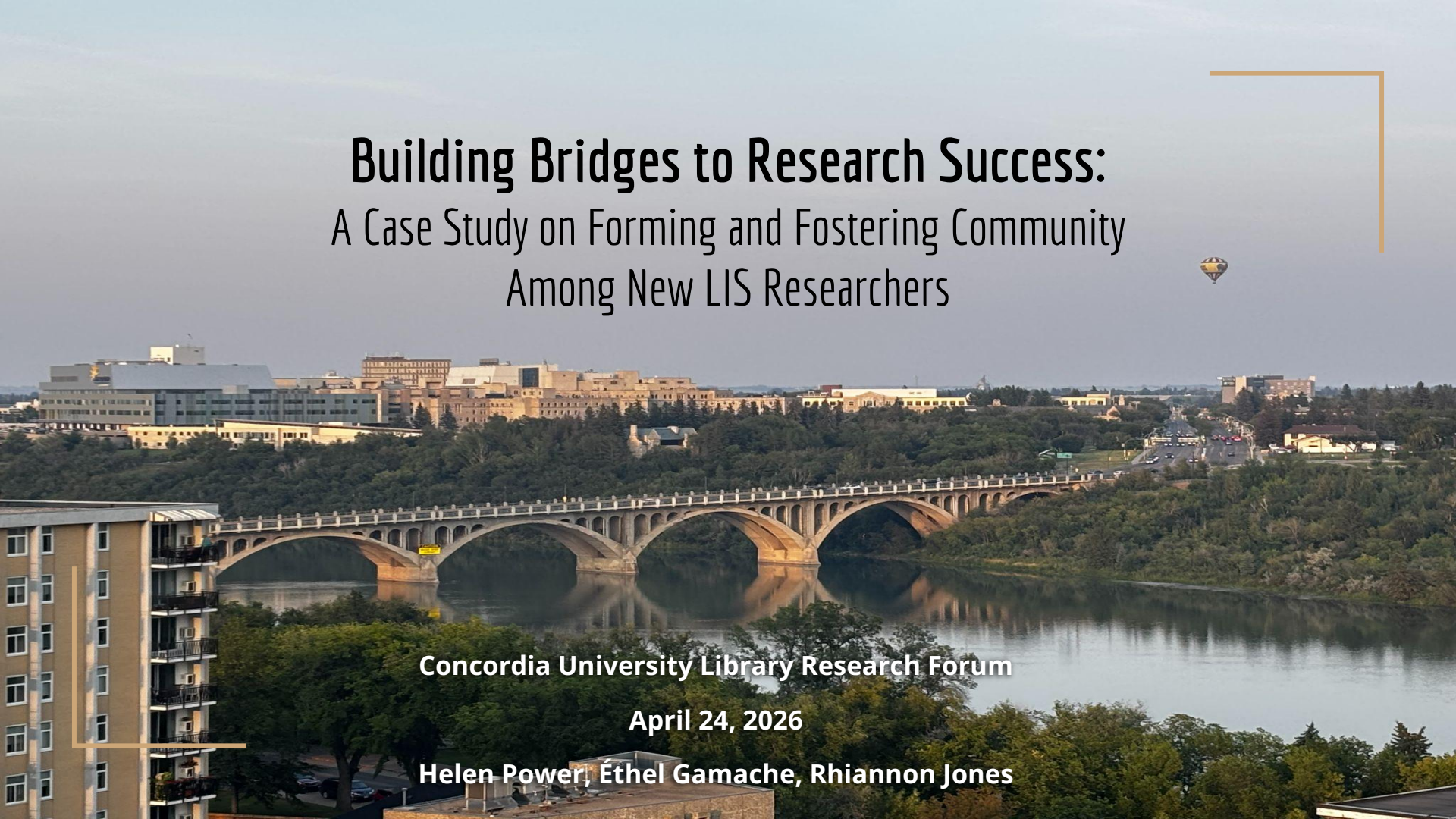




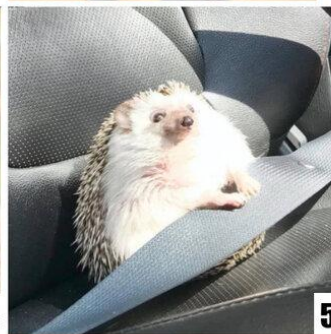
Building Bridges to Research Success: A Case Study on Forming and Fostering Community Among New LIS Researchers

Concordia University Library Research Forum

April 24, 2026

Helen Power, Éthel Gamache, Rhiannon Jones

Check-in
How are you
today?



