

**If You Host It They *Might* Come:  
Creating a Research Workshop Series for Undergraduates**

*Sarah Simms, Louisiana State University*



**Abstract**

This case study explores the creation of a research workshop series for undergraduate students at a residential Honors College on Louisiana State University's campus. Maneuvering past the one-shot model, this four-part workshop series was scaffolded through the semester in conjunction with students' assignment and research timelines. Staggering the workshops in this way allowed for a more intentionally paced introduction to the research process so as to not overwhelm students. Not only were these workshops opportunities to teach facets of information literacy and help students through the research process, but they were also guided by the principles of care and empathy. These workshops were created as a space outside of class where students and librarians could honestly share their perspectives, feelings, and experiences with research. By utilizing an empathetic approach to instruction, we can form connections that help mitigate negative feelings, anxieties, and assumptions students may have about the research process.

*Keywords:* Undergraduate research, workshops, academic libraries, information literacy instruction, library anxiety, research anxiety, empathetic teaching

## **Introduction**

As instruction librarians, we are often called into the classroom to help students navigate both the research process and the wilds of the information landscape. After being at the head of the classroom for several years, it seemed as though in some instances just saying the word research could send a student into a tailspin. In one single class, students might project anxiety, shame, fear, indifference, or excitement. Propelling forward the students who are excited about research is easy, but how do we support the students whose negative emotions or previous experiences can stop them in their tracks before they even get started? What if instead of a one-shot or utilizing the same rote instruction techniques we gave students the opportunity to explore their feelings about research? What if we gave them the space to be authentic? What if we ourselves became vulnerable in these moments? In short, what happens when the information session stops being polite and starts getting real?

This case study will explore the creation of a stand-alone research workshop series for first year undergraduate students in the Ogden Honors College at Louisiana State University. This series of workshops was designed with the underlying goal of assuaging student fears and anxieties around research through a two-pronged approach: bite-sized information literacy sessions paired with an empathetic student-centered pedagogical approach. While other workshop series had been attempted, it was not until partnering with the Ogden Honors College that the series found success. In an effort to meet students where they were – both mentally and physically – these in-person workshops were held at a central meeting place within the residential Honors College and were scaffolded throughout the semester. By maneuvering past a traditional one-shot model in this way, students had a chance to ingest information at a slower pace while recognizing their emotional response to various aspects of the research process.

Students were allowed the space to express their feelings around each stage of the research process – anxiety, fear, excitement, frustration – with the goal of working through any emotional barriers that could be hindering their research. By utilizing a more holistic approach to information literacy instruction that fosters dialogue, promotes authenticity, and builds community, we have an opportunity for students to recognize their own voice and autonomy in their research.

### **Literature Review**

For at least the past 35 years, our profession has been investigating the emotions people associate with libraries and research. In my own experience, students run the gamut – from excited and giddy to distressed or disengaged. However, it seems as though these negative emotions are the principle area of study, starting especially with Constance Mellon’s 1986 grounded theory study on what she coined “library anxiety.” In this study, she analyzed students’ written responses to the search process and a set of questions aimed at exploring their feelings about using the library for research; 75-85% of students “described their initial response to the library in terms of fear or anxiety,” some going so far as to describe it as a “phobia” (Mellon, 1986, p. 162). Upon further investigation, she found that students’ feelings of fear actually hindered their ability to begin research. Mellon’s solution was to redesign library instruction into what she called a “warmth seminar” whereby library-specific skills were still taught to students, but more time was spent in creating connections with students and defining library anxiety while underscoring that this was a common phenomenon (Mellon, 1986, pp. 163-164). Since this initial study, there has been no shortage of research into the various facets of library anxiety. One of the most recent studies concludes that at the heart of library anxiety is an unacknowledged state of shame (McAfee, 2018). Pernicious in its effect, McAfee (2018)

explains that “shame is a painful and isolating experience, and most users who are in these shame states believe they are the only ones with these feelings” (p. 252). Counteracting the effect of shame lies in its recognition. McAfee (2018) states:

