

Leah C. Tams. Reference and Instruction Services in Academic Archives during COVID-19. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. April 28, 2020. 56 pages. Advisor: Helen Tibbo

This phenomenological study examines the state of archival reference and instruction services in academic libraries during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this study explores if and how COVID-19 has impacted archival reference and instruction, as well as what strategies and/or tools academic archives have found to be effective in aiding their reference and instruction work. An anonymous, open-ended survey was sent to the Society of American Archivists' Reference, Access and Outreach Section, as well as to the Archivists Think Tank group. Responses were thematically analyzed to identify key concepts and trends. This study demonstrates the profound impact COVID-19 has had upon academic archives and provides valuable insights as to best practices for conducting archival reference and instruction work during a pandemic.

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REFERENCE AND INSTRUCTION SERVICES IN ACADEMIC ARCHIVES DURING  
COVID-19

by  
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## Introduction

The global COVID-19 pandemic has presented challenges to everyone in essentially every aspect of life, including institutional and professional contexts. One institution that COVID-19 has impacted particularly heavily is the university or college, especially because of low residency numbers and fewer revenue-generating sporting events. Within these institutions of higher education, academic libraries and their constituent archives and special collections have suffered even more—much of their work supports institutional goals of research and teaching, but work-from-home orders have significantly hindered staff members' ability to do such work. Archives and special collections have suffered from the switch to remote work because many of their services depend upon physical access to books, special collections, archives, and other materials.

This phenomenological study examines the state of archival reference and instruction services in academic libraries during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this study explores if and how COVID-19 has impacted archival reference and instruction, as well as what strategies and/or tools academic archives have found to be effective in aiding their reference and instruction work. An anonymous survey with open-ended questions was sent to the Society of American Archivists' Reference, Access, and Outreach Section, as well as to the Archivists Think Tank group on Facebook. After one month, the survey was closed, and responses were thematically analyzed to identify key concepts and trends. This study demonstrates that COVID-19 has had a significant

impact upon academic archives and provides valuable insights into best practices for conducting archival reference and instruction work during a pandemic, as well as future considerations for work in academic archives. It also provides useful groundwork for future research that seeks to study the impact of COVID-19 upon specific types of archives and the services that they provide.

## Literature Review

This study focuses on the novel phenomenon of the COVID-19 pandemic and thus positions itself among the most contemporary literature. As such, this literature review focuses on works published on or after 2000; however, several exceptions are made for seminal works in the field. Overall, this review demonstrates that while many studies and books have been written about reference and instruction services in academic libraries' archives and special collections, as well as about the impact of technology upon these services, no one has yet undertaken a study of the general state of archival reference and instruction during a global pandemic.

### Reference & Instruction in Academic Libraries

General works that deal with reference and instruction in libraries examine what each task looks like and how they are evolving to meet current and future needs, as well as how approaches can be implemented and managed (Cassell, 2017; Smith & Wong, 2016). Most of these works, especially due to this review's focus on recent literature, emphasize the growing and near-ubiquitous role of technology in libraries' reference and instruction (Bower & Mee, 2010; Cassell, 2017; Cassell & Hiremath, 2011; Clayton, 2007; Kvenild & Calkins, 2011). While some works highlight the fundamental difference between in-person and virtual reference or instruction (Cassell, 2017), other pieces, such as Bower and Mee (2010) argue that remote services are "as robust as those delivered to learners on campus" (p. 468). Within this body of work, some pieces focus solely on the

role and importance of remote services (Bower & Mee, 2010; Clayton 2007).

Clayton's 2007 book, for example, provides a useful and detailed guide for librarians, moving from designing distance instruction to delivery, collaboration, and assessment of distance instruction.

Recent books on general instruction in academic libraries focus overwhelmingly on shifts within the instructional role of academic librarians, resulting both from technological changes as well as philosophical and pedagogical changes (Hess, 2018; Kvenild & Calkins, 2013; Shumaker, 2012; Stormont, 2010). The title of Kvenild and Calkins' 2013 book (*Embedded Librarians: Moving Beyond One-Shot Instruction*) alone speaks to the changing role of academic librarians. No longer seen as resources at a singular point in time, academic librarians are increasingly embedded into diverse curricula and class sessions, being continually called upon for their services. Shumaker (2012) and others note that the common denominator among embedded librarianship work is an "overwhelming" focus on information literacy instruction (p. 65; Hess 2018). Hess (2018) provides a useful, metacognitive guide for academic librarians to examine their "instructional identities" and incorporate these identities into their work (p. 8).

Some of the more general works on instruction and reference, such as that from Smith and Wong (2016), have a chapter or section dedicated to archival reference and other informational services provided by archives. What differs the most between reference and instruction in academic libraries versus specifically in archives is the type of materials that are being represented and worked with. Academic libraries focus on relatively contemporary books, periodicals, and databases, while archives contain primary sources, unpublished manuscript collections, and other historical materials

(Smith & Wong, 2016). Otherwise, the reference question types received in archives (class assignments, searching for facts, seeking specific goals, and looking for known records) largely map to those received in libraries (Smith & Wong, 2016).

Moving beyond general publications and studies, many recent works about the services provided by academic libraries speak to critical librarianship, which is defined as “a movement of library workers dedicated to bringing social justice principles into...work in libraries” (critlib, n.d.), particularly as it relates to dismantling structures of white supremacy, capitalism, and structural inequalities. A systematic review of critical librarianship literature is beyond the scope of this paper, but some seminal pieces address critical information literacy (Doherty, 2007; Elmborg, 2006; Tewell, 2015), queer theory (Drabinski, 2013), antiracism (Brook et al., 2015), and accessibility for people with disabilities (Coonin & Hines, 2012).

### Reference & Instruction in Archives

#### *General Works*

Works that specifically focus on reference and instruction in archives approach these topics from several different angles. General works tend to mirror themes from those about academic libraries, inasmuch as they provide an overview of current trends, best practices, assessment, management and implementation techniques, and predictions of future trends (Cohen, 2011; Oestreicher, 2020; Prom & Swain, 2008; Pugh, 2005). The more recent works emphasize the impact of new technological developments and a shift from physical reference, access, and instruction to the provision of these services through virtual means (Prom & Swain, 2008; Oestreicher, 2020). As Tibbo observes in Prom and Swain (2008), technological developments have impacted “all aspects of the archival



enterprise” (p. 28), and these developments have led to an increase in demand for services from academic archives, including reference and instruction.