Agenda

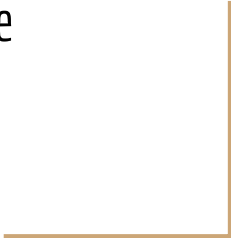
- On the importance of community in research
-Literature Review
- Our program
- Community building
- Study results
- Conclusions





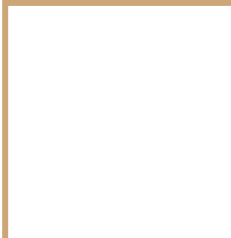
The Importance of Community in Research

From the Literature



On the importance of community in research - Literature Review

- Despite the research and scholarship aspects of academic librarianship, many librarians struggle with the process (Hoffmann, Berg, & Koufogiannakis, 2014; Tysick & Babb, 2006).
- Ackerman et al. (2018) surveyed untenured early career librarians and found that few had access to formal support and relied on informal mentoring opportunities or additional coursework in different disciplines.
- Barriers to research productivity include: time (Ackerman et al., 2018; Fallon, 2022; Fennewald, 2008; Hoffmann et al., 2014; Kennedy & Brancolini, 2018), **lack of community** (Kennedy & Brancolini, 2018), **lack of confidence** (Berg & Banks, 2016; Kennedy & Brancolini, 2018; Tysick & Babb, 2006).



Our Program



Our Program

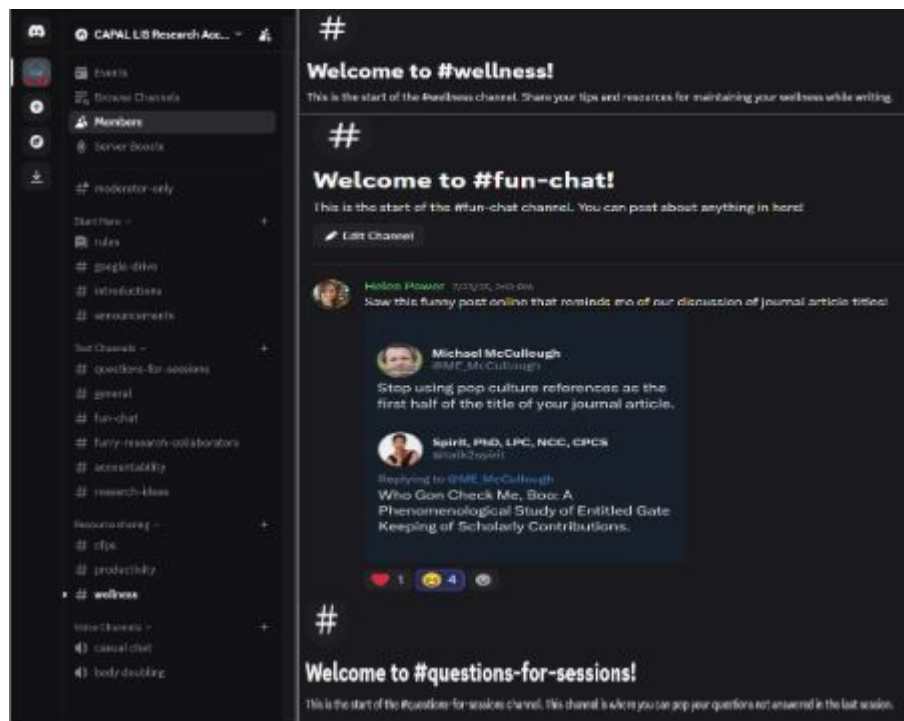
How it came to be:

- Prototype in Summer 2023: 12 weeks of Belcher's *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 weeks*
- Desire to study the program's impacts: reconducting it with Ethics' approval to perform surveys and follow an observation protocol
- Formalizing the program with a participation certificate from a relevant national association
- Under CAPAL's Education and Professional Development Committee

