

Improving library service to online students can only come from understanding their research needs and practices. How are they finding information for assignments? Which information sources do they actually use in their works cited? And most importantly, what challenges them about research? This poster reports the work of librarians attempting to understand the students they serve and the expectations of the faculty members who assign their projects. Four methods were used: a student survey, a faculty survey, follow-up interviews with students, and interviews with faculty members.

In addition to the results of the survey, the presenters will discuss the implications of the findings for their ongoing practice of library instruction and outreach. Did faculty members recommend that students use library resources for their assignments, or other information sources? Where did students learn how to find information? Were students more likely to use library resources in their research assignments or material they found elsewhere online?

Making the connection between what faculty expected and how students completed their research assignments provides a lens on the impact of the library in the academic endeavor. Are students and faculty members depending on the library's online services, including library websites, librarian pages embedded in the LMS, chat/text reference, and scholarly article databases? Do the results of the study show that more outreach is needed? Or have students found alternative non-library methods for research that their faculty members accept?

Participants in the session will leave with questions to ask about their own students and faculty as they assess their online instructional practices.