### *Archival Instruction*

When addressing instructional work done in archives and special collections, most studies are exploratory in nature and seek to report on current practices in the field (Allison, 2005; Bahde, 2011; Berenbak et al., 2010; Krause, 2008; Reynolds, 2012). These authors note the increase in demand for instructional services (Bahde, 2011; Krause, 2008; Reynolds, 2012; Schwier & Champion, 2020) while also noting that instructional services, at the time of these studies, overwhelmingly occurred in a traditional, face-to-face classroom environment outside of the archive “proper” (Allison, 2005; Berenbak et al., 2010). One study refers to this practice as “place-based education,” which leads to effective learning experiences for students (Schwier & Champion, 2020, p. 195). In a related vein, many studies emphasize the “vital role” (O’Sullivan, 2020, p. 437) that archives and special collections instruction plays in serving broader, burgeoning information literacy curricula at universities and other institutions of higher education (Hubbard & Lotts, 2013; Krause, 2008; Krause, 2010; O’Sullivan, 2020). Similarly, Davis (2021) emphasizes the importance that visual resources such as historic photographs can play in instructors’ efforts to teach primary source—and arguably, information—literacy. Other works published on archival instruction stress moving past the basics of simply teaching with primary sources and advocate for doing so with a critical pedagogical approach, such as postmodernism (Hooper, 2010), feminist theory (Accardi, 2013), decolonization (Warren, 2020), and disability rights/accessibility (O’Sullivan & Alexander, 2020). This combination of primary sources and critical theory

shows the critical impact that archival instruction can have upon educational practices and student learning.

Indeed, several works related to archival instruction focus on the overwhelmingly positive experience and impact that archivists and primary source instruction have upon the education of undergraduate students (Bahde & Smedberg, 2012; Krause, 2010; O’Sullivan, 2020). Krause (2010) notes that archival instruction brings history to life for undergraduate students, while O’Sullivan (2020) lauds the “immersive, experiential approach” that special collections and instruction can offer (p. 436). Some studies criticize the lack of instructional assessment (Krause, 2008), while others attempt to measure, and subsequently applaud, the positive impact of archival instruction (Bahde & Smedberg, 2012). With these measures of impact upon students, however, also comes an impact upon archivists and special collections librarians themselves. Krause (2010) observes that although archival professionals are spending increasing amounts of time in instructional activities, “they are hesitant to articulate their contribution to the classroom and to identify themselves as educators” (p. 401). Overall, the extant literature displays a very positive view of the role and impact of archival instruction work in institutions of higher education.

### *Archival Reference Work*

The body of literature that examines archival reference work within institutions of higher education addresses several different aspects of the field. Some focus on the education and training of reference archivists and found that most archivists did not consider themselves experts (Duff & Fox, 2006), and later studies echoed this conclusion, finding that most reference archivists gained their experience on the job (Radcliffe,

2014). Still other works approach archival reference work from the angle of analyzing users by examining the ways in which user studies have changed and why user studies have not been conducted as frequently by archival institutions (Rhee, 2015). Within this category of studying users, Hebert (2010) found that archivists use preferential language depending on the user and their reference query, preferring “serious” and academic researchers over “nonserious” users (p. 50).

Instead of focusing on users of archives, perhaps the largest body of literature written about archival reference addresses the modality of reference work, highlighting the rise of remote or virtual work, especially as new platforms of communication become available.

#### Remote Reference in Archives

Earlier studies of remote archival reference focus on the transition from in-person to electronic reference and explore how techniques from the former can be applied and/or modified to the latter (Tibbo, 1995). Others focus on the greater opportunities provided by electronic reference to promote collections and “take the riches of their repositories into the world” (Cox & Students, 2007, n.p.) while also noting that typically the small amount of digitally available content drives a dramatic increase in remote reference queries (Salzmann, 2001).

This increase in electronic reference requests has provided useful fodder for content analyses of queries, which tend to examine how users express their needs and what kinds of questions/needs users have (Duff & Johnson, 2001; Martin, 2000; Monahan, 2015). Both Martin (2000) and Duff and Johnson (2001) found that users had new expectations of archival reference, including an increase in the amount of research

they could conduct and assistance they could receive remotely. In a similar vein to these works, a couple of studies employ content analysis to compare “traditional” versus electronic reference queries and answers (Lavender et al., 2005; Shakeri et al., 2012). A study out of Iran found that research-related requests made up the majority of virtual reference queries and the minority of traditional reference queries (Shakeri et al., 2012). All these studies point to the increasingly important role that remote reference has, especially in aiding researchers.

With an influx of requests and the growing significance of virtual services comes new challenges, and McKim’s 2000 study highlights the inconsistencies in how electronic reference via email is implemented and managed at different institutions, especially given the “fractured nature of email reference” (p. 48). Despite developments in technology, contemporary electronic communication still remains disjointed for many, but it is also a reality that we must bow to because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Reference & Instruction in Libraries & Archives during COVID-19

Unsurprisingly, there have not been very many extensive studies detailing what remote reference and instruction in archives look like during COVID-19, due to the still-novel and evolving nature of our current situation. However, the publication of works addressing COVID-19’s impact upon libraries more broadly is steadily increasing. A study of remote reference among academic librarians is currently being conducted and analyzed (Dar, 2020a). Preliminary themes emerging from the study’s responses, other than a shift to virtual reference and instruction, include the need to establish a presence, set limits, and appear publicly available (Dar, 2020a). In a more recent piece from November 2020, Dar (2020b) reports on COVID-19’s impact on public and academic

libraries, highlighting how librarians have had to adapt to remote or socially distant in-person reference interactions. Dar identifies the importance of effective communication, time management, collaboration, and affective care as key strategies for fruitful reference interviews during COVID-19 (Dar, 2020b). A short piece from Ginelle Baskin (2020) likewise acknowledges the necessary shift to completely virtual reference at their institution and offers six useful tips to help academic librarians handle remote reference queries.