Program Design and Participants

- Series of six 1.5-hour workshops over the summer of 2025
- Offered through Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians
- 37 participants, 36 consented to participate in study
- Certificate granted to participants who were members of CAPAL and who attended at least 5 out of 6 sessions
- Multiple surveys to assess research readiness
- Discord page and activities to encourage community building

Our Summer



LIS Research Accelerator 2025 edition		
Weeks	Dates	Themes
1	July 9	Welcome to the LIS Research Accelerator
2	July 16	Designing Research: Setting the stage for a successful research project
3	July 23	Working on Writing
4	July 30	Developing Evidence and Interpretation
5	August 6	Strengthening our Structure
6	August 13	Preparing for Publishing



Building a Community



During and between sessions

The sessions were held online, on Zoom. Different activities fostered a sense of camaraderie and belonging. (Thompson & Carello, 2022; Pacansky-Brock, 2017)

- Ice breakers,
- Padlet (real-time collaborative web platform),
- Zoom whiteboards,
- Zoom chat,
- Zoom breakout rooms.

Discord is a social platform allowing instant messaging, voice and video calls, as well as media. It resembles chat rooms.

We used the [CAPAL Code of Conduct](#).

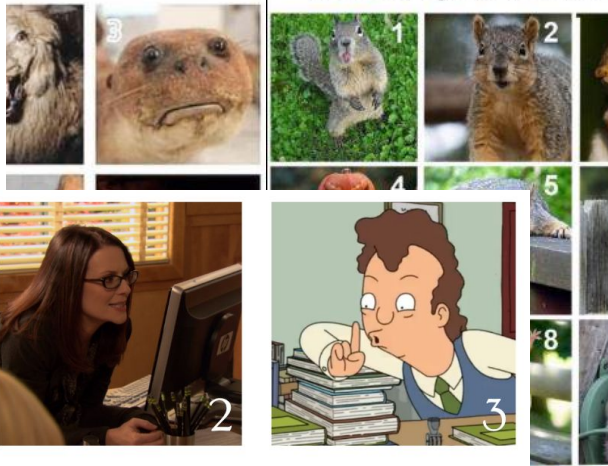
Between sessions: take-home activities encouraged using Discord and adding to Padlets.

Ice Breakers - How are you today? Scales

On a scale of Renaissance child how are you feeling today?



On this squirrel scale how do you feel today?



On this squirrel scale how do you feel today?



Padlet

Padlet

helenpower1 + 25 + 9mo

Wellness

Search Slideshow Share Sign up for Padlet

- Go for a walk (3)
- take breaks (0)
- Lots of tea (2)
- Iced Coffee! (4)
- Read a chapter, doodle (0)
- Pet a cat (2)
- meditation (0)
- pet my cat (5)
- Run (0)
- ride my bike (0)
- Go for a run (0)
- Do some yoga (1)
- Exercise (0)
- Gardening (1)
- Drink a glass of water (0)
- Get some fresh air (0)
- stop doomscrolling (7)
- Ranting to a friend to talk it out (3)
- Eating sweet things (1)
- retail therapy (0)
- read fiction (1)
- Stop and make a snack :) (1)
- calm music (0)
- Big stretch! (1)
- Dance party! (3)
- hug break with partner (0)
- Weekly game nights with friends (1)
- Gaming (1)
- Bounce ideas off my partner! (0)
- sleep (0)
- Craft break (0)
- Scream into the void (jk, sometimes I go outside and sit in nature for a min) (4)
- Watching a show with a friend (0)
- craft (0)
- Meal Prepping (0)
- nature (0)
- crochet! (2)
- power naps (2)
- yoga and ice coffee (0)
- Rewarding myself with a little treat (within reason) (1)
- stardew valley (2)
- zumba classes (1)
- Crosswords, Sudoku, logic puzzles (1)
- Painting (1)
- Taking the dog for a walk. 🐕 (0)

