members in the "rotation" who can be discreet as they collect the data.
(2) Even if you do not record or film anyone while collecting the data, people might film you and post the video on social media. We suggest that you tell your supervisor if you think that someone has recorded you. For example, we discovered that at least one student filmed us collecting the data and posted it on social media (a staff member from campus IT noticed the posting and forwarded it to us). Also, if you are recorded, we'd like to remind you not to panic because you have approval to participate in this study.
(3) Do not involve the student workers in taking the head counts in case someone confronts them; the library staff members need to handle complaints or confrontations. Also, the students might encounter people whom they already know who are violating the guidelines (which could affect neutrality).
(4) Remember the groups and organizations on your campus that can provide assistance. At SFA, the Division of Student Affairs and the Student Government Association provided important feedback and support about enforcing the COVID policies. Other groups could include library advisory committees.
(5) For this type of situation, libraries could request assistance and feedback from campus classes that focus on consumer

behavior, health policy and public relations. Because the students in these classes are closer to the ages of the library's users, they can provide more accurate and current analyses of the users' perspectives, and they could also recommend more effective (and realistic) enforcement strategies. Also, with interviews and focus groups, the library users might be more honest with their peers than with the library staff members. Lastly, these classes often seek applied, real-world projects for their students, and collaborating with these classes could create a "win-win" scenario for everyone.

(6) Although we tried to remain as obscure as possible while collecting data (anonymous, incognito, undercover, etc.), some of the library users eventually realized that they were being observed. People in their 40s or older will probably not be able to impersonate college students for very long (or at all)!


***Does This Person Look Like a Typical Student?***

### FINAL ISSUE #1: CONDUCTING SURVEYS

One of the most effective ways to conduct a campaign requires understanding why people decide to wear, and not wear, masks and facial coverings in the first place. We initially decided to gather information from two sources. First, we conducted research in the literature about mask-wearing behavior (those articles and studies are included in the "Sources" section). Second, we considered conducting a more focused campus survey to collect supplemental data, possibly through an anonymous survey on the library's web site.

However, we decided not to conduct a survey for several reasons. First, as of April 2021, the university has not conducted any campus-wide surveys about following the COVID-19 guidelines. Several library staff members pointed out that people might question why the library (as opposed to a general campus office) was conducting a campus-wide survey. Also, we realized that, even with an anonymous survey, some students might not be confident that the survey would really be anonymous, especially since we had already conducted head counts in the building (and our "incognito" approach was revealed by the end of those counts on social media).

Therefore, we concluded that the campus' central research office, rather than the library, should conduct the campus-wide surveys. The research office has the expertise and experience to build the survey, administer it and collect and analyze the data. The office will also appear more neutral to the people who complete the survey. If this office conducts the surveys, though, we recommend that several questions about the library be included in that survey. After the first campus-wide survey occurs, the library could use the data from that survey to build a more focused survey about wearing facial coverings/masks in the library building.

Lastly, even though we will not conduct a campus survey on wearing face coverings and masks, the information that we collected from our observations could assist us with conducting a study about library building usage. The data indicated which floors and areas had the most traffic and usage, and a survey could assist us with studying building interior design and service delivery.

### FINAL ISSUE #2: STUDY ROOMS

The SFA library reopened six study rooms in February, 2021, on a trial basis: (1) four rooms on the third floor with a maximum capacity of two people in each room; and (2) two rooms on the first floor with a capacity of one person for each room. The rooms are available in four-hour blocks when the library is open.

The students can reserve the study rooms through LibCal and check out the keys at the Circulation Desk. The usage policies are included in the confirmation email that the system sends to the student making the reservation, and the policies are also printed on the room key.

After we re-opened those rooms, we checked each study room at 8 a.m. Monday – Friday (before the rooms are available for checkout) and recorded 1-2 room violations each morning.

One staff member documented the violations with a second staff member as a witness. However, we did not assume that the last person who checked out the room committed the violation; the library does not have the staffing to check the rooms every time the room is used, so understandably, we did not want to associate a room violation with the wrong person. After recording the study room violations, one option could involve closing the rooms temporarily or until the pandemic has passed.

However, even if we closed the study rooms to the general users, we might keep those available to specific campus groups or services. For example, an SFA student asked if they could participate in a counseling session in one of the study rooms. Because of the COVID-19 safety guidelines, the university's counseling center was required to switch from in-person meetings to zoom meetings for at least some of their appointments. Thus, some of the students needed to find other locations on campus for those types of appointments (which require privacy and confidentiality). Other campus departments that could use the study rooms include career services for interviews.

### FINAL ISSUE #3: CHANGES IN PROTOCOLS FOR COVID-19 AND THE EFFECTS ON THE LITERATURE

As the research on COVID-19 continues, the protocols and policies will change and evolve. This situation, in turn, has a "domino effect" on the scientific literature. While I was finalizing the bibliography for this paper, one of the articles that I was going to cite was originally "In Press" in November, 2020, and covered recommended protocols and safety practices with COVID-19. However, that article is no longer available online; the publishers stated that the authors had requested that it be withdrawn, possibly because those protocols were no longer current. Thus, because the research on COVID-19 is changing quickly, confirming whether an article is available is important. I did not include that article in the bibliography because it is no longer available.

### CONCLUSION

Although the university clearly stated the required COVID-19 safety guidelines, a significant number of library users were still not wearing facial coverings/masks in the building. While the library has proven that a problem exists in the building (which is the first important step), finding a solution has been challenging. Every time we initially planned a strategy to improve compliance, we were delayed or were required to change strategies as the situation with COVID-19 changed, including: (1) the changes in state and federal guidelines and policies; (2) safety guidelines for SFA employees; (3) campus priorities; and (4) library staffing and safety.

Understanding why people do not wear facial coverings/masks on campus will require coordinating and synchronizing our research and analysis with other campus departments. No one can read the future, and the situation with COVID-19 has put all groups and organizations into new and unknown territory. Hopefully, we can adapt a lasting strategy that can withstand any changes with the COVID-19 situation.

*Edward Kownslar is the Head of Research Instructional Services at Stephen F. Austin State University.*


***Edward Kownslar is the Head of Public Services for the Ralph W. Steen Library, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX.***

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# Being COUNTER-Productive

## Developing Strategies and Workflows for Processing and Standardizing E-Resource Usage Data

By Kate Reagor, MSIS

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to offer instructions and best practices on how librarians can use OpenRefine to automate the majority of the cleanup work required to put monthly e-resource usage reports into a consistent and usable format: standardized across metric types and able to be imported into data visualization software. Some basic coding functions will be described, but no coding knowledge or prior experience with OpenRefine is required. The examples used within are COUNTER 5 format Database Reports and discussion around converting metrics will focus on these standards, but the methodology may be adapted to any desired format.

The techniques described here were developed as part of a graduate capstone project at the UT Austin School of Information: *Developing an e-Resource Usage Dashboard for Texas Libraries* (Reagor 2020), which involved working with the TexShare Databases program at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) to develop new methods to process and display consortia-level e-resource usage reports.

### OPENREFINE

OpenRefine is a long-standing open source tool designed for data cleanup and transformation. The program is available for free at **https://openrefine.org/** and, though it operates through your browser, all data stays private and remains on your machine ("OpenRefine" 2021).

OpenRefine is a popular tool among catalogers for cleaning messy metadata files, but it contains another feature that should be of particular interest to staff who manage their library's usage data – one that makes the automation of processing regular reports possible. In brief, a user may import a usage spreadsheet, work through a series of transformations until the data is in the proper format, and then export all of those transformation steps as a block of JSON code. This code block can be saved and, when applied to future iterations of that same report, will instantly apply all of the same transformation steps. In the case of the TexShare program's usage reports, this transformed a days-long monthly task involving 12 reports into a process that took approximately 30 minutes.

### SETUP AND BEST PRACTICES

Before you get started processing your first usage report, there are a few steps worth taking to ensure that the workflow creation process goes smoothly, and that the resulting code is robust and applies properly to future reports.

#### Document Everything as You Go

Every usage report will require a number of steps to be taken outside of the saved workflow, and each should be documented and saved in a procedure. These are the tasks that can't be automated, such as:

- How many non-data header rows OpenRefine should remove during import.
- If a report has known inconsistencies that should be checked and fixed before import, such as columns

changing names or order.
- If any manual cleanup is required after applying the code, such as adding the report date if that data is not included in the file.

These workflows are designed to be run regularly – ideally on a monthly basis. Creating these procedures as you go and keeping them up to date will ensure that the process goes smoothly every time it's repeated.

**Keeping Track of Files**

Following the process presented here means you will end up with at least two files for each report: a procedure and the saved transformation code. Considering how many reports most libraries get, these files can add up after a while. Additionally, the code itself must be saved as a text file. If you save it in Word, the changes it makes will absolutely break it. With this in mind, I recommend saving all procedures and codes as individual text files, saved together in a single folder, and then viewing them using a free text editor called Atom.

Atom allows you to open all files in a folder as a "project". All available files are displayed in a navigation bar on the left, and open files as tabs across the top. This allows you to quickly work your way through the procedure and code files for each report without the need to search for individual files or switch between windows.

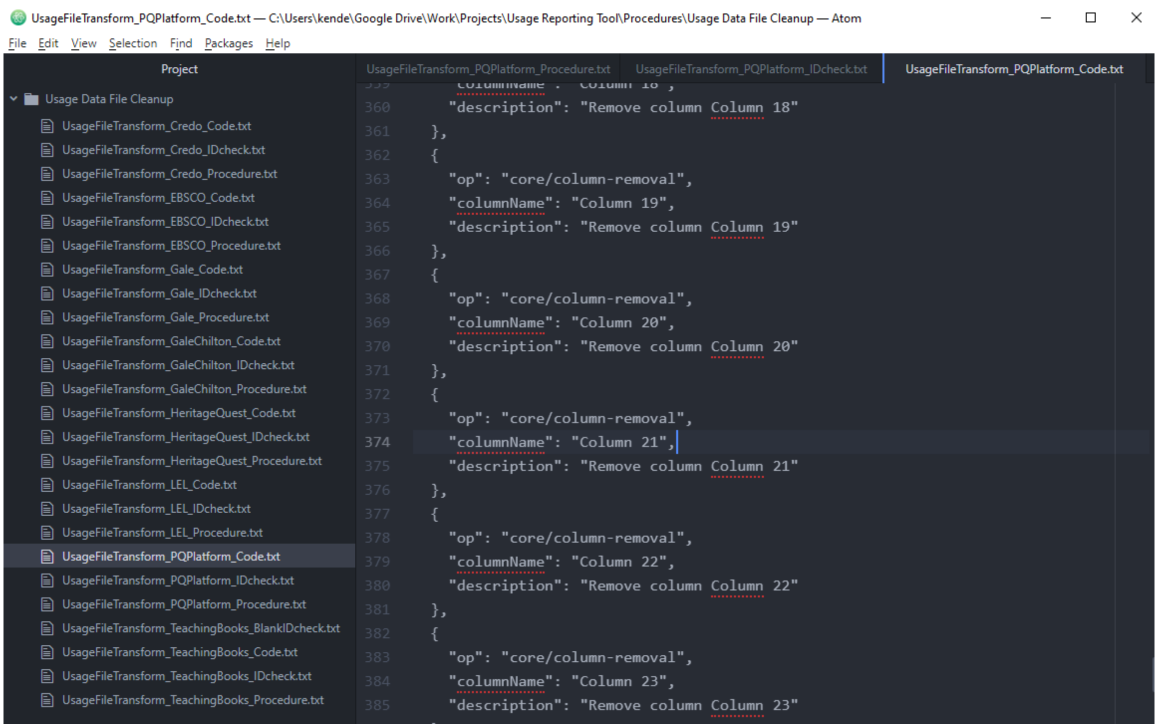



**Figure 1.** Atom text editor displaying usage file transformation procedures and code.

**Checking Transformations for Repeatability**

It's important to note that not every change made in OpenRefine will carry over when you apply the transformation code to the next report. It can be frustrating to do the work of processing an entire report and then applying those changes to the next one, only to discover that something didn't apply correctly and now the whole thing is messed up.

A good rule of thumb is to favor broader changes and avoid small, manual ones. Changes to individual cells or manually selected rows don't translate well across reports, but broad filters (called "facets" in OpenRefine) based on defined criteria do. But the most reliable way to ensure that all transformations will apply properly to future reports is to work with two of that vendor's reports simultaneously.