Many recently published case studies also affirm libraries' moves to remote work and service provision, and they detail each library's experience with this transition. Mehta and Wang (2020) report that the Maxwell Library at Bridgewater State University (BSU) in Massachusetts has had to adapt many of its existing services into a digital format in order to keep providing these services to faculty and students during the COVID-19 pandemic. They also describe new services implemented to support online teaching and learning at BSU, as well as best practices, such as promoting digital library services and contributing to libraries' collective understanding of pandemic responses (Mehta & Wang, 2020). Likewise, a collection of case studies published in *Medical Reference Services Quarterly* acknowledges libraries' and archives' shift to remote reference, online instruction, and the virtual provision of other library services (Bandel, 2020; DiPrince & Riedmueller, 2020; Gotschall et al., 2021; Howes et al., 2021; Koos et al. 2021; Lindsay et al., 2021; Radford et al., 2021; Riedmueller, 2020; Weeks et al., 2020). These articles provide insight into how each individual repository has adapted to the unique challenges posed by COVID-19 and how they are providing services to their patrons.

Explicitly addressing archival work during COVID-19, the *Appalachian Curator*, a newsletter that focuses on special collections and archives in Appalachia, published a report consisting of responses from 10 southern Appalachian academic archives (Hyde, 2020). While the institutions and their archives represented vary widely, several key themes are present: closed repositories, new workflows, online services, and limited repository access (Hyde, 2020). Likewise, a blog post from Duke University's Learning Innovation unit details how Duke's Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library has developed a number of digital resources (assignments, modules, videos, etc.) for classes, using digitized rare books and archival materials (Henningson, 2020). The SAA's Teaching with Primary Sources Section has been publishing many blog post case studies of how individual archives have used different technologies and techniques to adapt to remote primary source instruction (Belair, 2021; McColl, 2021; Spitz, 2021; Ullmann, 2021). The themes present in these regional and local case studies of archival services provide solid groundwork against which to compare the results of this research study, which captures data from a much broader geographic range of repositories.

Addressing a larger range of archival repositories and providing very relevant contextual information for this study is the Summer 2020 Archival Workers Emergency Fund Survey Summary, which was conducted and published by the Archival Workers Emergency Fund (AWEF) Organizing Committee, a part of the SAA (Tang et al., 2020). The AWEF survey received 145 total responses from a range of archival practitioners in a variety of settings, although the majority of respondents (50.3%) worked in academic archives. Of the 145 respondents, the vast majority (84.8%) were working fully or partially remote. Only 5.5% were working fully on-site. Many of the respondents (73.1%)

expressed concern over how COVID-19 would impact their future employment, and even more (78.8%) sought professional development resources. Of particular interest and relevance to the current study are the AWEF survey results regarding which aspects of COVID-19 work would continue beyond the pandemic: remote work and online reference, instruction, and programming were the most popular responses (Tang et al., 2020). The results of the broad AWEF survey provide very useful context and foundation for comparison with the results of this study.

In addition to the AWEF survey, the SAA has also informally published a couple of resources for archivists that suggest what they can do while having to work remotely (SAA Access & Disability Section [ADS], 2020; Rojette et al., 2020). These documents, both of which contain crowd-sourced information, outline the numerous activities that archivists can do while being forced to work from home, including professional development opportunities, metadata and description work, policy revision and development, general administrative work, and more. The *Archivists at Home* document acknowledges that reference work requiring physical access to materials, as well as on-site instruction, are both not able to be done virtually. It does, however, detail reference and outreach tasks that *can* be done remotely, including the creation of LibGuides, video tutorials, and FAQ or “Ready Reference” answers, among other tasks (SAA ADS, 2020). While both of these documents from the SAA provide helpful suggestions for archivists working remotely during the pandemic, they (understandably) do not provide an in-depth exploration of what remote reference work looks like at the moment.

In addition to its other contents, the *Archivists at Home* document (2020) also directs viewers to another crowd-sourced document that provides resources and

techniques for engaging in remote instruction with archives and special collections (Teaching with Primary Sources [TPS], 2020). It provides everything from curated general resources to practical ideas to suggested best practices, leaning heavily towards suggesting various online platforms and/or software that can help facilitate virtual instruction. Likewise, a short article from Carly Lamphere lists a few technology resources for academic librarians conducting online instruction, in which she largely promotes the use of Google's tools and/or an institutional LMS (Lamphere, 2020).

These articles and documents, while providing valuable, practical resources for academic librarians and archivists during COVID-19, are not fully-fledged research studies, and many of them date from spring and summer 2020, thus not addressing the current experience (fall 2020 and onward) of such professionals. Given the changes in instructional modes for the fall—especially at institutions that have made abrupt pivots from in-person to online instruction, such as UNC Chapel Hill—it is important to capture the current state of archival reference and instruction work. However, these works nevertheless provide useful groundwork against which to foreground and compare the findings of this study.



## Research Questions

Due to an understandable lack of research that considers the intersection of archivists in academic libraries, reference and instruction services, and the COVID-19 pandemic, this study helps to fill in this gap. Hence, the purpose of this research study is to explore the impact of COVID-19 upon reference and instruction services that are provided by archivists within academic libraries, examining if and how reference and instruction services have changed during the pandemic. Specifically, this phenomenological study answers the following questions:

1. What does archival reference and instruction look like during a pandemic?
2. Have archivists found effective ways to offer reference and instruction services during a pandemic, and if so, what are they?
3. What other activities do reference archivists engage in to sustain their work, if they cannot engage in typical reference and instruction?

Concepts that are key to this study are defined as follows:

- **Archivist:** Any staff member working in the archives and/or special collections of an academic library who performs reference and/or instruction services, excluding interns.
- **Academic Libraries:** Libraries that are attached to an institution of higher education and serve to support the institution's curricular and research needs.

- **Reference Services:** Services that aid patrons in locating materials relevant to their interests, including (but not limited to) orienting patrons to materials, helping patrons identify relevant materials, and ensuring that researcher's needs are met. Excluded from this working definition of reference is the related activity of outreach.
- **Instruction Services:** Services provided by archivists that teach concepts and/or skills to a group of people (typically, but not always, students).

## Methodology

Because COVID-19 is a new and ever-evolving phenomenon, it presents a unique challenge for archival reference and instruction services. Furthermore, because I am interested in how individual archivists have experienced and been affected by COVID-19 in their work, a phenomenological approach to research helped me to best understand the lived experiences of these professionals. Through the dissemination of a survey with open-ended questions, I thematically analyzed responses and was able to construct an accurate depiction of how archival reference and instruction work has been impacted by and adapted to COVID-19. This depiction, drawn deeply from study data, provides professionals in the field with an idea of best practices moving forward, especially since the pandemic's endpoint is unknown.