The simple act of acknowledging shame resolves many of its destructive effects—effects that would otherwise persist when it is hidden from our awareness. When shame is specifically identified, it can be replaced with attitudes and behaviors that strengthen bonds with the community. (p. 252)

Another perspective regarding student anxieties is Carol Kuhlthau’s Information Seeking Process (ISP) model. The ISP model is comprised of six stages that represent the information seekers’ experience through the research process - initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection, and presentation. Each stage has an affective, cognitive, and physical element associated with it. According to Kuhlthau, it is in the first (initiation) and third (exploration) stages that information seekers feel uncertainty, confusion, frustration, and doubt (Kuhlthau, 1988, 1991, 2004). These stages that Kuhlthau reference correspond to the introductory stages of students’ research when they are beginning a research paper and searching not only for a topic, but information related to that topic. Reflecting on this, it is worth noting that these introductory stages are often places where librarian-led instruction occurs.

Interestingly, in Kracker and Wang’s (2002) study analyzing the ISP model, they were able to identify additional affective and cognitive aspects related to research that they classified into “feelings about the process, perceptions of the task, and affinity to research. The relationship between anxiety and various cognitive aspects of research strongly supports the idea that research anxiety is more than library anxiety” (p. 303). This analysis effectively separates library and research anxiety into two separate categories. They go on to say that “students can relate

anxiety to starting research, collecting information, writing, and overall aspects such as time management” (Kracker & Wang, 2002, p. 303). Of these four anxiety-inducing steps of the research process, librarians can easily provide help with two: at the outset of a research project and finding information.

Utilizing instruction as a means to alleviate these anxieties, both research and library, is supported in other studies as well. Platt and Platt (2013) found that in an undergraduate research methods class in psychology two 50-minutes information literacy sessions led by a librarian were found to be instrumental in reducing students’ library anxiety. The results from these two sessions “strongly suggest that relatively brief but focused information literacy training is highly effective at reducing library anxiety in a variety of areas” (Platt & Platt, 2013, p. 250).

Papanastasiou and Zembylas (2008), in a similar study of undergraduates in a research methods class, found that students’ anxieties were linked to perception – perception of themselves as researchers as well as perceptions of the importance of research in their chosen career path. One of their recommendations to abating student anxiety was to prepare for early and in-class intervention:

For example, it is important for instructors to be aware of students’ anxiety, and make efforts to address it early on in the course. The instructors need to be sensitive to students’ concerns and attentive to their worries as soon as they make their appearance in the course. (Papanastasiou & Zembylas, 2008, p. 165)

In this study, Papanastasiou and Zembylas (2008) put the onus on the instructor, however, librarians brought into the classroom to teach information literacy could also play a part in recognizing and abating students’ anxiety, especially as relates to research and information literacy. Even as far as back as Mellon, studies suggest classroom intervention by not only

supporting students but also calling out the elephant in the room and being transparent about anxieties associated with the library, information seeking, and research.

Why should we be concerned with students' anxieties around both the library and research? According to Naveed (2017), "The manifestation of anxiety might have very serious implications for students' information seeking self-efficacy and academic performance... This situation may not only affect students' academic achievements but also may lead to academic procrastination" (p. 272). As mentioned before, one way to mitigate these anxieties is through instruction. Studies point to the positive impact that library impact has on students including the undergraduate student experience and success (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017; Rowe et al., 2021). However, there is no agreed upon modality for this instruction. While most of us provide instruction through one-shots, Chisolm & Spencer (2019) lament that these are "...often mis-identified in academia as cure-alls for necessary skillsets" with some faculty assuming that "one 50-minute session their [students'] first year is sufficient to prepare students for college-level research" (p. 44). In a guest editorial for *College & Research Libraries*, Nicole Pagowsky (2021) questioned the utility of the one-shot musing:

One-shots are transactional and keep us in cycles of ineffectiveness. They cause burnout. As the antithesis of collaborative work and collective action, they perpetuate silos. It is everyone for themselves measured in quantity. There have to be other options to develop more collaborative relationships with support for different approaches to teaching and measurement. (p. 306)

I find myself agreeing with both Chisolm and Spencer and Pagowsky – one-shot instruction can be *brutal*, and there are definitely questions surrounding its efficacy. The word "one-shot" alone alludes to the near impossibility of attempting to bestow threshold knowledge concepts in a

solitary 50-minute block. But if not a one-shot, what other options are there for information literacy instruction?