To do this, open reports from different months in separate browser windows. As you work through cleaning one file, stop periodically to export the steps already taken: in the Undo/Redo tab, click Extract and copy the text there. Navigate to the second report, revert it to "0. Create Project" in Undo/Redo if needed, then click Apply and paste the copied code. If all looks well, return to the first report and continue. If not, backtrack and find a different way to make the necessary changes.

While this may sound like a complicated and onerous process, remember that the goal is to automate the cleanup of all future reports. That initial investment of effort means that particular report will likely never need to be manually cleaned again.

### DATA TRANSFORMATION DESTINATION

The final step before you start transforming your data is to decide what you want your fully cleaned and processed data to look like. Ideally this configuration should allow you to combine the data from all of your usage reports into a single file or database, in a layout suited for analysis or visualization. For this purpose, the best configuration is something called the Entity-Attribute-Value Model, or "Narrow Data".

#### Wide Data

To understand Narrow Data, we must define Wide Data. As demonstrated in figure 2, wide data describes datasets where every distinct variable has its own column. It's human readable, but it makes combining different datasets difficult and data visualization software can't understand it. Note too that important information, such as the vendor name and report date, may be in the header or file name but not in the data itself.

| Smith Publishing Usage Report for Atad Library<br>Reporting Period Jan 1, 2021 – Jan 31, 2021 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **resource** | **year** | **month** | **searches** | **requests** | **investigations** |
| Science Connection | 2021 | January | 26 | 10 | 19 |
| Art Connection | 2021 | January | 32 | 0 | 15 |
| Math Connection | 2021 | January | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| Music Connection | 2021 | January | 42 | 6 | 27 |
| Literature Connection | 2021 | January | 55 | 33 | 44 |
| Connection Connection | 2021 | January | 2 | 0 | 1 |

**Figure 2.** An example table demonstrating wide data.

#### Narrow Data

Narrow data, on the other hand, is designed to be machine-readable rather than human-readable. It's difficult to scan by eye but works well with data visualization and analytics software. Note in figure 3 that every row contains all of the information needed to understand the data presented in that row, without having to refer to a header row or file name for context.

| location | vendor | resource | metric | total | date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Atad Library | Smith Publishing | Science Connection | Searches | 26 | 1-01-2021 |
| Atad Library | Smith Publishing | Science Connection | Total Item Requests | 10 | 1-01-2021 |
| Atad Library | Smith Publishing | Science Connection | Total Item Investigations | 19 | 1-01-2021 |
| Atad Library | Smith Publishing | Art Connection | Searches | 32 | 1-01-2021 |
| Atad Library | Smith Publishing | Art Connection | Total Item Investigations | 15 | 1-01-2021 |
| Atad Library | Smith Publishing | Math Connection | Searches | 5 | 1-01-2021 |
| Atad Library | Smith Publishing | Math Connection | Total Item Investigations | 2 | 1-01-2021 |

**Figure 3.** An example table demonstrating narrow data.

Data in this format can be combined with data from other reports without any loss of information, because each row indicates which library location, vendor, and resource the usage number belongs to, what type of use it indicates, and which month it's from. And if you do sometimes need the data displayed in readable tables, it's easy to convert it back to table format using data visualization software or Excel pivot tables.

## TRANSFORMING COUNTER 5 REPORTS

When you're ready to start processing reports, it helps to begin with the ones that require the least amount of cleanup. For most libraries this will be those reported in COUNTER 5 (C5), both because it is the primary accepted usage reporting standard, and because it is already very nearly in the narrow data format that is our goal. Keep in mind that, though this demonstration uses C5 Database Report metrics, these procedures can be adapted to other reports and metrics as well.

### Configure Parsing Options

To begin, open OpenRefine and click Browse to select your file. OpenRefine will prompt you to select a few pre-import configuration options before continuing. Here you can choose to eliminate non-data header rows or whether to use the top row as column names or keep them as part of the data.

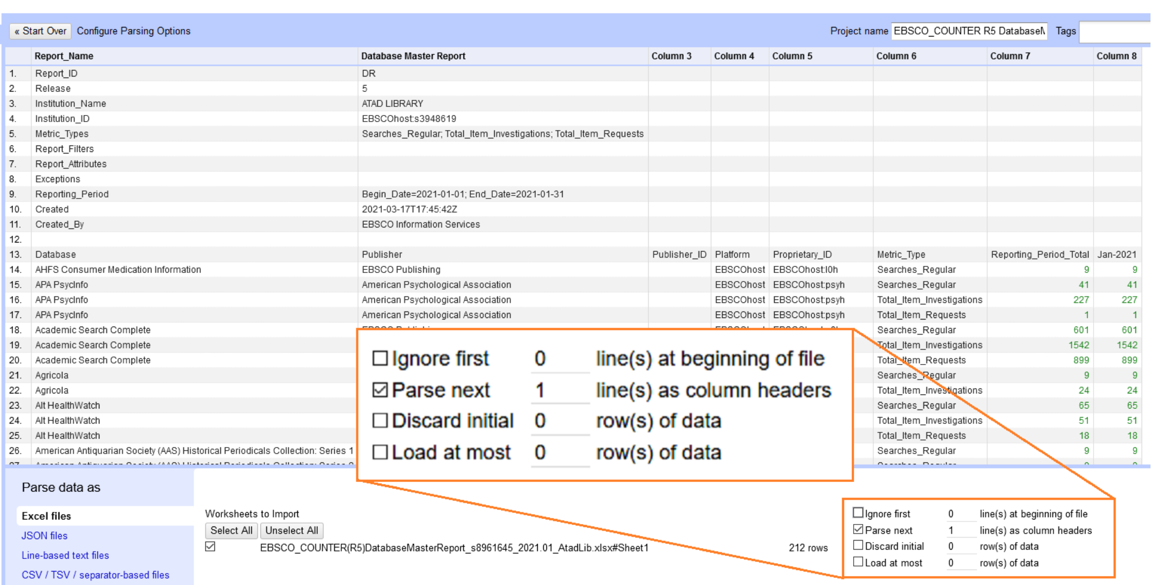


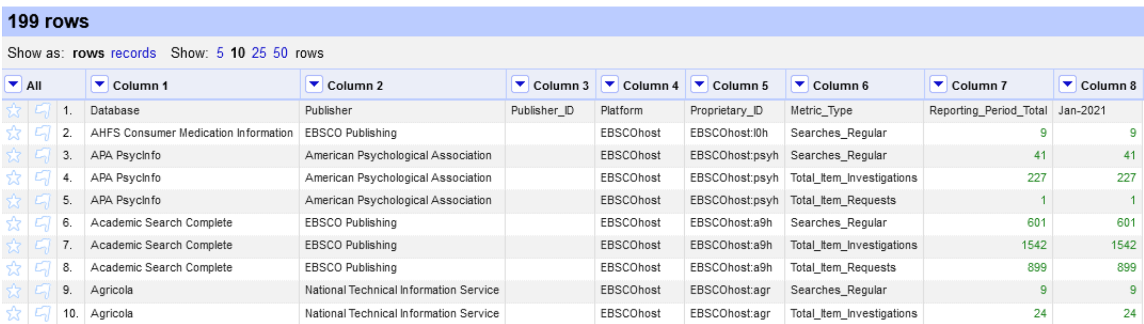
**Figure 4.** Configuring parsing options in OpenRefine.

In the case of this EBSCO report (figure 4) the useful data begins on row 13, so you would check "Ignore first" and set it to 13 lines. This sets row 13 as the column names, but in this case we don't want that. One strange quirk of COUNTER 5 is that it saves the report date as a column name rather than as an attribute within the dataset itself. If we want to combine reports from multiple months, then we need that date in our data. But it's difficult to pull data from column names in OpenRefine, so instead we uncheck "Parse next". Now those column names will be included in our data as our first row. This done, you can click Create Project to proceed.

If you plan on working with two reports simultaneously, this is a good time to import a second report using these same steps. In your current project, click "Open..." in the upper-right to open a second project in a new tab.

### Bringing the Date into the Data

COUNTER 5 reports are already very close to being narrow data. You can see in figure 5 that each row already contains most of the necessary information: database name, metric type, and the total for that reporting period. But there needs to be a column for the report date.



199 rows

Show as: rows records Show: 5 10 25 50 rows

| All | Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 | Column 5 | Column 6 | Column 7 | Column 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Database | Publisher | Publisher_ID | Platform | Proprietary_ID | Metric_Type | Reporting_Period_Total | Jan-2021 |
| 2. | AHFS Consumer Medication Information | EBSCO Publishing | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:l0h | Searches_Regular | 9 | 9 |
| 3. | APA PsycInfo | American Psychological Association | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:psyh | Searches_Regular | 41 | 41 |
| 4. | APA PsycInfo | American Psychological Association | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:psyh | Total_Item_Investigations | 227 | 227 |
| 5. | APA PsycInfo | American Psychological Association | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:psyh | Total_Item_Requests | 1 | 1 |
| 6. | Academic Search Complete | EBSCO Publishing | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:a9h | Searches_Regular | 601 | 601 |
| 7. | Academic Search Complete | EBSCO Publishing | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:a9h | Total_Item_Investigations | 1542 | 1542 |
| 8. | Academic Search Complete | EBSCO Publishing | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:a9h | Total_Item_Requests | 899 | 899 |
| 9. | Agricola | National Technical Information Service | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:agr | Searches_Regular | 9 | 9 |
| 10. | Agricola | National Technical Information Service | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:agr | Total_Item_Investigations | 24 | 24 |

**Figure 5.** A usage report in OpenRefine with column names, including the report date, in the first row.

While we could easily type in and paste the date by hand, our goal is to create a process that will convert and populate that date automatically for any report, with no need for manual entry. Instead we need to accomplish the same thing using broad transformations.

The first step is to clear all cells underneath the cell with the date, which can be done using a facet. Facets work like a filter, allowing transformations to be applied only to targeted selections. Here we will use a numeric facet on the date column to select and clear any cells in that column that are formatted as numbers. Click the arrow on the date column and select Facet > Numeric facet. This will bring up a facet selector on the left (see figure 6).

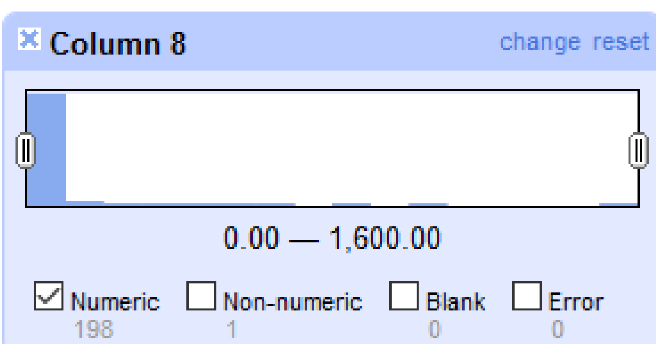



**Figure 6.** A numeric facet selector in OpenRefine

Note that the facet indicates that the column contains many cells with numeric data, but only one with non-numeric data. That last one is our date. Deselect the non-numeric box and you'll see that the rows displayed on the screen have been updated to show only those which contain numeric data in that column. Only the displayed rows will be affected by the following step. Click the arrow on that column, then select **Edit cells** > **Common transforms** > **To null**. Close the facet by clicking the "x" next to the facet box, and now you'll see only the date above empty cells.

Before moving on there is one more step that needs to be taken. Because of how OpenRefine saves facet information in the code, it will define the upward limit for the facet as the largest number represented in this particular report. If a future report contains a higher number, those cells won't be cleared. Fortunately, there is a workaround.

After clearing the cells, go to the Undo/Redo tab and click Extract to open the Operation History (see figure 7). Note in the code that the facet is defined as numbers ranging from 0 to (in this case) 1600. If any other transformations have been applied prior to this, make sure to only select this particular step. Click inside the box with the code and change the second number to something significantly higher, such as "20000000" (with no commas). Select and copy all code in the box, then close the operation history window. In the Undo/Redo tab, select the step immediately above the currently selected one to "undo" the step that cleared the numeric values. Then click Apply, paste the copied code into the box, and click Perform Operations. The numeric values will once again disappear, and this code will now work with all future reports regardless of usage numbers.