### **Positionality / Researcher Role**

As the researcher, my role in this investigation was to design and disseminate a survey with open-ended questions, and then to thematically analyze the survey's responses and draw conclusions from them. While I did not have a relationship with my research subjects, I have been personally affected by COVID-19 and am very invested in the archival work that I undertake. As such, I have likely brought in my own assumptions, such as viewing the pandemic and its impacts in a negative light, while on the other hand upholding the great importance that I place upon work in archives and special collections. Because COVID-19 has had a negative impact upon so many people,

and certainly upon institutions of higher education and archives, I needed to acknowledge the sensitivity of this research topic.

### **Sample Population and Context**

According to a 2004 study conducted by the Society of American Archivists and led by Victoria Walch, most archival professionals (93%) identified as white, and 65% identified as women (Walch, 2006, pp. 341, 333). Of the archivists surveyed, 36% were employed in an academic institution (Walch, 2006, p. 328). The study also found that archivists have at least one master's degree, typically in Library and Information Science (LIS) (Walch, 2006, p. 348). Hence, the population that this study draws from is overwhelmingly white, predominantly female, and more than likely has a graduate degree in LIS or some other closely related discipline, such as public history. A 2020 survey of 145 archivists found that most respondents identified as white and female (Tang et al., 2020), which is consistent with the 2004 survey's findings. Because this study focused on archival professionals in academic libraries, it drew largely upon 36% of the surveyed population from 2004 and the 50.3% from 2020; thus, it is likely that this portion of the overall sample population reflected the broader statistics of being mostly white, mostly female, and mostly holding a graduate degree.

To target the specific population of archival professionals working in academic libraries, this study used convenience sampling to disseminate a survey to the Reference, Access, and Outreach Section of the SAA, as well as to the Archivist Think Tank group on Facebook. Both of these groups have members who are not part of the target population, so specific language (including definitions) and screening questions were necessary at the beginning of the survey. In addition to targeting these professional

groups, snowball sampling was also employed to encourage qualified participants to share the survey with similarly qualified colleagues to complete the survey.

A primary limitation of these sampling methods is potential non-response error among academic archivists who saw the recruitment posts, and coverage error due to the fact that these two groups likely do not contain representatives from all academic archives. A related limitation of these sampling methods is that smaller sub-groups of the target population may not be represented, and inadvertent clustering may occur. The use of snowball sampling in conjunction with convenience sampling could make the possibility of inadvertent clustering even more likely. Despite these limitations, these sampling methods seemed to be the easiest way to reach the study's target population and increase the number of responses.

## **Data Collection Methods**

Firstly, I finalized my survey instrument, which consisted mostly of open-ended questions. The benefit of using an open-ended questionnaire is that respondents had the freedom to interpret the questions and respond to them as they deemed appropriate. It helped prevent pre-determining participants' responses and thus gave a more genuine picture of how respondents have experienced the pandemic's impact upon their work. Drawbacks and limitations of using an open- versus closed-ended questionnaire include creating complexities (instead of the simplicity of yes/no or other categorical questions) and increasing time/effort spent on responding, thus decreasing the likelihood that participants would complete the survey. In addition, open-ended survey responses require additional time to analyze compared to closed-ended responses. Compared to interviews,

open-ended surveys are limited by the inability to follow up on interesting or incomplete responses in the moment. Interviews were considered as a data collection method for this study; however, I felt that a survey was likely to return a greater amount of data from a wider sample than would have been possible with interviews, given the short timeline of my study. In addition, I was concerned that “Zoom fatigue” due to COVID-19 may have resulted in a reluctance to participate in the study if interviews were used as the primary data collection method.

After finalizing the survey instrument, which drew four preliminary questions from the American Library Association’s *Libraries Respond: COVID-19 Survey* from May 2020 (see Appendix A), and receiving IRB approval, I took the following steps over a one-month period:

1. Sent the survey to the Reference, Access and Outreach Section of the SAA
2. Posted the survey to the Archivists Think Tank Facebook group
3. Followed up requests within 2 weeks
4. Closed the survey to responses after one month.

The one-month response window, with a reminder halfway through the time span, allowed participants enough time to submit responses while not overwhelming them with requests. I closed the survey after one month because I had 52 responses and wanted to have enough time to appropriately analyze them. Additionally, by one month, responses had significantly decreased and also seemed to have reached a saturation point. While closing the survey due to reaching saturation could have unintentionally excluded unforeseen, unique data, this study is exploratory and not meant to be generalizable;

therefore the unintentional exclusion of unique data will not detract from the credibility of the study.

## **Data Analysis Methods**

Once the survey was closed, I first eliminated incomplete responses to the survey, which numbered 19 total. These incomplete responses included participants who did not meet the screening criteria, as well as participants who began the survey but did not answer any of the open-ended questions that were primary data collection points for this study. Although eliminated, these incomplete responses have been retained in case they warrant future attention. I then conducted a thematic analysis of the 33 complete responses to the open-ended survey questions, identifying key concepts and trends. Because this study is exploratory, I did not conduct in-depth qualitative coding. A general thematic analysis allowed me to get the best idea of the breadth of archivists' experiences of COVID-19 and its impact upon their reference and instruction work.

In addition to the qualitative thematic analysis, I conducted basic calculations related to the Carnegie Classification of each archivist's institution. I have also included basic numerical descriptions to provide additional context, particularly as they relate to repository status and "best practices" that I may draw from the data. These basic descriptions (e.g., "More than half of respondents mentioned...") help speak to the significance of certain experiences and help reinforce the idea that certain practices can indeed be considered "best," thus adding credibility to this study's conclusions.

## Research Quality and Ethical Considerations

To ensure the trustworthiness and quality of my research, I have been transparent about my methods and relationship to both my research subjects and the topics of my inquiry, and I went through the Institutional Review Board process to receive approval, providing the approval number in recruitment materials and the survey. Adapting some questions from the American Library Association's *Libraries Respond: COVID-19 Survey* helped lend further credibility to my study. I have included many quotes from my participants' responses to ground my analysis in the data. Other specific steps I have taken to ensure the credibility (CR), dependability (D), transferability (T), and confirmability (CO) of my research include:

- Investing sufficient time engaged with my research materials (CR)
- Including examples from raw data alongside conclusions and interpretations (CR, D, T)
- Describing if, how, and why my research designed evolved from the proposal stage (D)
- Honestly describing problems or challenges that I encountered with my methods (D)
- Maintaining an audit trail of my documents, instruments, data, and other study materials (CO)

Employing these strategies helped ensure that this study is of high quality.