Whiteboards - Where to submit a manuscript? Activity

Mix and Match



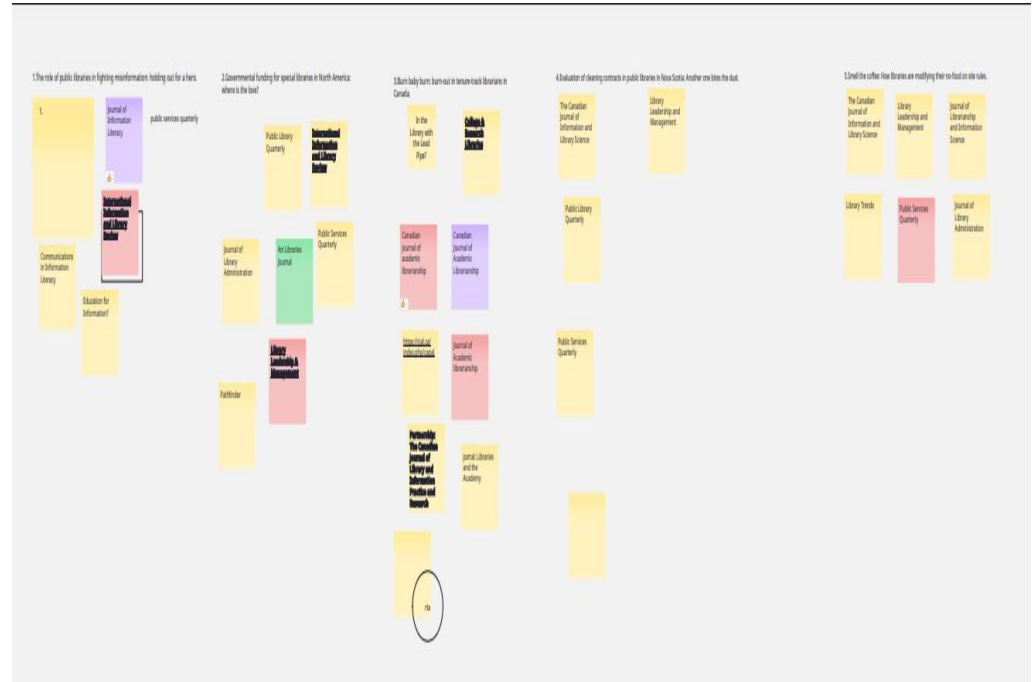
8 mins
Zoom whiteboard
All participants - collaborative

Here are five fictional titles. Match them to 3 existing LIS journals where you would submit them. You can select any LIS journal, in English and/or French, published in North America.

1. The role of public libraries in fighting misinformation: holding out for a hero.
2. Governmental funding for special libraries in North America: where is the love?
3. Burn baby burn: burn-out in tenure-track librarians in Canada.
4. Evaluation of cleaning contracts in public libraries in Nova Scotia: Another one bites the dust.
5. Smell the coffee: How libraries are modifying their no-food on site rules.

Note: This activity also aims to have you explore existing LIS peer-review journals publishing in North America.

Whiteboards - Where to submit a manuscript? Results



Zoom Chat

For individual, reflective activities.

Common Genres' Structures

Newspaper articles

- Objective reporting of facts (not supposed to be argumentative)
- Inverted pyramid structure – where most important information is first

Newspaper editorials

- Persuasive and argumentative, but not evidence-based

Magazine articles

- Anecdotal narrative followed by a “lede”, which is the pivotal part of the article guiding readers in reading the rest

Blog posts

- Informal and highly individualized

Mystery novels

- There shouldn't be plot twists in your journal article

Non-Western texts

- Note that these might not follow the macrostructure of the journal article

Breakout rooms - to deepen discussions on a specific topic

Pick what you need (recap) – writing discussion



Breakout rooms:

- Choose your breakout room according to what you want to discuss (free-flowing conversation).
 - Jump from a room to another room, as you need.
 - Integrate your ideas in your writing in the "Writing" breakout room (the only room for solo work).
- Research question (discussion)
 - Methodologies (discussion)
 - Ethics (discussion)
 - Literature review (discussion)
 - Introduction (discussion)
 - Abstract (discussion)
 - Conclusion (discussion)
 - Writing (solo work, with good company)