While there are other instruction alternatives to the one-shot, the staggered workshop model is one that I find quite appealing. Fleming-May et al. (2015) created a three-workshop model for students enrolled in a Bridge program at the University of Tennessee that introduced students to the library, librarians, and research. One of the takeaways from these workshops was that a staggering number (91%) felt more comfortable in the library and with asking for help from a librarian. Koelling and Townsend (2019), have created research clinics at the University of New Mexico “designed to meet students at their point of need for ENGL 120 research projects while giving them the flexibility to decide what sort of library help would be the most beneficial at the moment” (p. 78).

Other successful workshop models have been discussed in the literature such as Harding and Leligdon’s (2017) chapter on the creation of a one-day thesis writers’ bootcamp at Dartmouth College and Fraser Riehle’s (2008) article on a workshop held for freshmen Honors students at Purdue. At the University of Toronto at Scarborough, Guise et al. (2008) created a research/writing workshop for incoming freshmen students spanning two days in the summer before classes began. One could also get a sampling of current workshop models being held at colleges and universities across the country with a simple Google search. One of the most popular appears to be more of a “one-off” model where singular workshops are held on a particular topic without any sequencing. Many of these workshops are focused on particular parts of the research process, such as writing a literature review, or showcasing tools to help with research like citation management software.

By connecting these various veins in the literature, we can see that library and research

anxiety not only exist but can be alleviated through instructional interventions. As an instruction model, the one-shot is often looked to as the primary tool, though other outreach and instruction models, like workshops, have been utilized. Missing from this dialogue is an exploration of the convergence of a scaffolded workshop model with the use of an empathetic student-centered teaching pedagogy to mitigate student library and research anxieties. This paper aims to fill this gap by sharing the formation of a research workshop *series* as an instructional approach designed to parcel aspects of the research process into smaller and more manageable steps as a more intentional approach to information literacy and supporting undergraduate students.

### **Background**

In March 2017, the author joined the Research and Instruction Services (RIS) team as the Undergraduate & Student Success librarian at Louisiana State University (LSU), located in Baton Rouge, LA. This newly created position is responsible for planning and implementing library instruction, outreach, and programming to meet the academic needs and promote the success of undergraduate students, particularly those in the first and second year. Much of the emphasis of this role is providing instruction sessions that target first and second year students, more specifically general education classes like English. Without traditional liaison responsibilities, this position also expects and allows for the exploration of collaborative opportunities with departments and support services across campus. Since coming aboard in 2017, Fall enrollment numbers have consistently exceeded 30,000 students. Of that number, 81-82% are undergraduates with 30-36% of undergraduates classified as freshmen (LSU Budget & Planning, n.d.). With such a large undergraduate student base, the opportunities for collaboration and instruction at this public land, sea, and space-grant research university are seemingly limitless.



In the early fall of 2018, while working with faculty and instructors associated with Dual Enrollment, an opportunity arose where the head of RIS and myself were asked to help facilitate conversations about research as part of an AP Seminar class at a local private high school. AP Seminar is a one-year course focused on engaging students in interdisciplinary research and introducing them to complex topics that are analyzed using an inquiry framework with emphasis on analysis, evaluation, and communication. The fall semester of this course was entirely dedicated to the research process, but with the caveat that the instructor and librarians could not provide hands-on support to the students; instead, we acted more as facilitators, consultants, and at times mentors as students worked through the process themselves. Over the course of three class visits, we took an almost train-the-trainer approach where we modeled actions – steps of the research process, brainstorming and mind-mapping, formulating and reformulating a research question – that students could then use for their own research. What struck me in these sessions was being present with students as they grappled with their own assumptions, research dead ends, and other roadblocks. Frustrations were high, but we, as librarians, assumed a supportive role in each class we attended. As students worked through these learning thresholds, we encouraged student persistence often by just listening, empathizing, and sharing our own experience with research.