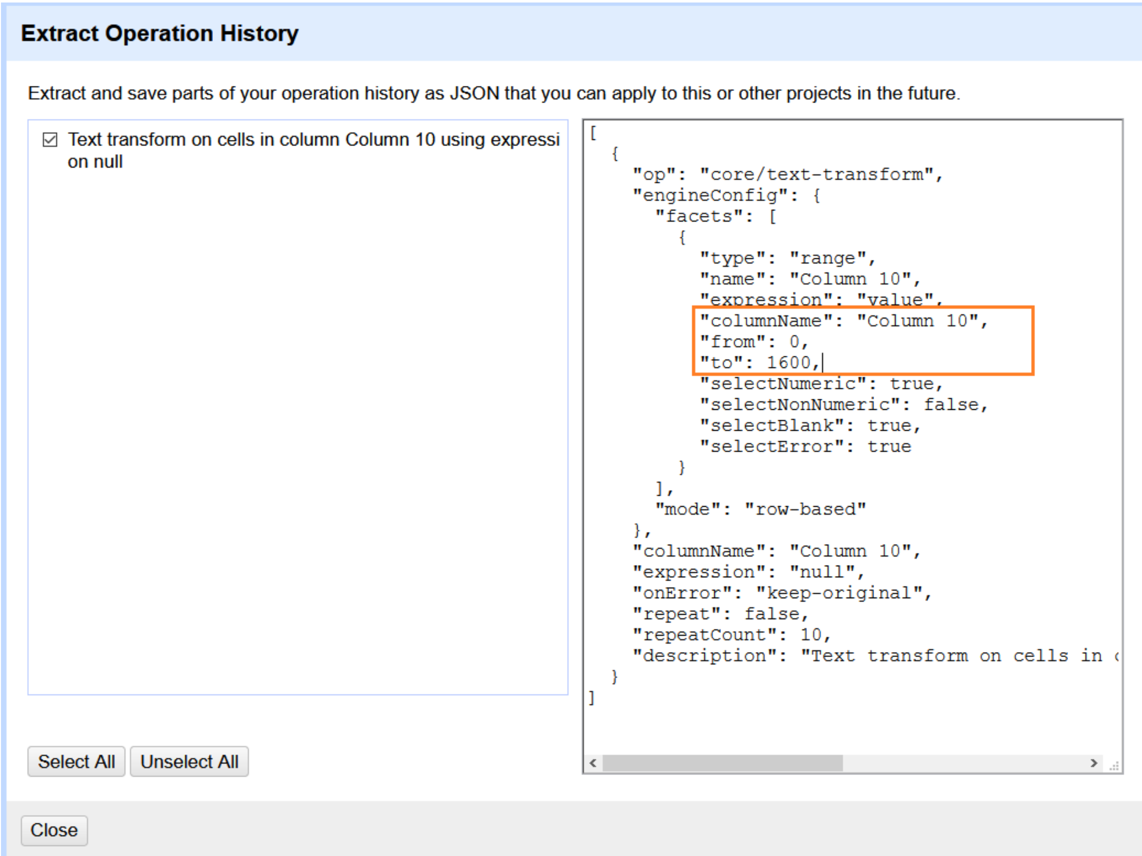
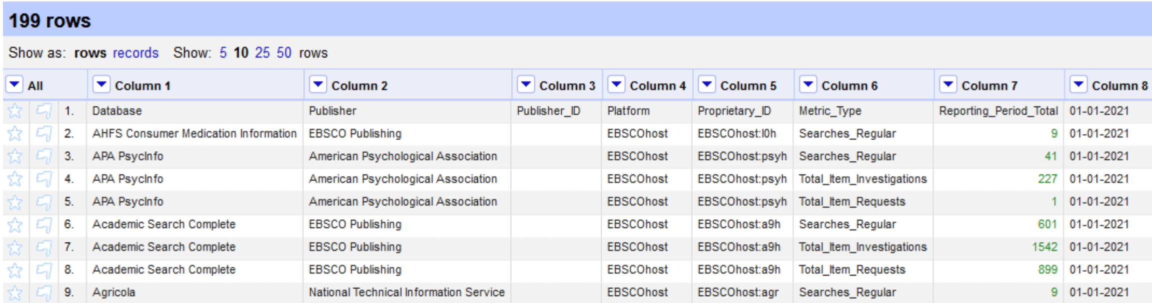



**Figure 7.** OpenRefine Extract Operations History box, showing how a numeric facet is represented in the code.

The next step is to convert the text string representing the date (e.g. Jan-2021) into something software programs will recognize as a date (e.g. 1-01-2021). OpenRefine does have some built-in functionality for converting text into DateTime format, but it doesn't work very well in this particular instance. For C5 reports, what ultimately worked best was to write some basic code in OpenRefine's coding language (GREL) that would look at each month's abbreviation and replace it with the appropriate numbers for month and day, but preserve the year as is. The resulting code was as follows:

```
value.replace('Jan','01-01').replace('Feb','02-01').replace('Mar','03-01').
replace('Apr','04-01').replace('May','05-01').replace('Jun','06-01').
replace('Jul','07-01').replace('Aug','08-01').replace('Sep','09-01').
replace('Oct','10-01').replace('Nov','11-01').replace('Dec','12-01')
```

The solution is a bit brute force, but it will properly convert the date from any COUNTER 5 report. Apply the code by selecting the date column, then **Edit cells** > **Transform**. Paste the code into the box, then click OK. Finally, populate the date throughout the column using **Edit cells** > **Fill down**.



199 rows

Show as: rows records Show: 5 10 25 50 rows

| All | Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 | Column 5 | Column 6 | Column 7 | Column 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Database | Publisher | Publisher_ID | Platform | Proprietary_ID | Metric_Type | Reporting_Period_Total | 01-01-2021 |
| 2. | AHFS Consumer Medication Information | EBSCO Publishing | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:l0h | Searches_Regular | 9 | 01-01-2021 |
| 3. | APA PsycInfo | American Psychological Association | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:psyh | Searches_Regular | 41 | 01-01-2021 |
| 4. | APA PsycInfo | American Psychological Association | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:psyh | Total_Item_Investigations | 227 | 01-01-2021 |
| 5. | APA PsycInfo | American Psychological Association | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:psyh | Total_Item_Requests | 1 | 01-01-2021 |
| 6. | Academic Search Complete | EBSCO Publishing | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:a9h | Searches_Regular | 601 | 01-01-2021 |
| 7. | Academic Search Complete | EBSCO Publishing | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:a9h | Total_Item_Investigations | 1542 | 01-01-2021 |
| 8. | Academic Search Complete | EBSCO Publishing | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:a9h | Total_Item_Requests | 899 | 01-01-2021 |
| 9. | Agricola | National Technical Information Service | | EBSCOhost | EBSCOhost:agr | Searches_Regular | 9 | 01-01-2021 |

**Figure 8.** Usage report in OpenRefine with a column containing properly formatted and populated dates.

This done, the row of former column names may now be cleared out. Choose a column name, such as “Metric_Type”, and facet that column using **Facet** > **Text facet**. In the facet tab next to Metric_Type, click “include”. You should now see only that top row. Now click the arrow next to All, on the far left, and select **Edit rows** > **Remove matching rows**. Close the facet, and that row will be gone.

Now all that remains is to configure the columns. First remove any unnecessary columns using **Edit column** > **Remove this column**. Next add new columns containing additional desired information, such as the vendor name itself and, if working with multiple library accounts or locations, the location name or identifier. Columns such as these, which will contain the same information in every row in the report, can be added by selecting any existing column and clicking **Edit column** > **Add column based on this column**. In the box that opens (see figure 9), give the column a name – in this case “vendor”. Erase the default text and input the desired text, encased in double-quotes to indicate it is a text string. Click OK, and that text will appear in every cell in the new column.

(Note that empty columns can also be populated by editing a single cell and selecting “Apply to All Identical Cells”, but this action will not be saved in the Operation History, and therefore will not apply to future reports.)

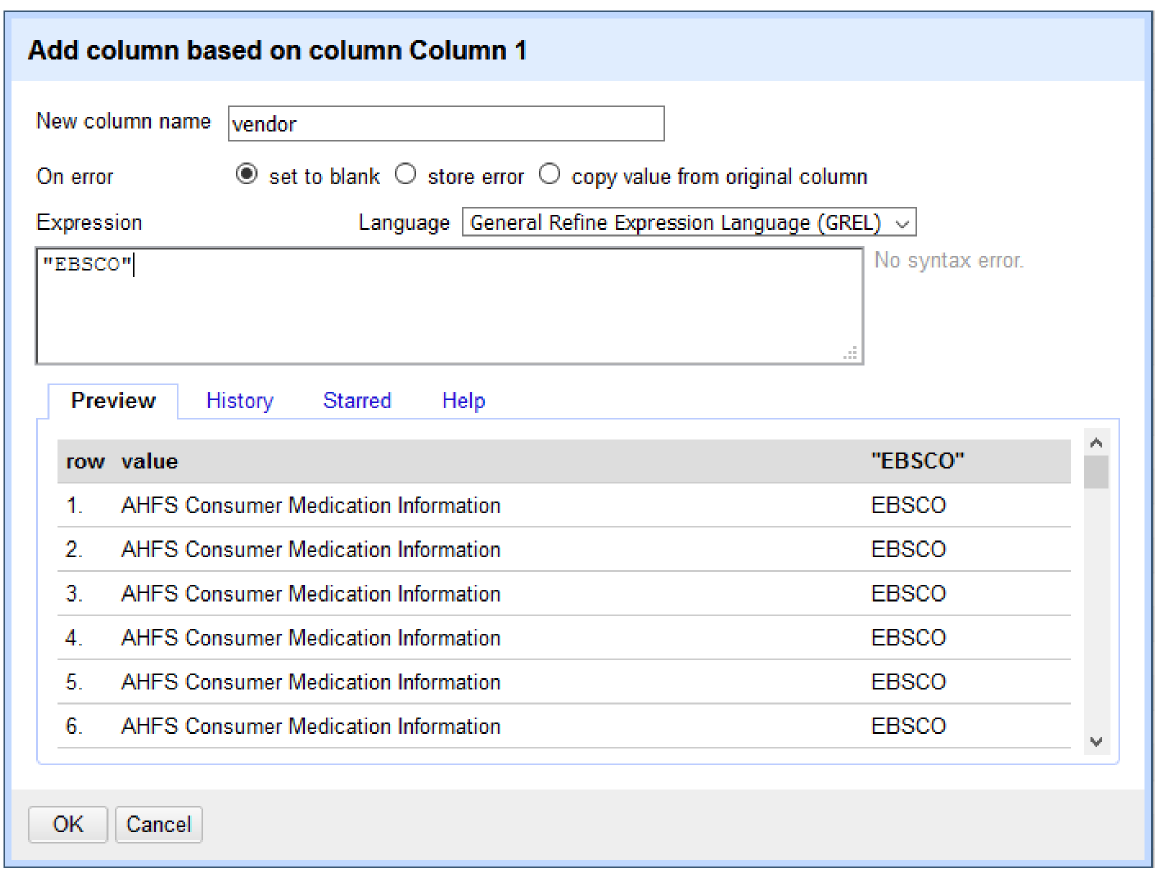



**Figure 9.** Adding a new column with defined text in OpenRefine.

Finally, rename any unnamed columns **(Edit column** > **Rename this column**), and move the columns into the desired order (using the move options under Edit column, or select **All** > **Edit columns** > **Re-order/ remove columns**). The specific names and order aren't important so long as they're consistent across all reports.

Figure 10 shows an example of a fully processed report. It contains columns identifying the library location, vendor, specific resources or databases, the types of use recorded, the total number of uses, and the month in which the use happened. Configured this way, the data can easily be combined with reports from additional months or vendors. It may be loaded as-is into a database or consolidated spreadsheet, and from there connected to data visualization software or further manipulated in Excel using graphs or pivot tables. The data can be grouped to show total aggregated usage numbers by vendor, broken out by individual resources, or grouped by dates to show total use by quarter or fiscal year.

**198 rows**

Show as: **rows** records Show: 5 10 **25** 50 rows

| All | location | vendor | resource | metric_type | reporting_period_total | reporting_period |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Atad Library | EBSCO | AHFS Consumer Medication Information | Searches_Regular | 9 | 01-01-2021 |
| 2. | Atad Library | EBSCO | APA PsycInfo | Searches_Regular | 41 | 01-01-2021 |
| 3. | Atad Library | EBSCO | APA PsycInfo | Total_Item_Investigations | 227 | 01-01-2021 |
| 4. | Atad Library | EBSCO | APA PsycInfo | Total_Item_Requests | 1 | 01-01-2021 |
| 5. | Atad Library | EBSCO | Academic Search Complete | Searches_Regular | 601 | 01-01-2021 |
| 6. | Atad Library | EBSCO | Academic Search Complete | Total_Item_Investigations | 1542 | 01-01-2021 |
| 7. | Atad Library | EBSCO | Academic Search Complete | Total_Item_Requests | 899 | 01-01-2021 |
| 8. | Atad Library | EBSCO | Agricola | Searches_Regular | 9 | 01-01-2021 |
| 9. | Atad Library | EBSCO | Agricola | Total_Item_Investigations | 24 | 01-01-2021 |
| 10. | Atad Library | EBSCO | Alt HealthWatch | Searches_Regular | 65 | 01-01-2021 |

**Figure 10.** A fully transformed usage report in OpenRefine, ready for export.

### Exporting the Code

Once all transformations are complete and have been confirmed to work on other iterations of the same report, it's time to save the transformation code itself. Go to the Undo/Redo tab and click Extract to open the Extract Operations History box. Making sure that all steps are selected and none are grayed out, copy the entire block of code and paste it into a text file. When future reports arrive, the code can be applied by clicking Apply in the Undo/Redo tab and pasting that code back in.