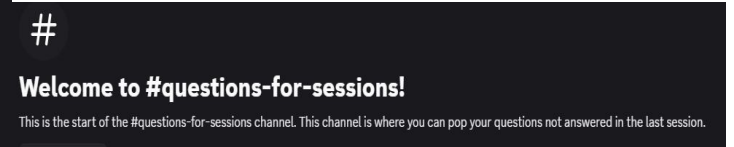
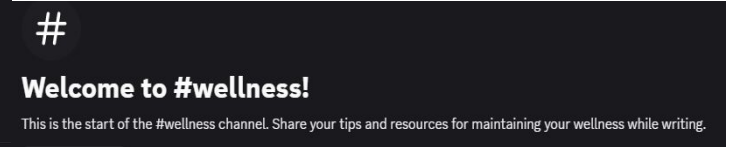
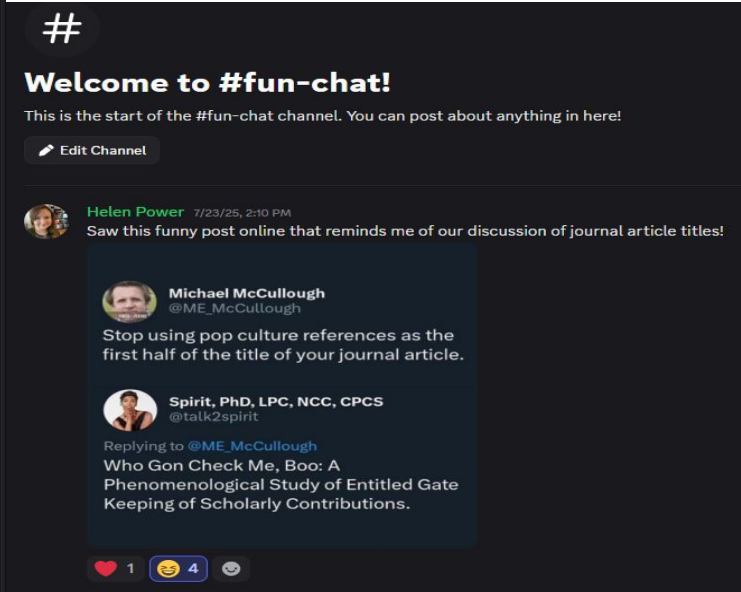
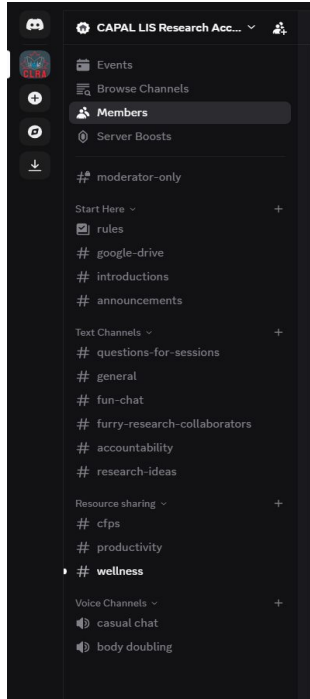


15 mins
Breakout rooms
Participants choose their breakout rooms – invited to move around as needed.

Discord

- Used for accountability, bouncing ideas, sharing feedback in between sessions.
- Channels for introducing oneself, sharing productivity and wellness tips, resources, questions, reflexions.
- Channels for working alongside other participants.
- Used for take-away activities.

Discord



Building community with discussion and engagement

We fostered both synchronous and asynchronous communication, including both formal and informal opportunities for discussion and engagement.

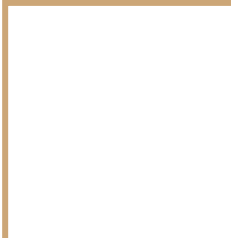
The lesson plans for sessions were organized in such a way to encourage relationship building among participants through small breakout rooms and group activities.

These multiple pathways for connection provided participants with opportunities to engage at their comfort levels.