This experience of utilizing empathy, connection, support, and mutual honesty caused me to reflect on how I approach my usual instruction sessions at LSU. The majority of my instruction to this point had been one-shots, the very nature of which may not allow for those type of connections with students for a variety of reasons. I realized that if I wanted to help students *through* the process, I would not only need to rethink my approach to the classroom but possibly create something outside of the classroom that allowed instruction and vulnerability to

coexist. I could create a space where students were free to share their feelings, experiences, and expertise with research while also learning about various facets of information literacy with me acting as more of a guide.

As described by Accardi (2013), this instructional approach borrows from feminist pedagogical tools:

Feminist pedagogy seeks to transform the teacher/student relationship and disrupt traditional notions of classroom power and authority. Typically, the teacher is perceived to have the ultimate authority in the classroom while students have limited power or agency or none at all. Feminist teaching strategies are anti-hierarchical and student-centered. (p. 42)

Beyond this power dynamic disruption, “Feminist pedagogy is also concerned with the validity of experiential knowledge, or the knowledge produced through the actual lived experience of students, and privileging students’ voices over the teachers’ voice, which is no longer viewed as the ultimate authority” (Accardi, 2013, p. 37). To add in a layer of care, connection, and honesty only further helps our students. “As we pay attention to the emotional needs of our students and ourselves, and weave this attention into our pedagogy, we can spin a wider web of change to create more liberatory classrooms in which students feel supported and safe to learn” (Chenevey, 2021, p. 310). And so, taking this experience with the AP Seminar and moving forward with a student-focused and empathetic pedagogical mindset, the idea of an undergraduate workshop series focused on different aspects of the research process was born. Different than just a stand-alone workshop, the crux of each iteration of this series was in its scaffolded nature. By paring down foundational information literacy concepts related to the research process into smaller and more manageable pieces, each singular workshop allowed for both librarian-led instruction as

well as student-centered dialogue. With a gentler and more gradual pace than a traditional one-shot, these workshops utilized both instruction and empathetic teaching methods as a way to alleviate student anxieties around the library and the research process.

We attempted two iterations of this scaffolded research workshop series before finding success with the Ogden Honors College. Both series had been designed with information literacy instruction as its underlying framework. Within this framework, each workshop session had been planned to allow for shared dialogue related to previous experiences, knowledge base, and emotions surrounding each phase of the research process. The first, a pilot series of the workshops, was unsuccessful due to low turnout. However, of the two students that did attend, each exhibited a marked positive change in attitude towards their research proving that this approach could be effective.

The second iteration was rebranded as Library Supplemental Instruction (SI) in an attempt to scale up the attendance and appeal of the workshop to undergraduates. The idea of “Supplemental Instruction” was borrowed from an existing and highly successful program provided through LSU’s Center for Academic Success in which a series of weekly study sessions are offered for historically difficult courses. This second approach was a failure as no students attended. According to a colleague, this was because students found the use of “Supplemental Instruction” in the title of the library workshops confusing. They assumed the workshops were meant for specific classes and not a workshop open to all. Despite wanting to grow the popularity of the undergraduate research workshops by mimicking and promoting them as “Supplemental Instruction,” it appears these efforts in fact had the opposite effect.

### **Honors Research Workshops**

After these two failed attempts I was back at the drawing board but remained undeterred

and undefeated. In the summer of 2019, through conversations between the newly hired Teaching and Learning Librarian, the Head of RIS, and the Head of Government Documents, I realized I still had one card up my sleeve – the Ogden Honors College. A highly competitive residential college described as a “campus within a campus” is modeled on that found at Oxford and Cambridge Universities where “students live together and take part in educational and social programming within that living space” (LSU Ogden Honors College, n.d.). The Ogden Honors College students have the opportunity to reside in the residence halls which are home to the Laville Honors House that serves as “both a residence and an academically focused collegiate atmosphere for first-year students in the Honors College” (LSU Residential Life, n.d.).