In addition to research quality, this study needed to address a couple of ethical concerns:

1. COVID-19 has impacted people in numerous, often negative, ways, so the survey could very well have brought up pandemic-related trauma for my participants.
2. Academic libraries may have enacted COVID-19 policies that my participants did not agree with and/or heavily criticized.

To minimize the chances of bringing up/resurfacing trauma, I prefaced the survey by acknowledging the traumatic nature of COVID-19 and sought to use affirming language throughout the survey. I also provided links to mental health resources at the end of the survey. To address my second ethical concern, I kept my survey responses anonymous and stated in my recruitment messages that responses would be kept anonymous, thus preventing the identification of my participants and their potential disagreement with institutional policies.

## Results and Discussion

The results of this survey speak to the profound impact that COVID-19 has had upon both reference and instruction work in a variety of academic archives, though doctoral institutions made up most respondent organizations.

### **Repository Status**

The first part of the survey asked some basic questions, adapted from the ALA's survey (see Appendix A), to better understand the status of each archivists' institution and their archives and special collections.

#### Carnegie Classification of Institutions

Of the 33 responses received, 21 institutions (63.6%) were classified as Doctoral, 9 institutions (27.3%) were classified as Master's Colleges and Universities, and 3 institutions (9.1%) were classified as Baccalaureate Colleges. No other Carnegie Classifications were represented in the data. Thus, the experiences of academic archivists during COVID-19 are situated within a variety of institution types, and the classifications represented are those most likely to have archives.

#### Status of Archives and Special Collections

Responses to repository status predictably varied from institution to institution, but over half of respondents indicated that the institutional community and/or the public could make appointments to physically access resources in their archives and special collections during the pandemic. A few archivists noted that appointments were allowed

on a case-by-case basis at their archives. Many respondents whose archives allowed appointments to access resources also indicated that only limited numbers of patrons were permitted into physically accessible spaces, so social distancing policies were in effect. Notably, only two academic archives were fully, physically closed, though one of these respondents specified that they were “open via remote research services.” On the other end of the spectrum, two archivists indicated they had never closed to the community, and one archivist indicated that their institution was fully open to all patrons with no restrictions.

#### COVID-Related Procedures

Like their status, the COVID-related procedures in place at each academic archive varied from institution to institution. However, all respondents had a minimum of 2 health and safety procedures in place, and most respondents had 4 or 5 procedures. Every respondent noted that their repository had health and safety protocols in place for staff, and almost all of them were sanitizing and quarantining materials and had social distancing requirements in place for patrons. Other common procedures in place at academic archives included phased re-opening, deep cleaning of interior spaces, and remote work for staff. One archivist noted that their archives also kept doors locked to limit foot traffic.

#### Future In-Person Access

In terms of how archivists envisioned in-person access to their archives in the 3 to 6 months following February 2021, almost all respondents indicated that they expected to provide in-person access by appointment only and with social distancing policies. Two respondents also selected the “Unlimited access” choice, but this option was selected

alongside appointments and social distancing, perhaps signaling a progression towards unlimited access. One archivist noted that they re-evaluate their status in relation to the wider community monthly, and another specified that the timetable for their response involved no changes for 3 months but then some progress in 4 to 6 months.

### Discussion

Taken together, the responses from the first part of the survey demonstrate that, at a base level, COVID-19 has indeed influenced academic archives situated in several different institution types, especially as reflected by the archives' operating status and health and safety protocols. The variety of responses to repository status questions indicates that a broad range of archivists' experiences have been captured through this survey; however, the absence of other institution types suggests that there may be future avenues of research that could address the impact of COVID-19 upon archives at other types of academic institutions. Responses from this part of the survey also demonstrate that the impact of COVID-19 has not been short-term; rather, the pandemic has had a lasting impact upon academic archives, and archivists expect to still have modified access and social distancing procedures in place for at least several months into the future. The lasting nature of COVID-19 speaks to the possibilities for longitudinal studies that track the impact of COVID-19 over time upon certain archives.

### **Reference and Instruction during COVID-19**

The second part of this study's survey consisted of open-ended questions with free-text responses and focused on the specific impacts of COVID-19 upon reference and instruction services in academic archives.

### Impacts of COVID-19 upon Archival Reference and Instruction

All archivists responded that COVID-19 has had a direct impact upon their archival reference and/or instruction work., Most respondents noted that COVID-19 forced them to provide reference and instruction services virtually, and many of them noted a marked decrease in instruction requests. One archivist said it was a “drastic reduction” in instruction requests, while others stated there is “very limited interest” from faculty, and a third detailed a “60% reduction in instruction sessions from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 semester.” Another archivist responded that “Our instruction program has ground to a halt as instructors have not wanted to re-imagine their archival assignments for a virtual course.” It is worth noting, however, that two respondents experienced an increase in instruction requests.

In contrast to drops in instruction, most respondents indicated that they were receiving increased numbers of remote reference requests, which came with several different challenges. The most obvious challenge that respondents mentioned was limited access to materials. As one archivist put it, “Everything is remote, so it sometimes makes retrieval of items difficult at this time.” Several archivists also spoke about the time-consuming nature of fielding and fulfilling remote reference requests. “The questions that do come are more complex and involved,” one archivist noted, while another said that “The amount of work that must be done by archives staff to fulfill these requests has also increased. Reasons for the increase in the amount of work include the need to make more copies for patrons (those who would typically visit in person) and having to find alternate sources of information when working from home without access to the collections.” Several others noted the vast amount of time they spent digitizing materials for reference.

For one archivist, institutional obligations mandated large-scale digitization:

“We are required (by institutional affiliation, etc.) to accommodate as best we can without physically allowing [patrons] into the reading room. It has created a whole set of major digitization projects for us.”

Archivists whose repositories are allowing limited in-person appointments noted that in-person reference numbers had decreased dramatically, with one respondent having no in-person requests: “Even though we are by appointment only, no one has chosen to come in.” Even with the option of in-person reference, it seems that (understandably) remote reference services are more popular during COVID-19.

#### Provision of Reference Services during COVID-19

Most respondents have been providing reference services remotely, and they are doing so through a variety of channels, including email, phone, live chat, and Zoom. However, several archivists clarified that members of their institutional community were encouraged to make in-person appointments, while patrons outside of the community had to use the remote option. For remote reference queries, archivists have been digitizing much more: “Our scan requests have increased, with patrons needing larger quantities of scans than pre-pandemic.” A couple of respondents noted that they still strive to acknowledge each reference request, and some archives have been more lenient in the charges they issue to patrons (i.e., waiving more reproduction fees, providing more free research, etc.). If archives were providing in-person reference services, almost all their archivists qualified that these services were available by appointment only. For archives that are fully open, they still seem to be providing a great amount of remote reference services to their patrons.