On social forums and rituals

*“Like some of our colleagues, we sometimes designate weekly themes for social forums such as “Pet Week,” “Hobby Week,” or “Favorite Song Week” where students post pictures of their pets, pastimes, and pleasures. Other instructors share weekly puzzles, inspirational quotes, or mindfulness activities. **These types of social activities and rituals help humanize students and instructors and help class members develop a sense of community and connection.**”*

- Thompson, P., & Carello, J. (2022). *Trauma-informed pedagogies : a guide for responding to crisis and inequality in higher education*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92705-9> (p.211)



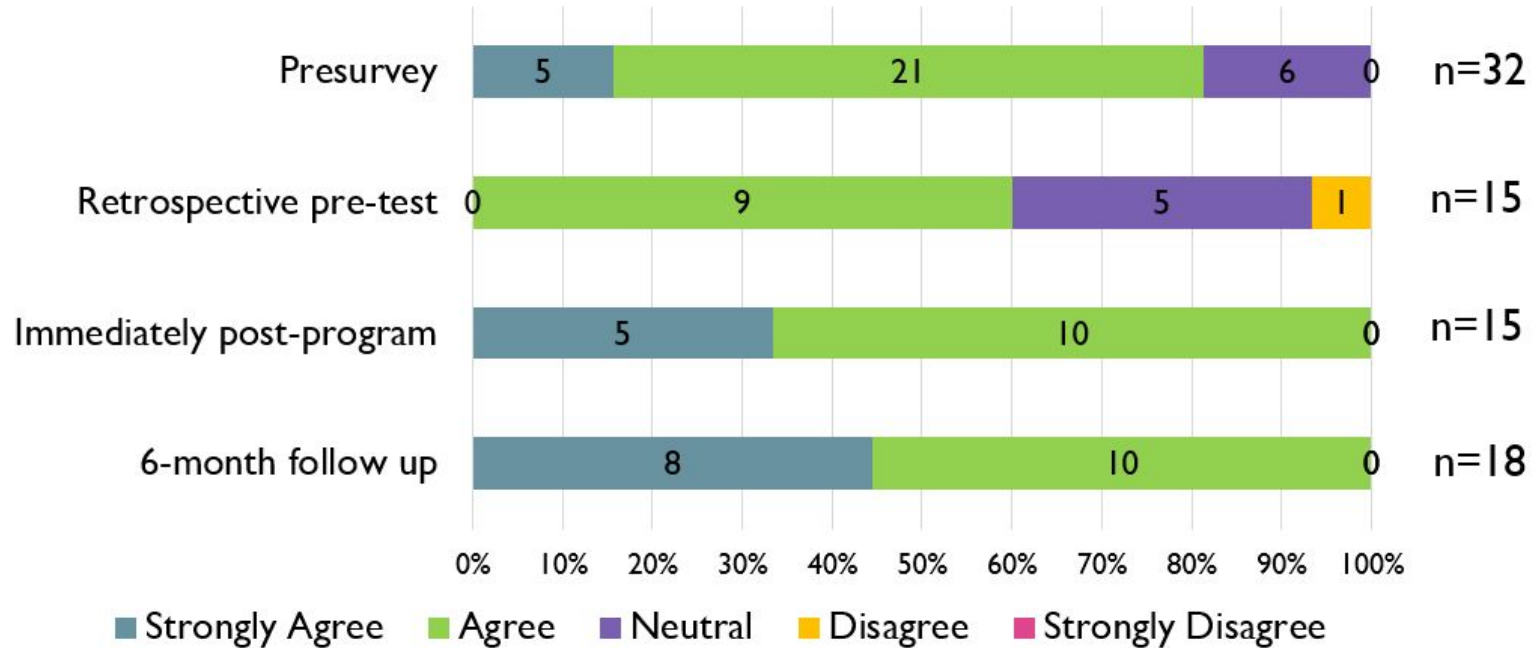
Survey Results



