

## The Quarterly Interview: Samantha Harlow

### UNC Greensboro

-Edited Transcript-

**LOEX:** *Where do you work? What is your job title and what are your main responsibilities? How long have you been in this position?*

**Harlow:** I work at the University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG) as the Online Learning Librarian and liaison to the academic departments of Community and Therapeutic Recreation, Kinesiology, and Public Health Education. As the Online Learning Librarian, I help create and manage research tutorials, provide instructional technology training to librarians, and work with librarians, instructors, and students to support and create virtual programming about research in online courses and programs. I also recently took over UNCG's Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives with our Student Success Librarian Melody Rood.

*Congratulations on winning the DLS Routledge Distance Learning Librarianship award! How did you become interested in being an online learning librarian, and what parts of your job inspire and challenge you most? What qualities do you think are especially important of someone in your role to have?*

My path to my current job was long! When I first graduated from the School of Information and Library Science at UNC Chapel Hill, I worked in archives and digital projects. I then got a job at High Point University (a small, private university in North Carolina) as the Media & Digital Services Librarian. Since this was a small school, I wore many hats. I worked with reference librarians on instructional technology training for faculty and students, which led me to become an Instructional Technology Consultant at the UNCG School of Education. In this role, I helped and trained instructors and faculty on instructional design and implementing courses through our UNCG learning management system, Canvas. This set me up perfectly to apply for the Online Learning Librarian position when it was posted because it combined my experience and interest in instructional design, online courses, learning management systems, and helping with research. The thing I like the most about my job is helping online students. Many times online students do not think they get the same services and support as face-to-face students, so providing them with consultations, online information literacy instruction, and virtual research workshops and competitions gives me opportunities to support them and learn about their unique research projects and life stories.

I think and hope that in this COVID-19 world, there will be more jobs like mine available in academic libraries, especially considering that every school now has to start focusing on online learning, even if they did not have any online programs or courses before COVID-19. If you are interested in having a job like mine, I would recommend gaining experience in your job or library school coursework or practicum with: instructional design, information literacy, scholarly communication, open educational resources (OER), creating online learning objects, accessibility and universal design for learning, and being able to work collaboratively with departments outside of the library, such as information technology, instructional designers, advisors, and administrators.

*You've written and presented about your work creating programs and services for graduate students in online programs. What programs and services have you found to be most effective? How do you involve and support other librarians at your institution who are also working with these students?*

When I first started in this position around 3 years ago, I sent out a survey about information needs to any student taking an online course, and we found that online students wanted to be included in research workshops; this led me to look into ways to collaborate across the university on creating virtual programming for graduate students. The main addition to programming that students appreciate and is the easiest to execute is providing a synchronous virtual session of pre-existing research workshops through Zoom, Webex, or another similar tool, as well as providing a recording. I helped facilitate this for many research workshops across campus, not just in the library: research poster design, scholarship metrics, open access publishing, research data management, Zotero citation management, and more. We also started inviting graduate students to our [Research and Application](#) programming, a monthly webinar series on library resources and services. And lastly, this year I created a [Webinars Worth Watching](#) competition in collaboration with the UNCG Graduate School; this new program is for face-to-face and online graduate students to determine who can give the most effective webinar or virtual presentation in 10 minutes. This new competition is modeled after [3 Minute Thesis \(3MT\)](#) and was featured in our campus weekly newsletter and on the Graduate School website.

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***How do you support instructors who need to teach online? What are some of their most frequently mentioned needs and interests in terms of library services and programs?***

I try to think of and implement library services to all patrons equitably by aligning with the [ACRL Standards for Distance Learning Library Services](#), which states “all students, faculty members, administrators, staff members, or any other members of an institution of higher education are entitled to the library services and resources of that institution.” Therefore, I believe that working with online instructors means working with them as any research librarian would: by connecting to the overall library information literacy outcomes, as well as aligning with their course student learning objectives either asynchronously or synchronously. UNCG also works on a liaison model, so providing training to our librarians about instructional technology and creating engaging online learning environments helps support all instructors teaching online through their librarian subject specialists. Our students and instructors also use UNCG’s learning management system (LMS) heavily in online courses, so providing many options for being involved in Canvas, our LMS, is crucial. We have a Librarian role in the People tab of Canvas, a SpringShare LibGuides learning tools interoperability (LTI) or application integration to create a Library Resources tab in all Canvas courses, and research tutorials in Canvas Commons (the LMS content repository).

***What is a recent project, service, or program that you’ve helped to create that you’re especially excited about and proud to discuss?***

I mentioned the [Webinars Worth Watching](#) program, but another project that I worked on this academic year was with a [UNCG Libraries Information Literacy Grant](#) with one of my Public Health Education faculty members. We created an online research activity using interactive video to assist with the research component of a group annotated bibliography assignment. In this online public health class, I created an eight-minute video about using PEO (population, exposure, outcomes) to create keywords, searching in library databases versus Google, and citations. This video was integrated in our LMS Canvas with Canvas Studio, and it included a pop up, ungraded quiz. Students then created a video of themselves looking for articles in library health databases and had group discussions around their searching videos.