## CONVERTING NON-STANDARD METRICS

COUNTER 5 reports are relatively easy to process but cleaning up non-standard reports can get a little more complicated. Not all vendors have migrated to the C5 standard, and some e-resources are designed such that the COUNTER metrics cannot be applied. This presents a challenge for offering straightforward instructions for processing non-standard reports, as each report will require its own unique approach and assessment. Still, the process will always break down into two distinct tasks:

1. Evaluate the metrics in the report and develop a crosswalk for converting them to an estimated equivalent to the desired usage metrics (e.g. COUNTER 5).
2. As with the COUNTER 5 reports, work through the steps required in OpenRefine to transform the report into the desired configuration.

In order to create a metric crosswalk, it is first necessary to understand exactly what is being counted by the metrics you're using as your baseline. In the case of COUNTER 5 Database Reports, the primary usage metrics are Searches (Regular or Federated), Total Item Requests, and Total Item Investigations. Searches are fairly straightforward, so we're going to focus on the latter two.

According to Project Counter (2021), the Total Item Requests metric counts instances of access to full-text objects or their equivalents: HTML or PDF full-text articles, video or audio content, images, etc. The Total Item Investigations metric includes all uses under the Total Item Requests umbrella, as well as any views of additional information around those objects: views of abstracts or previews, views of cited references, linkouts, etc.

to

or

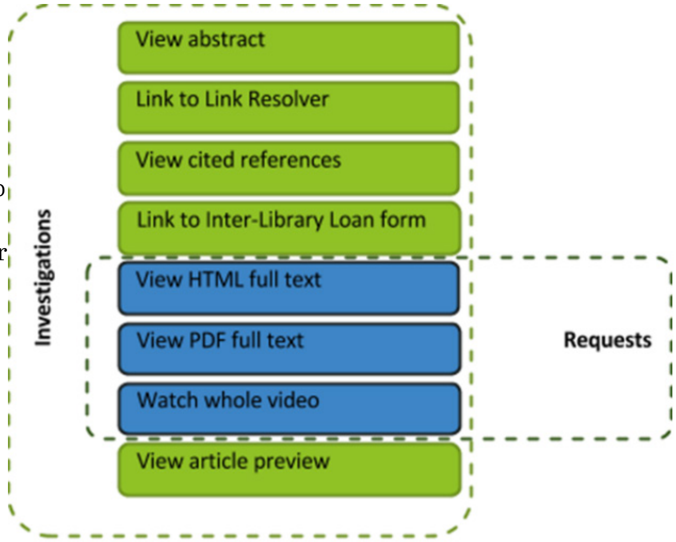



**Figure 11.** Graphic detailing what is contained within COUNTER 5 Investigations and Requests metrics (Project Counter 2021).

With this in mind, an equivalent to Total Item Requests would be any and all counted views of objects which are that resource's equivalent to full-text or media items. These might be accesses car manuals in ChiltonLibrary, legal documents in a Legal Forms resource, views of scanned documents in genealogy or other primary source resources. If a resource offers more than one such metric, then those metrics may be totaled together to get the Total Item Requests equivalent.

Next, an equivalent to Total Item Investigations may be calculated by identifying any metrics measuring views of non-full-text material such as abstracts or previews and adding these metrics together with the Total Item Requests. If no such metric exists in that resource, then simply leave both Requests and Investigations as the same number for that resource.

Of course, not all reported metrics must be included in the final processed report. Many reports continue to include Sessions as a metric, but COUNTER 5 does not include an equivalent to this metric. If C5 is your baseline standard, then these metrics may be discarded. Note, too, that not all resources will report equivalents to all desired metrics. Many resources do not include search functions, and therefore do not report searches. If that is a metric you wish to report, then it may have to be left blank for that resource.

To illustrate this process, I will give a few examples of crosswalks developed for non-standard reports. For LearningExpress Library, an equivalent to Total Item Requests could be considered the sum of accesses to all tests, tutorials, ebooks, and computer courses accessed that month. The "page hits" metric counts user views of individual pages in the resource, each of which contains summary information on what is contained within that section. Because this serves a similar function to an abstract or preview, that metric could be added to the previous count to indicate an equivalent to Total Item Investigations. The sessions and new user account metrics do not fit into the C5 metrics and can be discarded. The resource does not have a search function, and therefore Searches is left blank. ChiltonLibrary, on the other hand, only reports two metrics: Searches and Retrievals. Searches may translate directly, but without any abstract or preview function Retrievals must be counted for both Requests and Investigations.

Most vendors offer documentation on how their metrics are counted, which can be useful in developing these crosswalks. If questions remain, speaking to the vendor directly about their usage reports can yield additional information. But ultimately it is less important for the crosswalks to be perfect than for them to be consistent, transparent, and well-documented. It is vital to keep clear and descriptive documentation of how the report metrics are converted and what is counted for each, in case questions arise at a later date. If an issue is discovered necessitating changes to how the report is converted, then the data can always be reprocessed at that time.

## TRANSFORMING NON-STANDARD REPORTS

Processing non-standard reports in OpenRefine can be slightly trickier than the more standardized COUNTER 5 reports. Because each requires developing its own custom approach, I will stick to offering suggestions for managing a few common transformations likely to be required when dealing with these reports.

### Converting Wide Data to Narrow

As mentioned previously, wide data refers to reports in which every variable in a spreadsheet is given its own column. Converting these datasets into narrow data in Excel is time-consuming and typically requires multiple rounds of copying and pasting. Fortunately, OpenRefine makes this process much easier. When working with a report resembling the one in figure 12, OpenRefine can take the data from any selected columns and transpose them into two new columns: one for the attribute (for which it will use the column names) and one for the corresponding value (the numbers contained in those columns).

| All | Database | reporting_peric | Searches_Regular | Total_Item_Investigations | Total_Item_Requests |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 19th Century British Pamphlets | 02-01-2019 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. | AHFS Consumer Medication Information | 02-01-2019 | 57 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. | APA PsycInfo | 02-01-2019 | 92 | 328 | 0 |
| 4. | Academic Search Complete | 02-01-2019 | 704 | 2634 | 1416 |
| 5. | Agricola | 02-01-2019 | 82 | 55 | 0 |
| 6. | Alt HealthWatch | 02-01-2019 | 92 | 33 | 15 |
| 7. | American National Biography Online | 02-01-2019 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8. | Archive of European Integration | 02-01-2019 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. | Associated Press Video Collection | 02-01-2019 | 204 | 6 | 5 |
| 10. | Atla Religion Database with AtlaSerials | 02-01-2019 | 62 | 247 | 67 |

**Figure 12.** A dataset in OpenRefine presented in wide data format, with separate columns for the three usage metrics.

First, make sure that the columns are named using the exact text you want to be placed in the new metric type column. Then select the arrow for the first column, and then **Transpose** > **Transpose cells across columns into rows**. In the box that opens, select all columns to be included, check the option to transpose the data into two new columns, then name the key column and value columns according to your standard layout. In this case I used "metric_type" and "reporting_period_total" (see figure 13). Because this will create new rows in your dataset, make sure to check the option to "Fill down in other columns", so that data from unaffected columns such as vendor and database name will populate down.

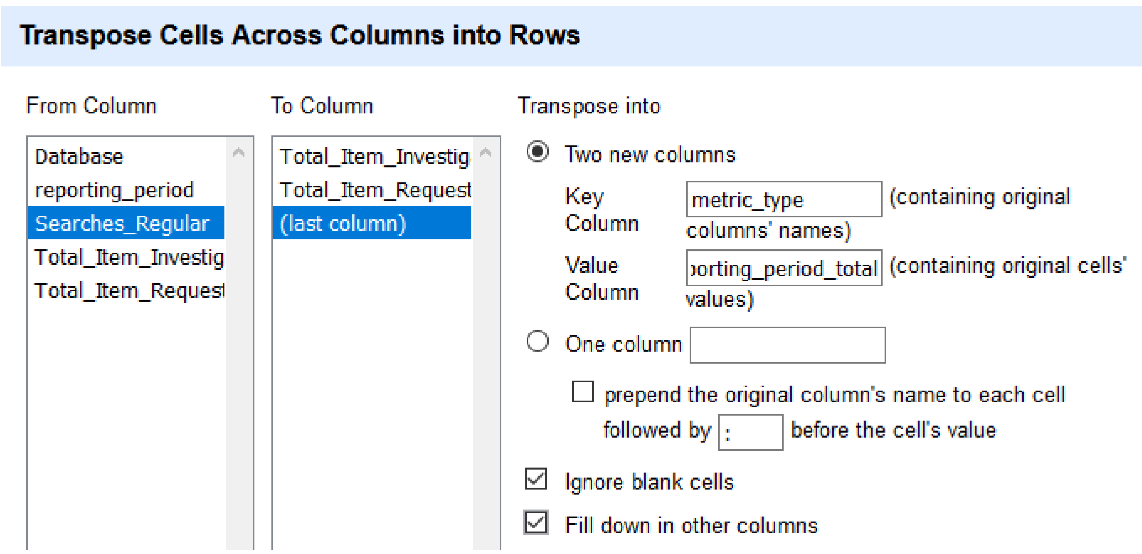



**Figure 13.** An option box in OpenRefine for choosing details related to transposing data across columns into rows.

Once complete, the data should appear as in figure 14, with one column describing the usage type, and one indicating the total. Note that this conversion will often result in a significant number of rows reporting a use total of "0". Because an absence of data is also counted as zero, these rows are unnecessary and increase the size of the file. It's best to simply remove these rows using a text facet on the number 0, then deleting all matching rows.

| All | Database | reporting_period | metric_type | reporting_period_total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 19th Century British Pamphlets | 02-01-2019 | Searches_Regular | 0 |
| 2. | 19th Century British Pamphlets | 02-01-2019 | Total_Item_Investigations | 0 |
| 3. | 19th Century British Pamphlets | 02-01-2019 | Total_Item_Requests | 0 |
| 4. | AHFS Consumer Medication Information | 02-01-2019 | Searches_Regular | 57 |
| 5. | AHFS Consumer Medication Information | 02-01-2019 | Total_Item_Investigations | 0 |
| 6. | AHFS Consumer Medication Information | 02-01-2019 | Total_Item_Requests | 0 |
| 7. | APA PsycInfo | 02-01-2019 | Searches_Regular | 92 |
| 8. | APA PsycInfo | 02-01-2019 | Total_Item_Investigations | 328 |
| 9. | APA PsycInfo | 02-01-2019 | Total_Item_Requests | 0 |
| 10. | Academic Search Complete | 02-01-2019 | Searches_Regular | 704 |

**Figure 12.** A dataset in OpenRefine after using the transpose function to consolidate data across columns into two attribute/value columns.

### Totaling Across Columns

Sometimes before converting wide data reports to narrow, it's necessary to add some metrics together to get the total equivalent numbers for Requests and Investigations. Though OpenRefine does have a "Join Columns" function, it primarily works to combine text strings rather than add numbers. Totaling several rows of numbers will require a little bit of coding, but fortunately the code itself is simple and can be easily adapted to any situation.