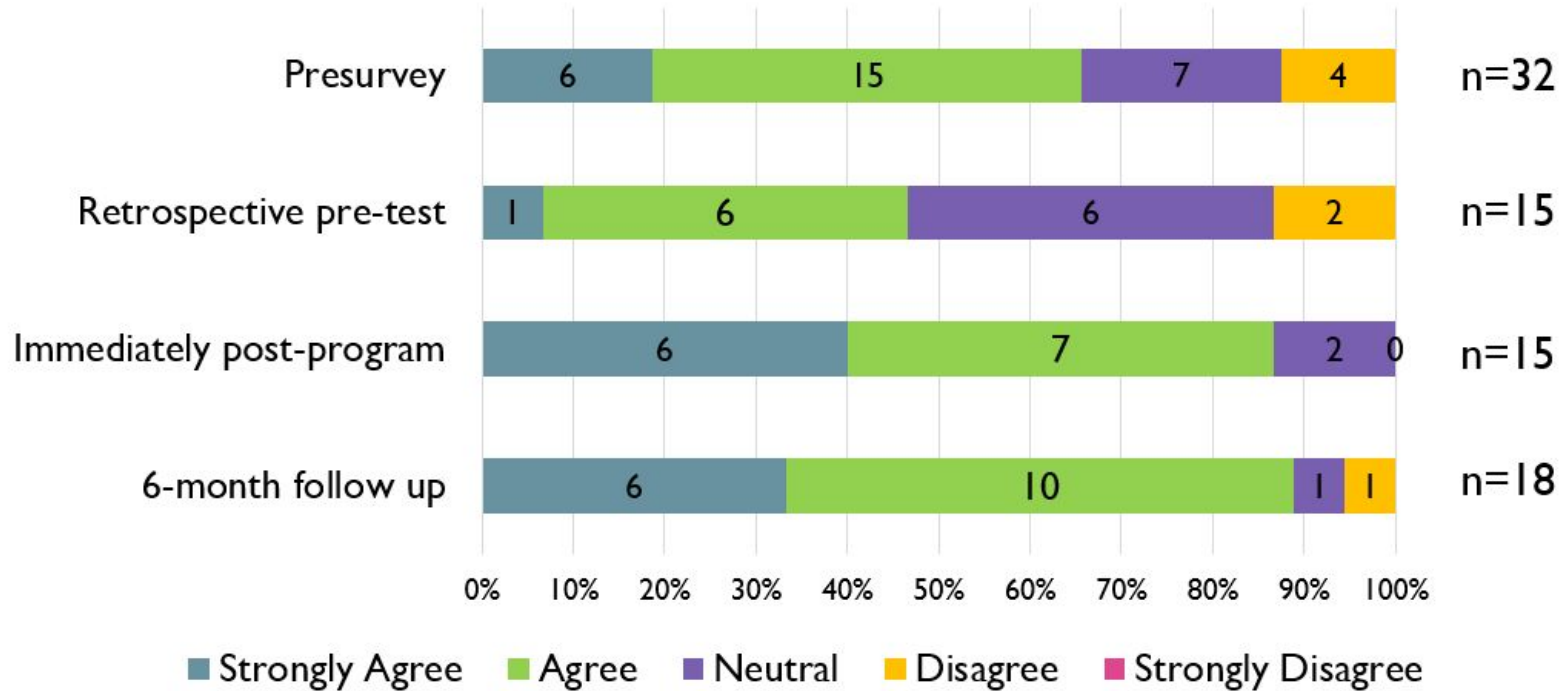
Methodology

- Anonymous surveys - participants assigned a code
 - Pre-program survey
 - Mid-point survey
 - Immediate post-sessions survey
 - 6-month follow-up survey
- Observation protocol
 - General interactions, chat engagement, activity involvement
 - Individuals who did not consent to study were not observed
- Approved by UCalgary Research Ethics Board (Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB))
 - Alternately approved by USask Research Ethics Board and by Concordia University's Human Research Ethics Committee

Participants Self-Reported Skill Level



Participants Self-Reported Confidence Level



Publishing Outcomes

Immediate Post-Survey, n = 15

Q: Did you complete a draft during the program?