### Best Practices for Reference during COVID-19

Unsurprisingly, the use of Zoom and the screen-sharing of resources were the most frequently mentioned and “vital” techniques for providing reference services to archive patrons. Additionally, several respondents emphasized the importance of conducting in-depth reference interviews and pre-visit consultations via Zoom to have a comprehensive understanding of patrons’ needs. Another common and unsurprising technique that archivists used to provide reference was the digitization of materials or the provision of digitized items (whether by the archive or through another source, such as HathiTrust). One respondent also provided an insightful tip for handling the increased demand for digitization: “Storing and organizing all digitized material by collection in the case that it is requested again by a different patron to reduce re-digitizing.”

A few respondents noted that, unfortunately, they had not identified any useful tools or techniques to aid in providing reference services. However, a couple of archivists did clarify that they answered “no” because their reference service circumstances had not changed from pre-COVID circumstances: “Prior to the pandemic, many of our reference requests are via email, so that remained the same, with the exception of not being able to answer all questions while working remotely.” The inability to answer all questions and to comprehensively fulfill patrons’ needs is a theme that also emerged in response to the survey’s final question as well (see “Additional Insights from Respondents”).

Other tools and techniques mentioned in responses included using LibCal to set up appointments with patrons, using iPads to provide quick reference images, and using Soundcloud and other media servers to deliver materials to patrons.

### Provision of Instruction Services during COVID-19

In terms of providing archival instruction services, over half of respondents indicated that they were providing only virtual instruction. The particulars of remote instruction varied from archivist to archivist—most used Zoom, while others used Webex or YouTube (for pre-recorded sessions), and some archivists offered a mix of synchronous and asynchronous services, while others provided synchronous- or asynchronous-only. These virtual sessions are typically accompanied by digitized archival materials.

Several archivists responded that they were providing both virtual and socially distant in-person instruction sessions, depending on the needs of the class and the archives' available resources. One archivist said that they were providing instruction “in every method possible,” including synchronous, asynchronous, in-person, and hybrid. Additionally, this archivist noted that “Due to the fact that in-person classes could be shut down at any moment, we double-plan for all classes so that we can turn an in-person class into a remote class with little to no notice.” Regardless of format, many respondents shared that the number of instruction sessions they provide has significantly decreased since the beginning of the pandemic.

### Best Practices for Instruction during COVID-19

Like reference services, Zoom and the digitization of materials were the most popular answers for the most useful methods of providing instruction during COVID-19. Aside from these general tools and techniques, several respondents mentioned the “incredible support and inspiration” from the SAA's Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) Section, especially in terms of keeping instruction sessions engaging and



interesting. TPS-suggested tools include, but are not limited to: Padlet, Poll Everywhere, Slido, Google Jamboard, and Adobe Spark. A few archivists also mentioned the utility of LibGuides for general and introductory tutorials.

For course-specific instruction sessions, collaboration with and support from professors was the most valuable resources for some archivists: “Working with professors to come up with a standard assignment that will easily fit into their classes being online has been the most helpful.” Another respondent noted that virtual instruction is quite difficult, but “our best tool is really support from the instructor.”

### Substitute Archival Work

Some respondents were understandably unable to conduct archival reference and instruction services, so they engaged in other activities instead. Common “substitute” activities for the surveyed archivists included professional development, outreach, processing backlogs, collecting COVID-related materials, and improving description and finding aids. In fact, almost every person who responded to this question mentioned that they edited and enhanced metadata for finding aids and digital collections at some point during the pandemic. One archivist has been working on a Conscious Editing project, which “works to remove and reword racially inflammatory language as well as language which glorifies white supremacy.”

In terms of outreach, many respondents created social media and blog posts to highlight collections and materials. “To make up for the decrease in traditional instruction services,” one archivist noted, “we have been more actively engaging with outreach in an effort to make our collections more visible.” These activities, especially those focused on outreach, access, and visibility, mirror those suggested in the SAA’s

*Archivists at Home* document (SAA ADS, 2020), with the exception of processing backlogs. While *Archivists at Home* focuses on fully remote work, these survey responses reveal that some archivists could physically go in to work but not perform regular reference and instruction services, most likely due to the archives being accessible to staff but not to patrons.

Notably, one archivist responded to the question of substitute work with the following: “We have been opened for the whole time, so we are still providing reference and instruction services.” Based on the other archivists’ responses, this experience of never closing during COVID-19 and being able to continue providing services is rare.

#### Additional Insights from Respondents

The final question of the survey gave archivists the opportunity to provide any other thoughts about their experiences of working in an academic archives during a pandemic. Not every respondent took advantage of this opportunity, but those who did expressed a range of struggles, frustrations, and emotion. “We’re struggling,” one archivist commented, while another shared that “Keeping up morale during this time-period was extremely difficult.” A self-identified Lone Arranger lamented that the pandemic has been “a very lonely time” for them, and another archivist shared that they were far more stressed providing reference services during COVID-19 than they had been pre-pandemic.

In addition to the general stress and struggles of living through a prolonged pandemic, a few participants noted that being physically removed from collection materials was difficult for both themselves and for their patrons. “It is harder to have the authentic engagements with researchers in a completely virtual environment,” one

archivist shared, and another stated that “First encounters with materials should be face-to-face and hands on,” to best connect with students. A few other respondents commented on the difficulty they had in convincing faculty of the importance of archival materials for their classes if they had not incorporated those materials previously.

Another difficulty that some archivists experienced was managing patrons’ expectations—one said, “I have really had to manage user expectations. For example, we do not have the staff to scan an entire collection and send it [to] them for their use!” A different archivist noted that “some patrons are less patient than others.” However, most others who commented about patron expectations noted that, overwhelmingly, patrons were far more understanding about time and resource limitations than in pre-pandemic times.