Click the arrow for any column which will be included in the final total. Select **Edit column** > **Add column based on this column**. In the box that opens, fill in the name for the new column to be created (in Figure 15 this is Total_Item_Requests). Then, in the Expression box, type the code telling OpenRefine which columns to add together. The basic format for this is: value (indicating the value listed in the selected column) + cells['ColumnName'].value (indicating the value for the cells in the listed column name). Any number of columns can be strung together using this pattern. The example given in figure 15 uses the following code to add the values of columns "TestsAdded", "TutorialsAdded", "eBooksAdded", and "ComputerCoursesAdded", with the "ComputerCoursesAdded" column being one initially selected when creating a new column:

```
value + cells['TestsAdded'].value + cells['TutorialsAdded'].value +
cells['eBooksAdded'].value
```

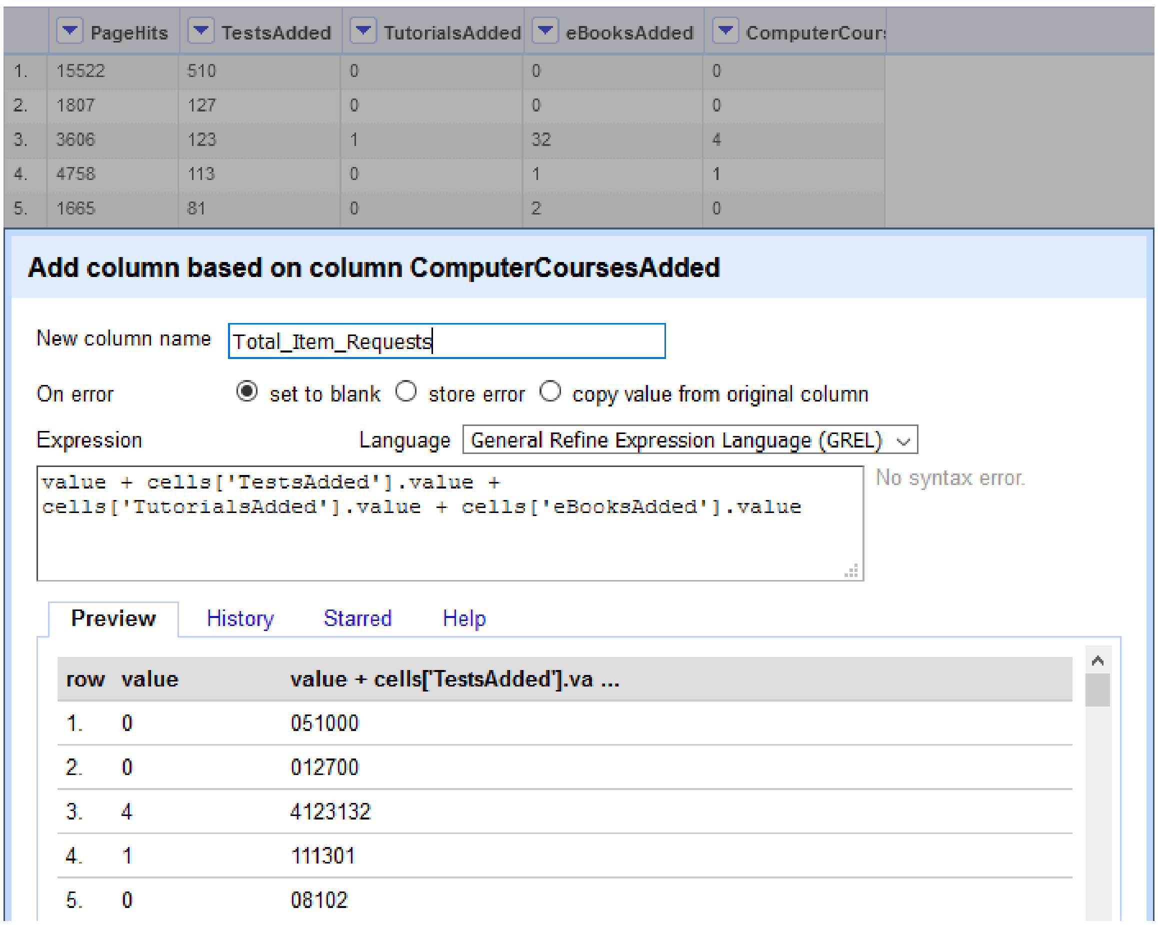



**Figure 12.** An option box in OpenRefine for creating a new column based on adding the totals from other columns.

The preview allows you to see what the resulting column will contain. However, note in figure 15 that the values shown are not an added total, but instead individual values placed together as a text string. This is because those columns are formatted as text rather than numbers. Luckily this is an easy fix. Text may be converted to numerical format using **Edit cells** > **Common transforms** > **To number**. Try the same process again after converting all columns to numbers, and it should add all cell values together properly (see Figure 16). The same process may then be repeated to add the new Total Item Requests column to the PageHits column to get Total Item Investigations. Lastly, delete all excess columns, then transpose the metrics and values into narrow data format as before.

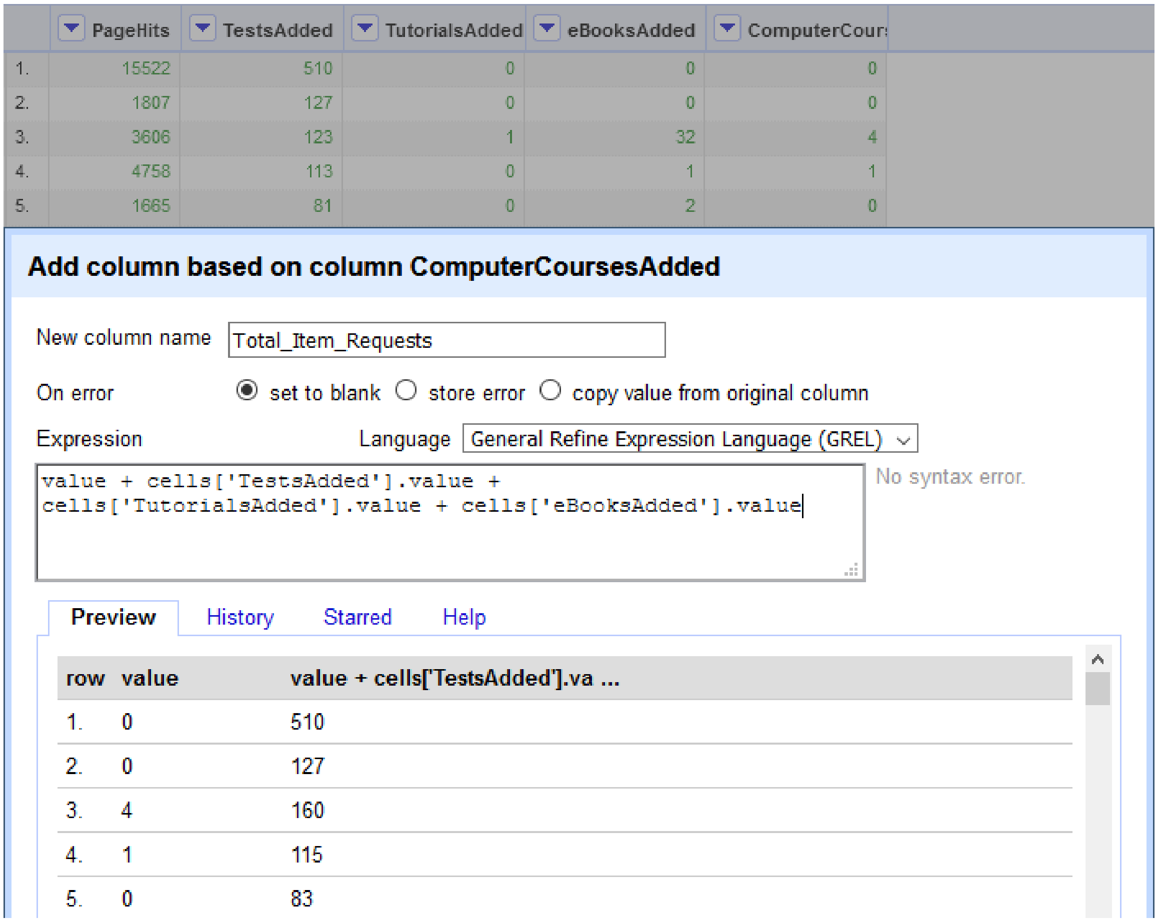



**Figure 16.** An option box in OpenRefine for creating a new column, with totals combining as numbers rather than text.

## PROCESSING CONSORTIAL REPORTS

Finally, I will briefly touch on a few tips for processing consortial reports that contain usage for multiple locations. Vendors typically differentiate between these locations using their own unique IDs and naming conventions that aren't consistent across reports. Luckily, OpenRefine can also automate replacing these with a more standardized ID or naming structure.

The first step is to create ID crosswalks for every distinct vendor or platform ID. Note that it's best to create these as separate files, in case different vendors use overlapping ID numbers. Each crosswalk is a spreadsheet containing columns for: known vendor IDs, the location each corresponds to, and the persistent ID and/or name the consortia assigns to that location. If multiple vendor IDs need to be assigned to a single location (e.g. branch locations whose usage should be counted towards the system), then add additional columns for branch locations and IDs, with the main ID and location columns containing information indicating which location their usage totals will be counted towards.

| VendorID | ID | Location | ID_Branch | Location_Branch |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5329048 | 101 | Atad Library System | 101 | Atad Library System |
| 9842342 | 101 | Atad Library System | 201 | Cirtem Area Library |
| 3924842 | 101 | Atad Library System | 301 | Edoc Historical Center |
| 2434323 | 102 | Egasu Library Consortium | 102 | Egasu Library Consortium |
| 3244224 | 102 | Egasu Library Consortium | 301 | Ofni Branch Library |

**Figure 17.** An example Vendor ID Crosswalk.

Once these crosswalks are set up, they can be uploaded into OpenRefine as their own projects. I recommend giving these crosswalks a tag, such as "crosswalk" to make them easy to find in case updates are required. These crosswalks can then be used to connect vendor IDs within the monthly reports to the appropriate consortia ID or location name in the crosswalk using a function called "Cell Cross".

To start, find the column in the report containing the vendor IDs and select **Edit column** > **Add column based on this column**. The cell cross function is constructed as follows:

cell.cross('Name of ID Crosswalk Sheet', 'Name of Vendor ID Column in that spreadsheet').cells['Name of Consortia ID Column in that spreadsheet'.value[0].

Thus if the ID Crosswalk Spreadsheet was saved in OpenRefine as "VendorID Crosswalk EBSCO", and contains columns named "VendorID" and "ConsortiaID", then the function would be:

```
cell.cross('VendorID Crosswalk EBSCO','VendorID').cells['ConsortiaID'].
value[0]
```

This will match each vendor ID with a consortia ID and populate the latter into a new column. If a match is not found that cell will remain empty, so be sure to check for blanks and update the crosswalks as needed.

Note also that the cell cross function does not always work properly with numeric values, so it may be necessary to convert numeric IDs into text using **Edit cells** > **Common transforms** > **To text**. Occasionally the resulting text strings will have a ".0" at the end. These may be removed using **Edit cells** > **Transform** and entering the following code:

```
value.split('.')[0]
```

This splits the values in half using the period and keeps only the first half.

### FUTURE WORK AND DEVELOPMENT

Of course, not every transformation can be anticipated, and some reports are more difficult to process than others. And it may be that some steps simply can't be automated and must be performed manually after applying the transformation code (just make sure to note these in the procedure). Fortunately, OpenRefine is a widely used program, and information on how to perform more complex tasks can often be found using a web search. But even with its limitations, OpenRefine offers immense potential for automating data processes and cutting down time spent manually cleaning and rearranging monthly reports.

TexShare Program staff intend to continue exploring the potential for using OpenRefine workflows to process consortial usage data and make the standardized reports available to its members through an online dashboard. Any questions related to this project may be directed to TexShare@tsl.texas.gov.

*Kate Reagor is a Library Technical Services Specialist for the TexShare Databases Program at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.*

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# Recognizing Professional Service in an Academic Setting

## The Distinguished Service Academy

By Loriene Roy, Jen Moore, and Rich Reddick

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICE IS OFTEN EXPECTED OF FACULTY, INCLUDING ACADEMIC TENURE-TRACK AND CLINICAL/NON-TENURE-TRACK LIBRARIANS.** Faculty may perform service at the department/school, university, and/or to the profession. This academic service typically includes work on committees, reviewing manuscripts, and appointments to local, statewide, regional, national, or international committees. Service in higher education can often be described as invisible or almost-invisible work, the behind-the-scenes action that keep institutions of higher education functioning (Applegate, pp. 302-303). For librarians, their daily work in librarianship is equated with service (Hartnett, Arant-Kaspar, and vanDuinkerken, p. 283). And, because librarianship is often considered to be a feminized profession, it is likely that librarians are called on to do more service and teaching (Neigel, 2015; Rosa and Henke, 2017). Librarians of color are called on to do more service in the area of diversity-equity-inclusion as well as in mentoring (Catterall, Mickenberg, and Reddick, 2019; O'Meara, Culpper, Misra, and Jaeger, 2021).