8 completed a draft

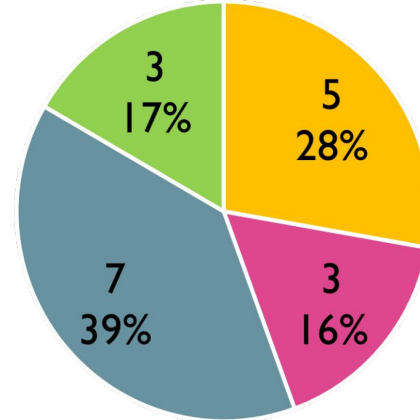
- Including research/grant proposals, a book chapter, an independent study project

7 did not complete a draft

- Some were not actively working on a project, and were attending to learn and acquire resources throughout the program

6-Month Follow Up, n = 18

Q: Have you successfully published/presented something as a direct result of this program?



■ Yes

■ I've submitted, & I'm waiting to hear back

■ I haven't submitted, but I intend to

■ I don't intend to submit in the near future

Pre-Survey, n=32

Q: What would you like to know more about during the Research Accelerator Program?

2 respondents (**6.25%**) commented that they were hoping to connect with other new researchers through this program.

- “I’m especially eager to build confidence in the early stages of the research process and to **connect with others** who are also developing their research skills.”
- “**Exposure to other researchers across the spectrum** - from new researchers to more experienced/confident researchers.”

Mid-Point Survey, n=25

Q: What has been the most important piece of information you've learned so far that will aid you in your research endeavors?

7 respondents (**28%**) commented on the benefit of talking through their research with others in the group:

- “[T]alking to others about their projects and experiences can offer valuable insights, spark new ideas, and help avoid common pitfalls. These conversations often reveal practical strategies and perspectives that aren't found in textbooks or articles.”
- “working through research with a supportive group and instructors.”

2 respondents (8%) indicated appreciation for the format of the sessions

- “It's a mix of the lesson and breakout rooms that is making this impactful for me.”

Six-Month Post-Session Survey, n=18

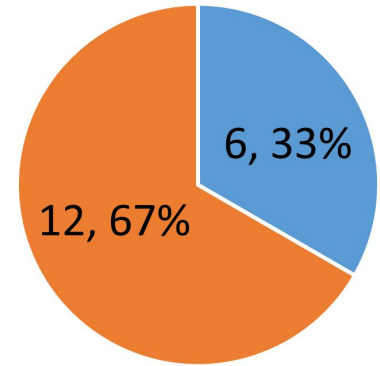
Q: Have you connected with the cohort community?

The 2 with lower confidence levels (neutral or disagree), both reported “No” for this question.

Those who indicated “Yes” for this question were:

Strongly agree (3) or Agree (3) for skill level and Strongly agree (3) or Agree (3) for their confidence level.

*Small sample sizes, but worth exploring whether the peer connection between members of a cohort increases perceived skill- and/or confidence-level in future studies



■ Yes ■ No

Six-Month Post-Session Survey Continued, n=18

Q: How has staying connected with the cohort community impacted your confidence/knowledge?

4 participants responded to this follow-up question

3 commented on how it boosts morale / moral support to have other participants in the same situation.

- “[C]hatting with them made me realize that not everyone is a whiz at research and we're all in similar places, no matter our backgrounds, which **makes me feel less alone or "unskilled"**. Thus, this has boosted my confidence and my comfort when approaching research / presenting / publishing”

Six-Month Post-Session Survey Continued, n=18

Q: Is there anything else that we haven't mentioned that you would like to tell us about?

3 participants commented the broader theme of connection and community

- 1 stated they wished they had had more time to connect with their cohort
- 2 indicated they benefited from the opportunity to connect with other LIS professionals and a "community who understand[s] me."

Other Community-Related Comments

General comments on community throughout responses to other, unrelated questions:

- "I've started looking at my topic in different ways based on what's hooked other participants' interest in my topic." (Midpoint survey)
- "Meeting others and making professional connections has also been really helpful." (Midpoint survey)
- "[T]hrough conversations with other participants it was great to hear I wasn't alone in my feelings about not being super stoked on writing lit reviews!" (Immediate post-survey)

Conclusions

- Community and relationship building is important in a research program.
- Future studies could examine this more directly.
- Explore how to incorporate even more opportunity for facilitator-participant relationship building.
- Next facilitation: summer 2027.

Thank you! Questions?

Questions and compliments:

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Éthel Gamache ethel.gamache@concordia.ca

Complaints:

Rhiannon Jones: rc.jones@ucalgary.ca



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