Much like other departments and colleges on LSU’s campus, the Honors College curriculum has a stepped approach with students beginning their academic career in general education and foundation courses and progressing towards courses more narrowly related to their major with the option of writing an Honors Thesis in their senior year. Honors classes allow faculty from around campus to share their research and expertise in a highly ambitious and rigorous classroom. One such foundational class is Honors (HNRS) 2000: Critical Analysis and Social Responsibility, the Honors equivalent to LSU’s English 2000 general education course. As an HNRS course, expectations for student performance are high. The class schedule is fast-paced with a mix of topic-specific lectures led by faculty experts or authors invited to speak on course texts as well as smaller seminar sessions where students are expected to actively participate in critical analysis of social issues through readings, discussions, and debate. Students are asked to write a research proposal mid-semester culminating in a final research paper and group presentations. Each class is designed to be small with an average of 15–20 students. These classes, or sections, are grouped together in “pods;” for example, you may have a pod consisting

of 5 classes, each class with 20 students for a total of 100 or so students in each pod. These pods come together for the large lectures but meet as smaller classes for their seminars.

Prior to creating these workshops, I had received few if any instruction requests for HNRS 2000 classes but did have the opportunity to work with a professor who wanted their pod to meet with a librarian in a consultation format outside of class to review their citations. While not ideal, these consultations and conversations did give me insight into the struggles that Honors students were facing – namely feeling overwhelmed, unsure, and anxious. I began to think that the workshop series might find a home with the Ogden Honors College. By pivoting away from the traditional classroom and instruction session, these workshops could provide a space for students to not only learn research skills but also brainstorm, collaborate, and share their experiences in a low-pressure environment. In order to do this, I would need to create an atmosphere of trust and sharing, not only by welcoming students to share, but by sharing myself. As outlined by Liz Chenevey (2021):

When we allow our students the opportunity in a session to share their feelings around research, we provide them an outlet for those feelings and the opportunity to see that they are not alone... The library instructor can disclose their own discomforts or anxieties around research... emotions are contagious, and instructor modeling can be influential in students' perception... This trust is essential for students to also begin to share their emotions around research, their assignment, or even just how they feel today. This small activity can be a grounding activity from which the rest of class stems that builds trust and connection by normalizing emotions. (p. 309)

At the suggestion of a colleague, a meeting was set up with the Associate Dean and Rector of the Laville Honors House. We proposed a non-mandatory, four-part staggered

workshop series to be held outside of class. The timeframe and topics of these workshops were to be patterned after the timeline of the research process students were experiencing in class. He was immediately supportive of this effort and understood our scaffolded workshop approach even helping me identify best times (evening), dates (Mondays scattered throughout the semester in line with research schedule), and location (a 50-capacity classroom in the French House, a focal point of the Ogden Honors College housing both administration and classrooms). This input was especially valuable because of his position as the Rector of the Laville Honors House. Overseeing the residential college in this way gave insight into students' lives, availability, and needs, something that I had only previously guessed at when planning the other workshop series. Our new champion also helped to widely advertise the workshop series by sharing promotional information and an online research guide created for these workshops among faculty teaching HNRS 2000 classes. Having this message come from someone who was both a faculty member and administrator helped to break down any communication silos I might encounter.

To bring in different perspectives and areas of expertise, I asked the Head of RIS, the Teaching and Learning Librarian, and the Head of Government Documents to help me lead these sessions. It was through this combination of librarians that I hoped to address the research needs of every student who attended the workshop in real-time. Each singular workshop was created to mimic a step in the research process. This stepped approach allowed for bite-sized chunks of information literacy to occur in a slow and intentional way to not overwhelm students. Each session was also designed to foster discussion with students and allow for not only their thoughts and experiences on the subject matter, but also to share their feelings as we progressed. Together, this series would help students through the entire process of research that culminated in their final research paper. A discussion of each of the one-hour workshops follows:

### **Honors Research Workshop 1: What is Research?**

As the first workshop of the series, the focus was an introduction to the research process. Discussions within the class by both librarians and students helped break down any assumptions that the process is linear and focused on what that iterative process might mean. Utilizing a large whiteboard, I drew out the process with feedback from students and librarians sharing their experiences to create a visual component that underscored the amount of time spent in background research sources and refining a topic. The discussion naturally moved to feelings associated with research. Students and librarians shared their perspectives and prior experiences, both good and bad. With librarians sharing their own experiences and being honest and vulnerable with students, it opened the door for students to feel comfortable to do the same. At a certain point, it felt as though the discussion was almost group therapy as we discussed pain points, anxieties, and frustrations with research and the palpable tension students were emitting at the beginning of the workshop began to ease. At the end of the workshop, the students were shown the LSU Libraries online research guides as a possible starting point for gathering information and resources on their topic.

### **Honors Research Workshop 2: Defining the Question**

Held two weeks later, this workshop was dedicated to helping students come to a *researchable* question. This timing coincided with students' upcoming deadline to submit a research proposal. Mirroring the process used with the AP Seminar, students were able to share their question for peer-review and peer-support. Initially envisioned as a think-pair-share activity, some students instead freely shared their topics of interest or research questions to the group. These were written on the whiteboard and both librarians and students offered suggestions, avenues, and related ideas to expand on the topic or tightly focus a research

question. The collaboration of additional librarians was especially helpful as each brought their own knowledge and expertise to the table and helped fuel this discussion.

### **Honors Research Workshop 3: Finding and Evaluating Source Materials**

Three weeks later in late October, this third workshop was led by the Head of Government Documents and me. To start, we asked students what they used for research and their familiarity with different source types and where to find them. After this lively discussion, students were shown various LSU Libraries' resources and navigation techniques that could be used for finding resources for their research paper. Beyond what the library was able to offer, we also discussed non-scholarly resources and ways in which to incorporate them into the research and research process. By bringing in an expert in government information that was able to highlight demographics, statistics, and other pertinent data, we were able to provide an introduction to a wider information landscape than what a one-shot normally allows. We also modeled what a "failed" search might look like and how to navigate around that with student input. Additionally, we shared some more advanced research techniques such as bibliography mining that were well received by students. Our initial idea for this workshop was to work one-on-one with students; however, students were more than willing to share their research topic and work together as a group as we explored different information sources.

### **Honors Research Workshop 4: Citation Help**

Our final workshop was held in early November as a final push to help students with citations. Surprisingly, attendance at this workshop was low with only two students. Instead of using this particular workshop to hammer out specific citation styles, we discussed why citations matter and their importance to the scholarly conversation. While we had planned to introduce citation management software to students, neither of the students were interested and instead



wanted to know more about the particulars of citation styles. In that regard, we shared some online resources that students could reference like the OWL Purdue. Since students did not have particular sources they were attempting to cite, the conversation was more focused on general use. With such a small group of two librarians and two students, we were able to discuss fears that students had when approaching citations. In a future iteration, I think inviting a faculty member or representative from the Writing Center to collaborate on this workshop would be beneficial for students as more time could be spent with specific examples of paraphrasing, summary, and citation.

### **Discussion**

Unlike the previous attempts of this workshop series, the Honors Research Workshops saw not only an increase in attendance (17 at the first, 12 at the second, 7 at the third, and, as previously mentioned, only 2 at the fourth), but *continued* attendance through many of the workshops (2 students attended three workshops while another 8 students attended two workshops). Some insight as to the increased attendance of these workshops may be gleaned from Witherspoon and Taber's (2021) recent publication of survey results from universities and colleges across the United States and Canada. The survey data examined elements related to workshop attendance, and from their findings, they were able to provide suggestions regarding what factors may contribute to the success of a workshop. Similar to the approach taken with the Honors College workshops series, these factors include workshop topics that are "of immediate relevance" to students and their needs, moving outside of the library and hosting these in student spaces, and identifying and advertising to a specific group of students for the workshop (Witherspoon & Taber, 2021, p. 122).