While much attention is given in the academic workplace to research and teaching roles, service is not well defined. There is evidence the approach to service and its value may be felt differently among librarians as compared to teaching and research faculty. Walters (2016) summarized this difference by stating "service is central to the work of academic librarians. In contrast, most faculty regard service as considerably less important than either teaching or research" (p. 819).

However service is demonstrated and defined, it is important to consider examining new approaches to recognize those who excel and exceed in their service commitments, just as those who excel in research and teaching are acknowledged. The paper covers the goals of establishing, in 2020, a Distinguished Service Academy (DSA) at the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) as "a formal organization of distinguished tenured and senior non-tenure track (NTT) faculty members with extraordinary achievements across their portfolios and in particular in terms of their excellence in mentoring and service to their college, the university, the state of Texas and the nation" (The University of Texas at Austin, 2020). The paper will cover eligibility to serve on the DSA, the nomination process, selection of DSA cohort members, communication within the DSA and with the University administration, DSA activities to date, and DSA members' expected continual service.

### BUILDING A FIERCE ACADEMY: ELIGIBILITY, NOMINATION, AND SELECTION

On September 16, 2019, the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost at UT Austin, hereafter referred to as the Provost, sent an email to all faculty, announcing the launch of the process to select a new Provost's Distinguished Service Academy (DSA). The DSA was founded in response to advice from campus committees, including the Gender Equity Council and the Council for Racial and Ethnic Equity and Diversity (CREED) to implement initiatives that recognized faculty community service. The DSA would serve as a sister recognition to UT Austin's Academy of Distinguished Teachers. The DSA would elevate service work by providing selected faculty with a title, compensation, and recognition. It would build trust among the faculty as a whole that such efforts would be noticed and in alignment with the work of faculty at the state's flagship university (Reddick, 2020).

The email invited nominations or direct applications from candidates among the tenured and non-tenure-track faculty who might be recognized for their service as well as for their mentorship. Two open face-to-face information sessions were held, one in late September 2019 and the second in early October 2019, to share information about the proposed DSA. A website was built to provide background and accept applications (**https://provost.utexas.edu/the-office/faculty-affairs/provosts-distinguished-service-academy/**).

Eligible faculty had to have, at least, tenure with promotion to an appointment higher than assistant professor and a record of at least three prior years of full-time employment at UT Austin. NTT candidates also had to have a record of at least three years of employment at UT Austin at a level higher than the first NTT level. Thus, nominations were accepted from those holding positions as senior lecturer or associate NTT professors.

Nominees submitted a three-page personal statement in which they described their track record in:

- engagement in service and active mentoring,
- excellence in teaching and research for tenured faculty or another area for NTT candidates,
- an explanation of their philosophy of service and mentoring,
- contributions to their department, and
- support for equity-diversity-inclusion.

The most critical section of the personal statement was the nominee's vision of how they might be an asset to the DSA and advance its goals of (1) publicly recognizing faculty who have outstanding records in service and mentoring; (2) providing other faculty with training on service and mentoring; and (3) assist the university faculty, staff, and studies in pursuing and documenting their efforts at achieving excellence in service, teaching, and research (The University of Texas at Austin, 2020). They added their curriculum vitae and two support letters, usually from faculty colleagues at UT Austin. One support letter could have been submitted from a student and one might have been from a colleague outside of UT Austin.

A twelve-member review committee received the applications and conferred with each other to select the first DSA members. Members of the committee included representatives from six UT Austin colleges or schools including the College of Liberal Arts, College of Natural Sciences, College of Education, Moody College of Communication, Cockrell School of Engineering, and School of Nursing. Two members were students—an undergraduate and a graduate student—and two held administrative positions in the Provost's office, including the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and the Vice Provost for Diversity.

On January 21, 2020, five faculty at UT Austin received letters from the Senior Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs and the Provost, informing them that they were selected as recipients of the first Distinguished Service Award. The inaugural DSA included three professors, an associate professor, and an associate dean, from five different units (College of Library Arts, College of Pharmacy, College of Education, College of Natural Sciences, and the School of Information). Just as the first DSA members were associated with a range of disciplinary areas, they also were a diverse body in terms of ethnicity and sexual orientation with four from under-represented communities. Prior to the first DSA meeting, the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs anointed the first cohort as FIERCE: Fierce Inaugural Educators Renowned for serviCe Excellence. They became the FIERCE ones.

## THE FIERCE ONES MAP THEIR COURSE: COMMUNICATION WITH THE COHORT AND TO THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

The DSA met with the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, on February 14, 2020, two weeks after their selection was announced. The DSA met each other, some for the first time, as they heard about the selection process and they reviewed their roles. They learned that, outside of their stipends, the DSA did not have a working budget. Some of their first tasks would be to draft bylaws for the DSA and consider how as the first cohort they would be involved in recruiting nominations and selecting members of subsequent DSAs. This meeting was followed by one held by the DSA in March 2020 at a restaurant near campus, an event that marked for some of the DSA members the last time they would have a face-to-face event before the University closed its physical campus due to COVID-19 (Reddick and Moore, 2021).

Membership in DSA was always intended to be more than recognition of service. There were expectations placed on DSA members. The initial information about nominations stated that members of DSA would host one or more workshops each semester along with sessions providing one-on-one mentoring during the academic year. Each FIERCE one was also expected to write an annual report documenting their involvement in DSA work over the previous year. In addition to having the verbal and written recognition, members of the DSA are given a stipend of $5,000 for each of the first five years that they serve. They may elect to serve an additional five year term without annual stipends.

Over summer 2020, the DSA met every other week over Zoom to socialize as a cohort and discuss key topics related to academic life including work/life balance, autonomy, zest and enthusiasm for their work, elevating exemplary work, and cultural taxation. By August 2020, they affirmed their values as supporting and promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility through their approach to discussion and decision making.

## THE FIERCE ONES PROCEED: ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE COHORT

The FIERCE ones were fierce in their determination to elevate the acknowledgement and presence of faculty involvement in service. While united in this goal, they were also committed to follow a process of working together that rejected the hierarchical model and, instead, elected to bring their own stamp to their meetings and communication. Unable to meet face-to-face, this helped make their Zoom meeting setting more familiar, welcoming, and satisfying.

The DSA opened their meetings with a Land Acknowledgement that was developed by a UT Austin Committee on Acknowledgement during the summer of 2020 and approved by the Faculty Council at its first meeting in fall 2020. Land Acknowledgement introduces the original people of the lands on which UT is located along with the other tribal nations in Texas (University of Texas at Austin, Native American Indigenous Studies, 2020). The Land Acknowledgement was followed by meditation, led by one of the FIERCE ones, as a sweet time to ease the strain of day-to-day. Instead of assigning each to the traditional parliamentary stations of chair, vice-chair, secretary, and member, they considered the roles that they might fulfill to evoke a shared leadership based on respect. Each of the five FIERCE ones adopted one of the following roles for an initial two-year period. They invited contributions from other DSA members in meeting the tasks.

- Meeting Planner: the person who develops and shares meeting agendas; polls the DSA and schedules meetings; and notifies and reminds members of meetings and task deadlines;
- Meeting Facilitator: the person who welcomes and opens meetings; invites DSA members to introduce themselves; facilitates and helps maintain anti-oppressive practices in meeting discussions and gathering structures; ensures focus on key topics by supporting coverage of main agenda items; makes sure that all voices are heard by reducing monopolization of conversation and gentle inquiries;
- Communications Liaison: the person who coordinates outward-facing communications between the DSA and the wider University and its units as well as with community beyond the University; this person may coordinate written documents by preparing drafts, and collaborating on and/or assigning other DSA members to prepare reports, letters or statements written on behalf of the DSA;
- Note-Taker/Archivist: the person who records decisions and action item arising from each meeting and makes sure they are organized and accessible to all members in Box, the cloud storage space available to those affiliated with the University;
- Membership Coordinator: the person who attends to details related to the annual application to the DSA; plans and manages a manual review of the application process; communicates advice from the DSA to the Provost; and serves as a liaison between the DSA and the DSA Review Committee.

## SERVICE BEGETS SERVICE: PRODUCTS OF THE INAUGURAL DSA COHORT

The frequent meetings helped the FIERCE brainstorm and, ultimately, focus their attention on how they might promote service and mentoring to the other 3,809 faculty members at the University (University of Texas at Austin. Total Faculty Members, 2020). The DSA was able to produce the following tangibles:

1. A bylaws document;
2. A document that lays out the DSA commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility through demonstrating intentional equity, horizontal organization, and consensus based decisions;
3. A one page multi-color customizable DSA flyer for use in inviting attendees to future DSA information sessions;
4. An outline for a live information session on the DSA;
5. Revision of the DSA content on the Provost's website;
6. With the Provost's Communication Team, development of a DSA Logo as a front-facing image for use on communication and future merchandise;
7. Five videos, each featuring a separate DSA member, for use in illuminating the nature of FIERCE faculty mentoring;
8. A group presentation at one of the weekly meetings of the University's Distinguished Teaching Academy;
9. Two one-hour workshops on service and mentoring, one for general faculty and another more focused on the needs of NTT or professional faculty;
10. Publications about the DSA, and
11. Ideas for future workshops and communication.

## THE DSA: NOW A TRADITION

O'Meara and her colleagues made recommendations for how higher education can work toward workplace equity (2021, p. iv). Among their recommendations is that of giving credit, in terms of recognition and reward, to those who devote more effort in areas such as service. The DSA is an example of responding to this recommendation.

The strength of the DSA was in the people, the unplanned connections that the FIERCE ones made with each other. Connections that were evidenced in their deep, evolving conversations that reflected their personal styles of humor and multidisciplinary orientation. DSA members shared their own work and disciplinary references and served as reader's advisors for each other. They valued, respected, and appreciated each other's work. Their collaborative nature could be described as "humble learners" (Reddick, 2020).

Although DSA members were already intensely involved in other university-wide activities and initiatives, each was known for their responsiveness to the call to engage. They were a magnet to people wanting them to provide more service and embodied the adage, "if you want to find someone to do the work, ask a busy person." The tension between finally being recognized for critical, supportive work in our respective communities, and the additional cultural taxation that membership in the DSA entails remains a concern. Institutions must be mindful of how honoring and acknowledging valuable community-based work – what UT Austin's president has termed "changing the world"– can actually exacerbate the issues that are liabilities for historically marginalized identity groups in higher education.

Having created their respective roles in the DSA from scratch, now DSA members are looking to their future role as a cohort. They are contemplating creating additional resources for faculty colleagues including resources on mentoring. Inspired by an article by O'Meara (2020), they are considering creating a service dashboard to quantify and provide comparison levels so that the workload and compensation might be equitably distributed. They are considering more collaborative writing including op-ed pieces on the role of service and mentoring.

The first DSA cohort views the association with the DSA with pride, adding it to our signature email, and referring to the DSA at media opportunities. They accept the responsibility of committing themselves to the DSA so that the University will continue to invest funds to recognize faculty who demonstrated the University's motto of "what starts here, changes the world".

*Dr. Loriene Roy, Professor, School of Information; Dr. Jen Moon, Assistant Dean for Non-Tenure Track Faculty, College of Natural Sciences, and Dr. Rich Reddick, Associate Dean for Equity, Community Engagement and Outreach, College of Education at University of Texas at Austin*

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# Change and Impact of Library Instruction Classes During COVID-19

By Dr. Yumi Shin

## INTRODUCTION

Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected academic libraries (Breeding 2020; Dixon 2020; Walsh and Rana 2020). Due to this sudden obstacle, library employees have been struggling to provide the same quality of library services prior to the pandemic. Consequently, it was necessary to change the methods of teaching library instruction classes during these unprecedented times. Online library instruction classes are essential to meet students' and faculty's safety and satisfy the need for a new library instruction delivery format. Although there was the need to develop online library classes for off-campus students, Lamar State College – Port Arthur (LSCPA) did not have the technology to provide these services as a primary method of instruction before the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the school to devise an appropriate system whereby students had to learn the same way as in a face-to-face environment. This research examined how the LSCPA librarian changed the library instruction classes during the COVID-19 pandemic and how these changes impacted student learning. This study's specific objective was to evaluate how students felt about the new delivery method of library instruction and how much they learned from online teaching.