Despite the struggles evident in responses to this question, archivists’ comments occasionally provided glimmers of hope: “Some of the reference procedures have actually proved to be useful and we’ll continue using them after we fully reopen.” Another archivist shared a similar sentiment: “It’s hard, but we’ve also been able to focus on our digital accessibility and online exhibits, skills we’ll retain as we hopefully reopen this year.” These newly developed skills and procedures could introduce additional flexibility in the post-pandemic workplace: “This experience has enabled us to rethink how we offer reference and instruction and has made us more flexible in what can sometimes be a profession full of rigid standards. While I’m not glad to be in the middle of the pandemic, I’m thankful that we were forced to introduce some flexibility into our everyday workflow.” In addition to newfound flexibility and skills, some archivists were

able to forge new connections with faculty members and students at their institutions, which will hopefully facilitate further on-campus growth of the archives.

### Discussion

The responses to the second part of the survey indicate that COVID-19 has had an extremely significant impact upon the reference and instruction services provided by archivists in academic libraries. Experiences have understandably varied from repository to repository, depending on operating status, staff, policies, and available resources. Overwhelmingly, the provision of reference and instruction services shifted to remote means, with a heavy reliance upon videoconferencing software like Zoom, although some archives are now providing in-person options for these services. Most archivists experienced a marked decrease in requests for instruction sessions but an increase in reference questions, as well as an increase in time spent answering queries. However, it is important to note that these statements are not applicable across the board—each archivist had a unique experience of working during COVID-19.

Underpinning much of the work archivists are providing during COVID-19 is the extensive digitization of materials. To adapt to the new and evolving circumstances of remote and socially distanced work, as well as to accommodate the sheer amount of digitization requests, archivists have had to develop new workflows while remaining flexible throughout the pandemic. Some archivists have struggled with these new workflows and their inability to access materials and coworkers, but this time has also allowed them to develop new skills and projects and to recognize workflows that will be useful in the post-pandemic future.

In terms of best practices for conducting archival reference and instruction work during a pandemic, several key points emerged from the survey responses:

- In-depth reference interviews are more critical than ever when providing remote reference, to best understand patrons' needs while making an efficient use of time and other resources.
- Managing patrons' expectations through clear and specific communication is a great aid in providing remote reference.
- Collaborating with faculty members and garnering their support are key aspects of providing instruction during a pandemic.
- Zoom (or other videoconferencing tools) are very useful in enabling both remote reference and remote instruction.
- The digitization of materials is critical to providing effective reference and instruction services during a pandemic.

To support remote work, mass digitization, and new, flexible workflows, archivists have had to rely heavily upon many different technologies, including videoconferencing platforms, media servers, email, scanners and document cameras, instructional applications (Padlet, Google Jamboard, etc.), and more. While the use of technology in archives is not new, it is clear from the survey responses that reference and instruction services could not have been provided during COVID-19 without it. This mission-critical nature of so many different technologies suggests that academic archives should endeavor to stay abreast of current technological trends and support professional development training and activities for their archivists.

While COVID-19 has had a direct impact on archival services, it is important to note that it has also had a very significant human impact upon archivists themselves. The stress, loneliness, and struggles of working during a pandemic (whether remotely, in-person, or a combination of the two) are evident throughout the responses to the survey. The predominance of these emotions highlights the need for academic libraries to prioritize not only the physical health of their archivists, but their mental health as well.

Finally, because many respondents were unable to conduct their normal duties for a period of time and had to fall back upon other activities such as outreach, redescription, metadata cleaning, and processing, it is clear that archives need to consider developing alternative and flexible works plans for employees in the event of an emergency. Since new strains of COVID-19 and other viruses continue to develop, archives will need to be prepared for future disruptions to work and having these alternative work plans could help facilitate a smoother adaption to work during a pandemic.

## Impact, Limitations, and Conclusions

Because this study broadly explored the impact of COVID-19 upon reference and instruction services provided by archivists in academic libraries, these professionals and other academic library personnel are now able to see how their peers have handled the pandemic, hopefully gaining new insights for their own work that they can implement in the future. These insights could certainly impact policy decisions at academic libraries, especially if the pandemic remains a factor in determining work and available services. This study's results also provide a preliminary idea of "best practices" for archival reference and instruction work during a pandemic.

Overall, this study was limited by its use of convenience sampling and the resulting sample, which was relatively small and non-generalizable. Intentionally circumscribing my target population left out the experiences of archivists who work outside of academic libraries, or about 64% of the archivist population, as it stood in 2004 (Walch, 2006). Both of these sampling decisions were justified by the exploratory, time-limited nature of this study. Despite these limitations, this study provides fruitful groundwork for future research that examines and/or compares the impacts of COVID-19 in academic archives at different types of institutions—for example, a future study could focus on academic archives at Doctoral universities versus Baccalaureate Colleges and compare thematic results. Furthermore, the best practices identified in this study are

certainly applicable outside of academic libraries, thus impacting the larger field of archival work.

Overall, this study has demonstrated the profound impact that COVID-19 has had upon reference and instruction work done by archivists in a variety of academic libraries, forcing most of these archivists to work from home for a time and to provide reference and instruction remotely. The largely virtual provision of these services has forced archivists to rely heavily upon different technologies (but particularly Zoom) and the on-demand digitization of materials. However, in-person options for reference and instruction are becoming available at some repositories. The overall heavy reliance upon technology underscores the need for professional development training and activities for archivists, which their archives and institutions should support. Archives also need to provide mental health support for their employees, as evidenced by the struggles voiced by respondents. Despite the struggles that many archivists have faced during the pandemic, the introduction of new, flexible workflows and the development of new skills will be beneficial to archival work in the post-pandemic future.



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## Appendix A. ALA *Libraries Respond: COVID-19 Survey*

The following questions from ALA's *Libraries Respond: COVID-19 Survey* were adapted for the current study. The full survey can be found at:

[http://www.ala.org/pla/sites/ala.org.pla/files/content/advocacy/covid-19/Libraries-Respond-COVID-19-Survey-May-2020\\_5-12-20.pdf](http://www.ala.org/pla/sites/ala.org.pla/files/content/advocacy/covid-19/Libraries-Respond-COVID-19-Survey-May-2020_5-12-20.pdf).