Beyond attendance data, these workshops can be considered a success based on

connections made with students, as well as feedback from a professor. Student feedback that we received in-class was positive, and many stayed after the workshop to thank us. The difference in the atmosphere from when the workshops started to when it ended was not to be taken lightly. The tension at the start of a session when first discussing research could, at times, be cut with a knife. The positive shift in students' attitudes as the session progressed was palpable. It was clear that by creating this space that was not only focused on information literacy but also allowed students to honestly share where they were in that moment helped to diminish feelings of anxiety, fear, and frustration. In line with McAfee's (2018) shame discourse and nullification measures, this was especially profound as students realized they were not alone in feeling this way.

In addition to the real-time feedback received from students, I also received insightful and positive anecdotal feedback from a professor in the Honors College whose students had attended some of the workshops. When discussing the effects of the workshops on students' research, they shared that students had a better appreciation for research in that they felt they could actually do it. Additionally, the research hadn't been as intimidating for students because they knew where and how to start. Interestingly, their students were excited about their research because I had been excited about their research topics when discussing them in the workshops. These personal exchanges in the workshop helped them to realize their research had value. According to the professor, this was an energizing and positive experience for the students. This energy and positivity made its way into the final research products for the class that resulted in enjoyable papers to read as well as "some of the best presentations to watch because the students were so very proud of their understanding."

To follow up with students, we had planned to send a formal assessment to attendees in

the spring semester of 2020. We were interested in seeing what, if any, lasting effects the workshops had. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic altered our entire existence beginning in March of 2020, and I decided to not burden students with this assessment. As the pandemic raged well into 2020 and forced most of academia to quickly pivot online, I made the decision to not hold the Honors Research Workshops in Fall 2020 as our only option was virtual. I was concerned with online burnout that students might be experiencing, especially freshmen, as well as my own doubts that I could recreate the rich discussions and connections that were had in-person in a virtual environment. While some might argue that a pandemic is the perfect time to host these types of workshops, one does need a certain amount of self-awareness and know their limits. I did not have the bandwidth to try to host these workshops virtually in the midst of a pandemic. If I am not bringing my best and whole self to a session, how can I expect my students? According to Veronica Arellano Douglas (2020):

By knowing and honoring our own boundaries and limits, we place ourselves in a better position to offer help to others and facilitate care. We are educating whole people who bring all of themselves and all of life's complications and joys with them into the classroom, but we are also whole people in our own right, who bring our own complications, abilities, and limits into the classroom. (p. 57)

Despite the pandemic, we are in the process of planning for an in-person Fall 2021. The Honors Research Workshop series will be revived with one modification related to assessment. For future workshops the creation and dissemination of an assessment piece for attendees to take before and after each workshop. This assessment will use an online virtual "bulletin" board, like Padlet, where students can anonymously answer questions in a collaborative space. Prompts for students to answer openly and honestly will be included in this assessment such as: "How does

research make you feel?” In addition to these types of open-ended questions, students will have the opportunity to use a Likert scale to rate how they feel about writing a research paper. Follow up assessments will be utilized to gauge how students feel after each workshop as well. These assessments will then be compared to indicate any differences in students’ emotions related to research.

### **Conclusion**

As initially conceived, the undergraduate research workshop series was an opportunity to meet with students outside of class in a space that promoted honest discussion, vulnerability, and empathy from both student and librarian. Through all of this, making an authentic connection with students and allowing students to make authentic connections among each other has been the driving force. By connecting with students in this way, we acknowledge not only their humanity but also their lived experience. This intersection of instruction and emotional acknowledgement is a way to mitigate negative feelings that may stand in the way of a student’s success with research. This approach – teaching information literacy through an empathetic student-centered lens within a scaffolded workshop model – allows for a unique space where students can truly explore the research process and develop their voice and autonomy in the process. I believe this instruction and outreach model will be increasingly important during these uncertain and tumultuous times.