## BACKGROUND

### *Lamar State College – Port Arthur*

Lamar State College – Port Arthur (LSCPA) was established in 1909 in Port Arthur, Texas as Port Arthur Business College to educate the workers in the petrochemical industry of southeast Texas. In 1911, the college was renamed Port Arthur Collegiate Institute by the Methodist Episcopal Church, which took over the institution until 1918. The college was finally given the current name, LSCPA, in June 1999. LSCPA offers more than thirty academic and technical programs, giving students opportunities to transfer to four-year institutions or to pursue their majors in the job market upon graduation. As a member of the Texas State University System, LSCPA respects its students' educational achievements, its employees' contributions, and the support it receives from the community. LSCPA has continuously increased its number of students and programs it offers, which includes distance education. Due to COVID-19, enrollment decreased to 2,312 in Spring 2021, which was about 6% less than Spring 2020. Therefore, the college has offered various options to encourage student enrollments, such as late registration and late start semesters.

### *Gates Memorial Library: Pre-COVID-19*

The Gates Memorial Library at LSCPA was initially built in 1917 as the Port Arthur Public Library and was later placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981. The library offers various collections of full-text journal articles, books, e-books, and streaming videos. It also provides other library services, such as circulation, distance learning support, electronic devices rental, and interlibrary loan. In addition, the library offers library tours and library instruction classes based on the requests of faculty members. Due to the limited staffing, the library relies on many student assistants for its operation.

Before COVID-19, the Gates Memorial Library only offered face-to-face library instruction classes with various instructors' requests; however, most of the classes were for students who took courses on campus, and unfortunately there was no class available for distance education learners. Therefore, instructors in online courses had to bring the students to the library for the library instruction class if they thought the class was needed. Due to the inconvenience, the library rarely received online instructors' requests, although instructors realized the library instruction class was necessary. Despite acknowledging the need for online library instructions, the library could not afford to provide the services due to the tight budget and the lack of available technology.

### *Gates Memorial Library: Post-COVID-19*

The Gates Memorial Library is expected to quickly adjust to a remote learning environment in the current post-COVID-19 pandemic period. Although the library has operated regular business hours during the pandemic, many of the normal library services have been modified to fit a model of distance education. For example, library instruction is entirely online, with few exceptions where a face-to-face class is required. The Open Educational Resources (OER) page was created on the library website to provide easy access to open textbooks for students and faculty. Video library tutorials are offered to students and faculty who wish to utilize them as supplement materials, and the chat service is continuously provided to students and faculty who need assistance regarding their research. The library also changed the policy to allow students to check out the library laptops during the pandemic.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Distance Education*

Distance education has been given considerable attention by today's educators, and the demand is increasing tremendously (Andrade 2016; Barefield and Meyer 2013; Thompson and Stella 2014; Lenert and Janes 2017). The concept of distance education first appeared at least 160 years ago (Simonson et al. 2014) with the inception of correspondence studies, which were first conducted by Charles Toussanit and Gustav Langenscheidt, language teachers in Berlin, Germany around 1843 (Simonson et al. 2014). Later, this study moved to the United States with the University of Chicago becoming the first university in the nation to offer correspondence courses in 1890 (Simonson et al. 2014). Since then, interest in online education has grown enormously. Lenert and Janes (2017) presented data from the analysis of the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS) in 2013. It was stated that more than 5.5 million learners took at least one fully online course in the United States. Furthermore, students not only in the USA but throughout the world are benefiting from the growth in distance education (Simonson et al. 2014; Yi 2005).

Due to the changes in education delivery modes, the services that academic libraries are providing should be changed to satisfy today's customers' needs. Yi (2005) emphasized the demand for changes in academic libraries. As computer, telecommunication, and information science develop at a frantic pace and today's students work with technology comfortably, academic libraries should consider providing more online services to keep the library sustainable (Yi 2005).

### *Online Library Instruction*

Online library instruction programs can be offered in many different ways. First, online library research tutorials can be utilized with an easy production process at little cost. According to Nichols, Shaffer, and Shockey (2003), online library tutorials were the most cost-effective and time-saving method to deliver consistent content to the large student population. The topics of video tutorials can vary, depending upon the needs of patrons. Dugan et al. (2001) mentioned that placing the activities throughout the tutorials had several advantages. The exercises could help students focus on the lectures and provide fast feedback (Dugan et al. 2001).

Second, synchronous library instruction classes via web-conferencing can be developed that allow students to learn in real-time from a distance. Although the tutorials can assist the students in learning necessary research skills, they may not deliver sufficient information for specific courses. Many academic libraries extended their programs to online library instructions after providing online tutorials (Barnhart and Stanfield 2011; Handler 2011). To prepare for live classes, a software program to facilitate courses should be selected, such as Adobe Connect or Blackboard. Synchronous library instruction classes can convey appropriate and in-depth information about the specific topics and provide instant answers from the students taking online classes via the live chatbox. However, several problems concerning synchronous library classes were mentioned in the literature, the most troublesome being technical problems (Barnhart and Stanfield 2011; Handler 2011). Handler (2011) included unexpected disconnections, freezing screens, lagging displays, and sound problems as the most frequent issues cited in synchronous library classes.

### *Libraries During COVID-19*

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted academic libraries (Breeding 2020; Dixon 2020; Ohler and Pitts 2021; Walsh and Rana 2020). When the COVID-19 pandemic happened, the vast majority of academic libraries closed physical facilities to ensure employees' safety and prevent the spread of the virus, although some libraries remained open with limited services. Libraries have continued to try to serve their patrons with reliable information and access to library resources as much as possible by offering the delivery of digital content and virtual services to satisfy educational or recreational needs (Breeding 2020; Dixon 2020; Walsh and Rana 2020). Due to library closures, many library employees began working from home with more flexibility and autonomy (Breeding 2020), however, this sudden change of working environment has caused many new issues. For example, libraries should identify what tasks could possibly be done remotely and what services could be offered in-person. Technology problems often occur while working from home, such as internet connectivity (Breeding 2020). Ohler and Pitts (2021) also emphasized the need to create a new operating system that embraces iterative development techniques. Developing new services, spaces, and collections strategies is essential to adapt to fast-changing campus environments under the pandemic (Ohler and Pitts 2021).

## METHODS

### *Research Design*

The fundamental objective of this study was to examine how the LSCPA librarian changed the library instruction classes during the COVID-19 pandemic and how these changes impacted student learning. Two options were offered to cope with the pandemic: video library tutorials and synchronous library instruction classes.

First, four video library tutorials were developed via Blackboard to teach students how to navigate library resources. The tutorials included the following: how to find books, how to find articles, how to do in-text APA citations, and how to do in-text MLA citations. These tutorials were provided to students who did not receive a library instruction class, yet still needed research assistance to complete their assignments. Two surveys were conducted before and after watching videos to compare the differences to measure students' experiences. The first survey determined the users' previous library experiences and confidence levels of searching resources, such as what sources they consulted on research, how they received library instruction, and how they would rate their confidence using library resources. The follow-up survey gauged the participants' perspectives and confidence level changes after watching video tutorials. The questions covered topics such as how helpful the video tutorials were and how much their confidence level changed after watching them.

Second, synchronous library instruction classes were introduced via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra to provide the same quality of instruction as the traditional face-to-face class. The classes were recorded for students who could not participate in the class, or students who wanted to watch them again when necessary. During the synchronous class, the librarian conducted two surveys about the students' library experiences at the beginning and end of class to determine the impact synchronous classes had on their learning outcomes. As with the video tutorial surveys, these surveys measured students' previous experiences and the impact of online classes. In addition, the pre- and post-tests were done to check the students' knowledge regarding MLA in-text citations. To compare the differences before and after the classes, both tests were exactly the same and contained four questions, which students learned from the classes in order for the impact of synchronous classes on student learning could be examined precisely.

### *Data Collection*

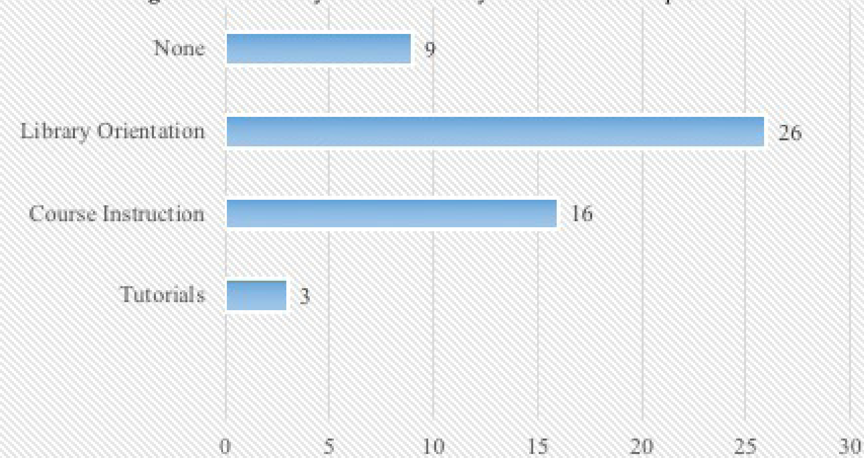
The librarian offered video tutorials and synchronous library instruction classes via Blackboard to faculty at LSCPA. In Fall 2020, two faculty who taught the courses Learning Framework (EDUC 1100) and English composition (ENGL 1301) agreed to use video tutorials to conduct the surveys. Two synchronous classes were held for the course Public Speaking (SPCH 1315) in Fall 2020. In addition, one education class (EDUC 1100) utilized video tutorials, and six synchronous classes were offered for the course Public Speaking (SPCH 1315) and two English classes (ENGL and DENG) in Spring 2021.

The surveys of video tutorials were

**Table 1.** The number of students participated in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021

| Semester | Fall 2020 | | | Spring 2021 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Video Tutorials | | Synchronous Class | Video Tutorials | Synchronous Class | | |
| Class | EDUC 1100 | ECHS 1301 (4 classes) | SPCH 1315 (2 sessions: 2 classes) | EDUC 1100 | SPCH 1315 (2 sessions: 5 classes) | ENGL 1301 & 1302 (3 sessions: 7 classes) | DENG 301 &410 (1 session: 4 classes) |
| Number of students in class | 24 | 75 | 35 | 17 | 114 | 152 | 58 |
| Number of participants | 4 | 42 | 21 | 8 | 19 | 29 | 9 |
| Semester | Fall 2020 | | | Spring 2021 | | | |
| | Video Tutorials | | Synchronous Class | Video Tutorials | Synchronous Class | | |
| Total Participants | 46 | | 21 | 8 | 57 | | |
| | Video Tutorial | | | Synchronous Class | | | |
| Total Participants | 54 | | | 78 | | | |

**Figure 2.** How did you receive library instruction in the past



collected by faculty through Blackboard. Once the faculty gathered the results, they were sent to the librarian. The librarian then collated and evaluated the data to finalize the results. Since the nature of the two teaching styles was different, the surveys of the synchronous classes were conducted during the class time via SurveyMonkey, with the librarian solely collecting the data and analyzing it after each class. Due to the ease of data collection, more synchronous classes were conducted in Spring 2021. Table 1 shows the number of students in each class who participated in the surveys. In total, fifty-four students participated in the video tutorial surveys, and seventy-eight students completed synchronous class surveys.

## RESULTS

### *Video Tutorials*

Feedback from the first survey indicated that the students consulted on research with Instructors (46%), Peers (22%), Others (17%), None (9%), and Librarians (6%) (**See Figure 1**). Regarding library instruction, twenty-six out of fifty-four students (48%) responded that they received library instruction in the past from library orientation, while nine students had no prior library instructions (**See Figure 2**). About 52% of the students expressed their level of searching library resources as somewhat confident (**See Figure 3**). At last, 46% of the participants described their citing ability as fair, and only two students said their citing capability was poor (**See Figure 4**). On the other hand, the second survey clearly showed the students found video tutorials helpful in many ways, such as finding articles and books from library resources (**See Figure 5**). All but one student stated being confident in finding sources after watching the videos (**See Figure 6**). Because of these positive feedbacks, all the participants stated they would recommend video tutorials to other online learners.