- Academic library type: Carnegie Classification ([Institution Lookup](#))
  - Answer choices: Doctoral; Master's Colleges and Universities; Baccalaureate Colleges; Community Colleges; Tribal Colleges; Special Focus; Other (Please specify)
- Library Building Status: With respect to your community, what is the current status of your library building(s)? Select the option that best fits your situation.
  - Answer choices: All locations are fully closed; Some locations are fully closed, others are still fully open; The community can only make appointments to access resources inside at least one of the buildings; Limited numbers of patrons are permitted into the library at any one time; Patrons are able to access materials through curbside pick up; The library is open to all patrons (no restrictions); Other (please specify)
- To your knowledge, which of the following crisis-related processes or procedures will be/are in place in your building? Check all that apply.
  - Answer options: Health and safety protocols for staff; Deep clean of interior spaces; Sanitation/quarantining of materials; Social distancing requirements for patrons; Phased re-opening of operations; New or revised support services that require staffing (e.g., remote work, trauma response); Not sure; Other (Please specify)
- What type of in-person access do you envision offering to your community in the next 3-6 months? Check all that apply.
  - Answer options: Library never closed to the community; By appointment only; Implementing social distancing policies; Curbside services; Delivery to patrons; At partner locations; Unlimited access; Unknown; Do not plan to open to public; Other (Please specify)

## Appendix B. Recruitment Messaging

I am completing my master's degree in Library Science at UNC Chapel Hill, and I'm currently researching how COVID-19 has impacted archival reference and instruction services in academic libraries. To that end, I am seeking survey participants who:

- Work in the archives and/or special collections of an academic library
- Provide reference and/or instructional services to patrons within and outside of the education institution's community
- Are comfortable and willing to complete a 15- to 20-minute anonymous survey about their experiences providing reference and/or instruction services during a pandemic.

I know that COVID-19 is a sensitive topic for so many of us, so please do not feel the need to complete this survey, especially if it induces pandemic-related trauma. As Eira Tansey so wisely reminded us, no one owes their trauma to archivists—and I would add that no one owes their trauma to anyone else, period. If you *are* comfortable and willing to complete this survey, your responses will be kept completely anonymous in order to protect your identity. If you have questions about whether or not you meet the above criteria, please feel free to contact me at [ltams@unc.edu](mailto:ltams@unc.edu).

This research study and its findings will be presented to my thesis advisor and may be digitally published in the Carolina Digital Repository (<https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/>). Wherever this study is read and/or published, it will always be kept completely anonymous.

This research study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (IRB # 20-3238).

I sincerely appreciate your time and am looking forward to receiving your responses!

[Link to Qualtrics Survey]

## Appendix C. Survey/Questionnaire

The following text and questions comprised the research survey:

**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**  
**Research Information Sheet**  
**IRB Study #: 20-3238**  
**Principal Investigator:** Leah Tams

The purpose of this research study is to examine the state of archival reference and instruction services in academic libraries during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this study will explore if and how COVID-19 has impacted archival reference and instruction, as well as what strategies and/or tools academic archives have found to be effective in aiding their reference and instruction work. You are being asked to take part in a research study because you provide archival reference and/or instruction services in an academic library.

Being in a research study is completely voluntary. You can choose not to be in this research study. You can also say yes now and change your mind later. If you are a member of the UNC community, not participating will not affect your relationship to UNC.

If you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to complete an anonymous survey. Your participation in this study will take about 15 to 20 minutes. We expect that between 1 and 50 people will take part in this research study.

You can choose not to answer any question you do not wish to answer. You can also choose to stop taking the survey at any time. You must be at least 18 years old to participate. If you are younger than 18 years old, please stop now.

The possible risks to you in taking part in this research are:

- Feeling uncomfortable and/or anxious.
- Potential loss of confidentiality of data.

There are no potential direct benefits to participants.

To protect your identity as a research subject, no identifiable information will be collected.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact the Investigator named at the top of this form by calling 804-432-9194 or emailing ltams@unc.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the UNC Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB\_subjects@unc.edu.

Screening Questions:

- Are you a staff member (excluding interns) working in the archives and/or special collections of an academic library?
  - Answer: Yes; No [No will prompt respondents to exit the survey with a statement of gratitude for their willingness to participate.]
- Do you provide reference and/or instructional services for the archival/special collections materials with which you work?
  - Answer: Yes; No [No will prompt respondents to exit the survey with a statement of gratitude for their willingness to participate.]

Main Survey Questions:

- Academic library type: Carnegie Classification ([Institution Lookup](#))
  - Answer choices: Doctoral; Master's Colleges and Universities; Baccalaureate Colleges; Community Colleges; Tribal Colleges; Special Focus; Other (Please specify)
- Archives and Special Collections Status: With respect to your community, what is the current status of your institution's archives and special collections? Select the option that best fits your situation.
  - Answer choices: Fully closed; The institutional community can make appointments to physically access resources; The institutional community and the public can make appointments to physically access resources; Limited numbers of patrons are permitted into the library at any one time; Open to all patrons (no restrictions); Other (please specify)
- To your knowledge, which of the following crisis-related processes or procedures will be/are in place in your archives and special collections? Check all that apply.
  - Answer options: Health and safety protocols for staff; Deep clean of interior spaces; Sanitation/quarantining of materials; Social distancing requirements for patrons; Phased re-opening of operations; New or revised support services that require staffing (e.g., remote work, trauma response); Not sure; Other (Please specify)
- What type of in-person access do you envision offering to your community in the next 3-6 months? Check all that apply.
  - Answer options: Never closed to the community; By appointment only; Implementing social distancing policies; Unlimited access; Unknown; Do not plan to open to community; Other (Please specify)
- How has COVID-19 impacted your archival reference and/or instruction services? [Long-text answer box]

- How are you providing reference services to your patrons during a pandemic? [Long-text answer box]
- Have you discovered any particularly useful methods, tools, etc. to aid in providing such reference services? [Long-text answer box]
- How are you providing instructional services to your patrons during a pandemic? [Long-text answer box]
- Have you discovered any particularly useful methods, tools, etc. to aid in providing such instructional services? [Long-text answer box]
- If you are/were unable to provide reference and/or instructional services, what activities did you engage in instead? [Long-text answer box]
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience working in archival reference and/or instruction during a pandemic? If so, please use the below text box to share your experiences. [Long-text answer box]

Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey! Please feel free to share this survey with your colleagues who work in academic archives and special collections to provide reference and instructional services, if you are comfortable with doing so.

COVID-19 is a sensitive and often anxiety-provoking topic. If this survey brought up any anxieties for you, you may want to take advantage of one or more of these mental health resources:

- [Mental Health and COVID-19 Information and Resources](#) from Mental Health America
- [Coping with COVID-19 Anxiety](#) from the Ohio Department of Health
- [Coping with Stress](#) from the CDC
- [Taking Care of Your Emotional Health](#) from the CDC
- [Disaster Distress Helpline](#) (1-800-985-5990) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Again, thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey—I sincerely appreciate your feedback!