## References

- Accardi, M. T. (2013). *Feminist pedagogy for library instruction*. Library Juice Press.
- Arellano Douglas, V. (2020). Moving from critical assessment to assessment as care. *Communications in Information Literacy*, 14(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2020.14.1.4>
- Association of College and Research Libraries. (2017). *Academic library impact on student learning and success: Findings from Assessment in Action team projects*. Association of College and Research Libraries.  
[https://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/issues/value/findings\\_y3.pdf](https://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/issues/value/findings_y3.pdf)
- Chenevey, L. (2021). An emergent pedagogy of presence and care: Addressing affect in information literacy instruction. *Libraries*. <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/letfspubs/199>
- Chisholm, A., & Spencer, B. (2019). Through the looking class: Viewing first-year composition through the lens of information literacy. *Communications in Information Literacy*, 13(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2019.13.1.4>
- Fleming-May, R., Mays, R., & Radom, R. (2015). “I never had to use the library in high school”: A library instruction program for at-risk students. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2015.0038>
- Fraser Riehle, C. (2008). Partnering and programming for undergraduate honors students. *Reference Services Review*, 36(1), 48–60. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00907320810852023>
- Guise, J. L., Goosney, J., Gordon, S., & Pretty, H. (2008). Evolution of a summer research/writing workshop for first-year university students. *New Library World*, 109(5/6), 235–250. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03074800810873588>
- Harding, K., & Leligdon, L. (2017). Engaging in the undergraduate research writers’ process:

- Creating a thesis writers' bootcamp. In *Undergraduate Research & The Academic Librarian: Case Studies and Best Practices*. Association of College & Research Libraries.
- Koelling, G., Townsend, L., & Townsend, L. (2019). Research clinics: An alternative model for large-scale information literacy instruction. *Communications in Information Literacy*, 13(1), 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2019.13.1.6>
- Kracker, J., & Wang, P. (2002). Research anxiety and students' perceptions of research: An experiment. Part II. Content analysis of their writings on two experiences. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 53(4), 295–307.
- Kuhlthau, C. C. (1988). Developing a model of the library search process: Cognitive and affective aspects. *RQ*, 28(2), 232–242.
- Kuhlthau, C. C. (1991). Inside the search process: Information seeking from the user's perspective. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 42(5), 361–371.
- Kuhlthau, C. C. (2004). *Seeking meaning: A process approach to library and information services* (2nd ed). Libraries Unlimited.
- LSU Budget & Planning. (n.d.). *University Fall Facts*. University Fall Facts. Retrieved August 14, 2021, from <https://www.lsu.edu/bgtplan/facts/index.php>
- LSU Ogden Honors College. (n.d.). *The Ogden Honors Campus—LSU Honors College*. Retrieved August 15, 2021, from <http://www.honors.lsu.edu/honors-campus/overview>
- LSU Residential Life. (n.d.). *East & West Laville Halls*. East & West Laville Halls. Retrieved August 15, 2021, from <https://www.lsu.edu/reslife/housing/traditional/laville.php>
- Mellon, C. A. (1986). Library anxiety: A grounded theory and its development. *College & Research Libraries*, 47(2), 160–165. [https://doi.org/10.5860/crl\\_47\\_02\\_160](https://doi.org/10.5860/crl_47_02_160)

Naveed, M. A. (2017). Information seeking anxiety: Background, research, and implications.

*International Information & Library Review*, 49(4), 266–273.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10572317.2017.1319713>

Pagowsky, N. (2021). The contested one-shot: Deconstructing power structures to imagine new futures. *College & Research Libraries*, 82(3), 300–309.

<https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.82.3.300>

Papanastasiou, E. C., & Zembylas, M. (2008). Anxiety in undergraduate research methods courses: Its nature and implications. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 31(2), 155–167.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17437270802124616>

Platt, J., & Platt, T. L. (2013). Library anxiety among undergraduates enrolled in a research methods in psychology course. *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian*, 32(4), 240–251.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01639269.2013.841464>

Rowe, J., Leuzinger, J., Hargis, C., & Harker, K. R. (2021). The impact of library instruction on undergraduate student success: A four-year study. *College & Research Libraries*, 82(1),

7–18. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.82.1.7>

Witherspoon, R. L., & Taber, P. O. L. (2021). Increasing student attendance at library workshops: What the data tells us. *College & Research Libraries*, 82(1), 113–128.

<https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.82.1.113>