### *Synchronous Library Instruction Class*

As with the video tutorials, the students in the synchronous library classes expressed more confidence finding resources and MLA citing after the

**Figure 3.** How would you rate your confidence with using the library resources?

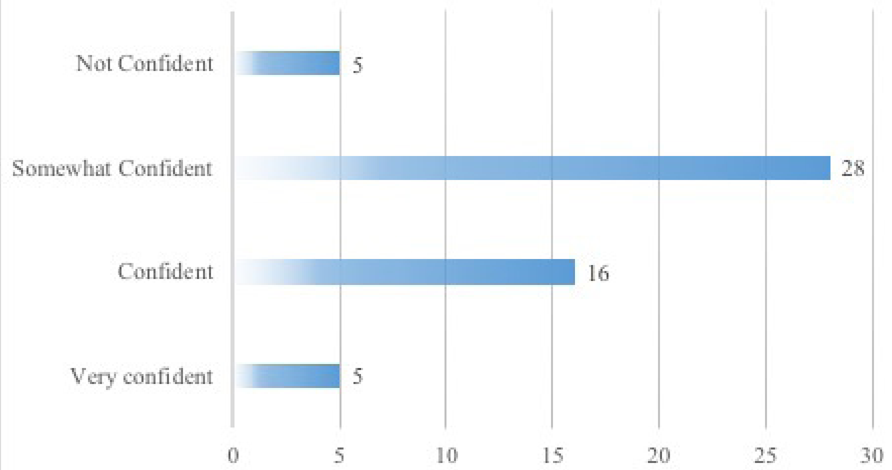



**Figure 4.** How would you rate your ability to cite your resources appropriately?

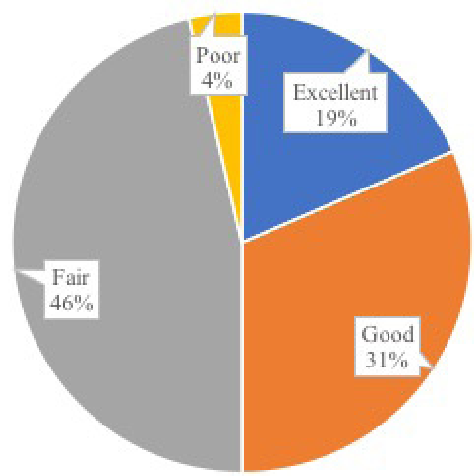



**Figure 5.** How helpful have you found the library search skills acquired in these tutorials in completing other assignments?

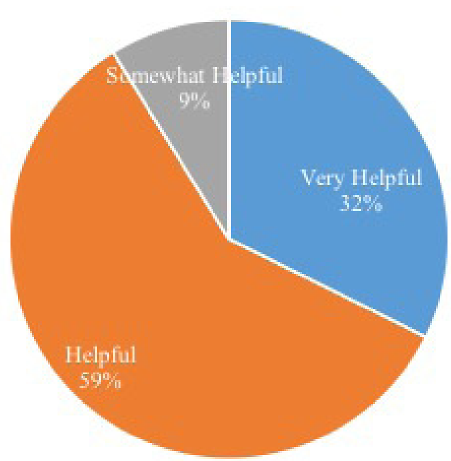


Figure 6. After watching the tutorials, I am now confident in finding books relevant to my research topic.

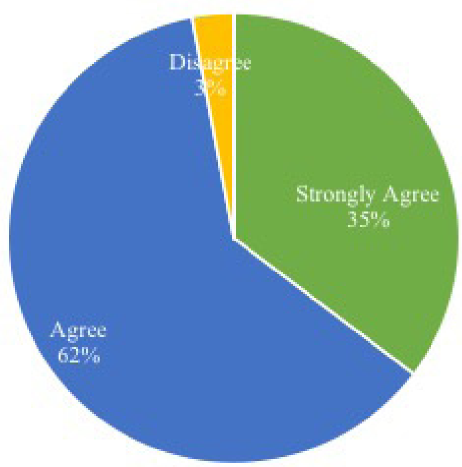
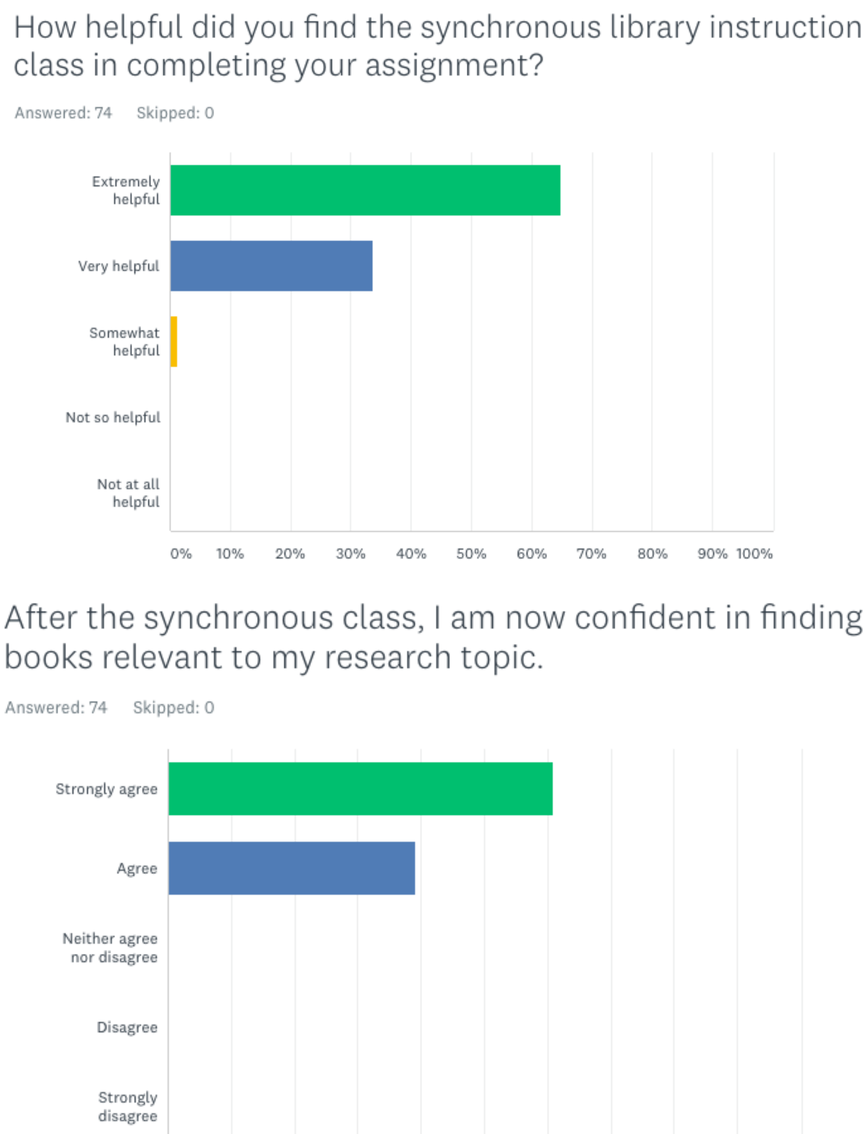



**Figure 7.** Survey after class




classes. All the participants agreed that synchronous classes were beneficial, with almost 65% of the participants expressing that the class was extremely helpful (**See Figure 7**). The majority of the students indicated they became confident in finding books and articles after the class (**See Figure 7**). Furthermore, the MLA pre-/post- test showed students improved significantly on the MLA post-test. The average accuracy rate in the MLA post-test was 71%, whereas the MLA pre-test rate was only 27% (**See Figure 8**). About 2.6 times better grades were seen on the post-test. Overall, synchronous classes were proven to be effective when face-to-face classes were not available.

## DISCUSSION

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, librarians should adapt iteratively and swiftly to changes when delivering library instructions. The librarian in this study effectively reacted to the challenges of the pandemic by developing video tutorials and synchronous classes to provide library instruction services amid the pandemic. The librarian offered these services to various faculty members who regularly request library instruction classes. This collaborative effort enabled students to enhance their library skills despite the difficulties associated with providing the same quality of library instruction services after the COVID-19 pandemic. The collaboration ultimately culminated in a significant improvement in student learning. Despite the librarian's countless efforts, the library instruction classes dramatically decreased after the pandemic, as can be seen on Table 2. Furthermore, the winter storm in Texas during the third week of February 2021 was seen as another obstacle to providing library classes. Stress, anxiety, demotivation, and uncertainty caused by the combination of COVID-19 and the unexpected winter storm might be the reasons for the decrease in library instruction classes.

On the other hand, the successful outcomes suggest that alternative methods of delivering library instruction services should be more widely offered across the campus during the pandemic. It is also notable that video tutorials or synchronous library classes utilized in this study were found to be effective tools of providing library information when face-to-face classes are not available.

Despite the meaningful findings, the present study has a few limitations. Since the participation rate was so low, it was difficult to reach concrete conclusions. It was especially hard to collect data from video tutorial surveys because the librarian had no control over managing the surveys in Blackboard. In the present study, the impact of video tutorials and synchronous classes were measured within a short-term period; therefore, the long-term efficacy of these methods still needs to be evaluated. In order to overcome these limitations, a more active approach to various faculty should be followed that includes frequent emails to all faculty members, or more involving more participation in campus events to reach a greater number of faculty. Unfortunately, due to the uncertainty and stress over the virus, students and faculty are less motivated and encouraged to participate; therefore, the librarian's continuous effort is essential for students' academic success during these unprecedented times. In addition, another post-test in six months after the initial post-test is also planned to evaluate the students' long-term knowledge retention.

**Figure 8a.** Pre-test Average

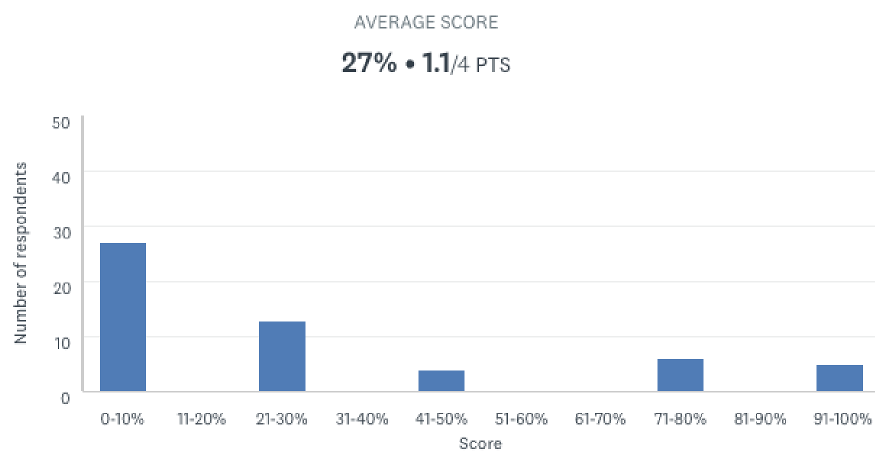
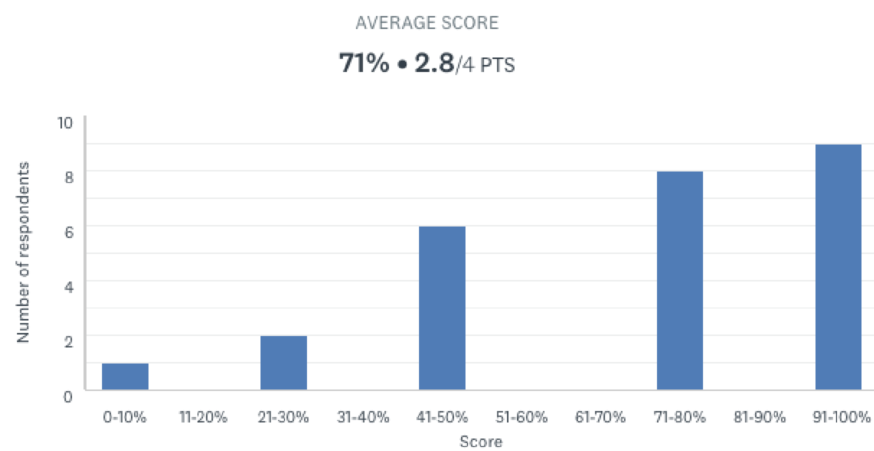



**Figure 8b.** Post-test Average




## CONCLUSION

Due to the increasing prevalence of distance education and the COVID-19 pandemic, in the future, more users will need access to, or the choice of, online library instruction sessions. Video tutorials and synchronous online education are the evolving means of online library instruction. While they have been used as alternative methods for face-to-face teaching for several years, the Gates Memorial Library only recently adapted them to cope with the pandemic. This study showed that online library instruction methods could significantly help students learn and hone library skills for finding and using library resources. It was observed in the present study that such improvement and confidence led to enhancing students' performance in classes at the two-year college. Finally, this study emphasized the need for partnership between the librarians and faculty in various majors to educate the students efficiently and productively.

*Dr. Yumi Shin, Coordinator of Reference and Access Services, Lamar State College - Port Arthur*

**Table 2.** The number of Library Instruction Classes before/ after COVID-19

| | Before COVID-19 | | After COVID-19 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Semester | Fall 19 | Spring 20 | Fall 20 | Spring 21 |
| Number of Library Instructions | 18 | 14 | 5 | 6 |
| Total Number | 32 | | 11 | |

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