***You and a co-presenter had a Distance Library Instruction Virtual Poster Session presentation, hosted by the ACRL DLS Instruction Committee, and part of that presentation focused on a challenge that I think many of us face: determining a workflow for creating online tutorials and re-***

***vamping older tutorials. What advice could you give to those of us who are leading similar efforts in our libraries?***

Yes, we are undertaking a “soft launch” of our new suite of research tutorials that are available through [a website](#) and modules within Canvas Commons repository. This was a liaison team effort, where many UNCG librarians designed and created the content for the different tutorials and modules within this suite. In terms of my advice on creating online tutorials or revamping older tutorials, I would definitely suggest working with other librarians at your university. For this project, we also worked closely with the UNCG Information Literacy Coordinator, Jenny Dale, by aligning the tutorials to our [new information literacy student learning objectives](#). Working with a set of learning objectives always makes a redesign or tutorial creation project easier. And lastly, we reused open educational resources (OER) and copyright-free materials from other libraries and librarians, as well as using the free, HTML5 tool H5P and LibWizard to create quick checks and interactions throughout; we did not have to buy any expensive software to make these tutorials.

***What are some of your go-to online tools and programs that you use in your work, both those that are likely familiar to many librarians and some that may be less familiar?***

I like to keep it simple, and use a lot of free and widely known tools such as Trello to stay organized with creating digital learning objects and projects; LibGuides and New Google Sites for website creation; Google Slides for course integrated presentations and embedding in LibGuides; Slide Carnival and Canva for presentation design; YouTube for hosting and creating closed captions; and our learning management system Canvas. Another tool that some librarians in North Carolina and the instructional design world are using is [H5P](#), which we used in our research tutorial revamp. For sustainable use, it’s best to host your H5P content on your institution’s server through something like a WordPress plugin, but it’s easy to use and design interactive tutorials, videos, and questions that can easily be embedded within a website or LMS.

***What are some of your favorite active learning activities to use with online students?***

For synchronous sessions, I use chat and polling tools, such as Mentimeter or Google Forms, to gauge prior knowledge and make sure participants are following the content. I like to build in formative checks through these polls in the webcast. When I have a consult with online students, I always make a Google Doc where they are an editor and we work together on creating permalinks to searching in data-

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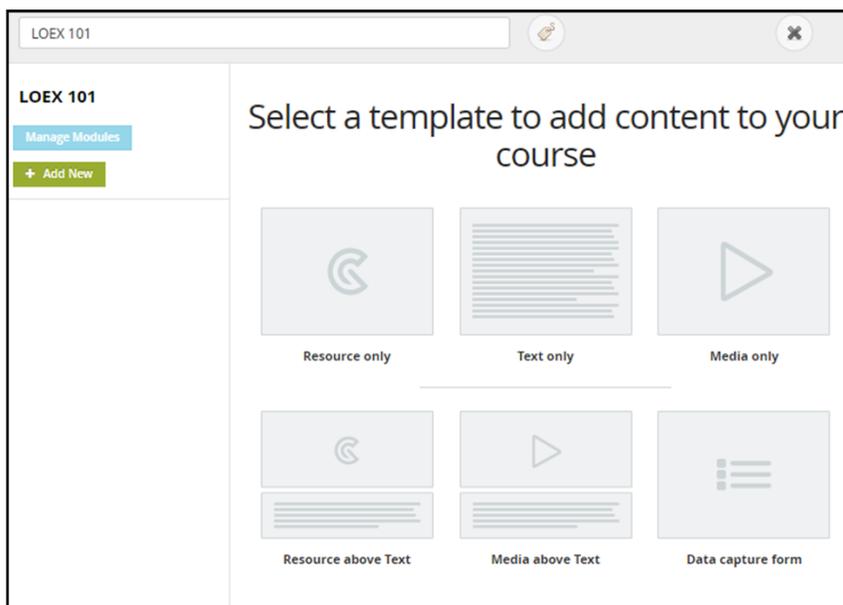
(GoConqr...Continued from page 6)

As you add modules, they will appear on the left hand menu. Once there, you can rearrange them by dragging and dropping. The “Manage Modules” interface allows you to rename a module, add a score weight, and require a minimum score (for flashcards and quizzes) required to proceed to the next module in a sequential course.

### Conclusion

GoConqr’s tools provide a quick and easy way to create a variety of learning assets that you can use to engage your students in our current online only and hybrid teaching environments. You can use these tools to create and share content with your students, or you can have your students become the content creators using these tools to complete assignments, collaborate with classmates, or just share information with one another. Check out GoConqr, and I predict your exploration will spark a few new ideas for engaging your students in online learning.

**Figure 6: Module templates in GoConqr’s course builder tool**



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bases, citation management, and more. For asynchronous learning, I like creating engagement through interactive video using something like Canvas Studio (some free, similar products are PlayPosit and H5P).

#### What books or articles have influenced you?

I usually go to the *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning* for articles when researching online learning and libraries.

- Haber, N., & Mitchell, T. N. (2017). Using Formative & Summative Assessment to Evaluate Library Instruction in an Online First Year Writing Course. *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning*, 11(3-4), 300–313.

This article is a great over view of assessing online library instruction with both formative and summative assessment.

- Skarl, S., & Bosque, D. D. (2019). Going the distance for grads: What online graduate students want from the library. *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning*, 13(1-2), 167-183.

This article is a nice overview of the unique needs of online graduate students, which is an important population I often work with at UNCG.

- Woodward, K. M. (2017). Building a Path to College Success: Advocacy, Discovery and OER Adoption in Emerging Educational Models. *Journal of Library & Information Services In Distance Learning*, 11(1-2), 206–212.

I took over open educational resources (OER) at UNCG Libraries with my colleague Melody Rood in the Fall 2019, and this article is a great example of OER advocacy and programming within academia.