PROJECT REPORT

Critical Citation in a Canadian Context: The Development of Citation Justice Resources at the University of Victoria Libraries

Jessica Mussell
University of Victoria Libraries

Jessie Lampreau
University of Victoria Libraries

Heather Dean
University of Victoria Libraries

This project report provides an overview of a citation justice project developed at the University of Victoria Libraries, a Canadian academic library, as part of a broader library initiative aiming to address inherent biases within traditional scholarly publishing and academic research practices. Leveraging the unique position of libraries and information specialists as partners in the research process, this report details the steps undertaken, lessons learned, and future plans for advancing critical citation and inclusivity in academic scholarship.

Introduction

Critical citation brings into focus the biases of traditional scholarly publishing and academic research practices, which have historically excluded marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, and other People of Colour as well as people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Citation justice is "the act of citing authors based on identity to uplift marginalized voices with the knowledge that citation is used as a form of power in a patriarchal society based on white supremacy" (Coalter n.d.). Citation justice is a proactive approach to ensuring more voices are included and recognized in scholarship through the process of citation. As information specialists, librarians and archivists are well situated to advance critical citation and citation justice within campus communities given their role in advancing information literacy (including citation), their relationships with campus researchers, and their professional responsibilities (Coalter 2023). Indeed, many academic libraries now have resources supporting this work. At the University of Victoria (UVic) Libraries, we recently developed the LibGuide "Citation Justice: A Critical Look at Citation Practices" and launched a workshop on critical citation and citation justice for the campus community, work that directly connects with the Libraries' efforts around information literacy.[1]

A Case for Critical Citation and Citation Justice at the University of Victoria Libraries

UVic Libraries plays a significant role on campus in educating students to become information literate and competent researchers, which, in accordance with the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (Association of College and Research Libraries 2016), necessitates understanding citation practices. The Libraries has a robust network of resources to support citation, including experienced and knowledgeable

---

[1] For readers not familiar with the term *LibGuide*, it is a web-based content management platform that allows libraries to create guides containing information and resources for a specific topic or discipline.

librarians and staff, a webpage dedicated to citation support, and LibGuides on the utilization of citation managers and generators. The Libraries further supports students with citation practices (and academic integrity more broadly) through one-on-one consultation and an extensive teaching program. Librarians themselves are highly networked with students and faculty and across campus communities, including with key partners in Learning and Teaching Innovation (LTI) and the Academic and Technical Writing Program (ATWP). For this reason, teaching critical citation and citation justice is a logical extension of the role UVic Libraries already plays on campus.

In addition to their expertise in information literacy and interconnectedness with the campus community, academic librarians may also feel personally and professionally responsible for furthering new perspectives on traditional research methods and academic publishing. Importantly, competencies for librarians developed by professional associations identify social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion as integral to the profession (American Library Association 2022; Canadian Association of Research Libraries 2020). Even if these commitments can at times be aspirational, there has been increased focus in the profession on social justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, as can be seen in recent conference presentations (Winberry et al. 2021; Tang et al. 2021) as well as explicit statements on library websites (Furner, Ibekwe, and Birdi 2022). However, the fields of librarianship and archival studies have much work still to do (Kendrick 2023; Hathcock 2015; Ettarh 2017).

UVic Libraries' work in this area is broad-ranging and includes guides for anti-racism and anti-oppression (Gupta and Miller 2021), a guide on diversifying sources (Liu and Gupta 2024), and a recently developed *Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Pedagogy Toolkit* (Gupta, Liu, and Lanning 2025). Additionally, UVic Libraries, which is located on the Territory of the lək̓ʷəŋən Peoples in what is now known as Victoria, British Columbia, is engaged in ongoing work to decolonize its spaces, descriptive practices, and collections through formal working committees (such as the Decolonizing Description Task Group and the Decolonizing Spaces Working Group).

The Project: Developing Local Critical Citation Resources for Our Campus Communities

In the fall of 2023, we proposed developing resources on critical citation and citation justice under the auspices of the Libraries' Information Services Working Group, whose mandate is to lead and develop information services and workshops for students, faculty, staff, and the community. The completion timeline for this project was six months, with the expectation of three deliverables to be in place for the start of the fall 2024 academic term: a workshop, LibGuide, and reading list. The goals of the project were multifaceted and included building awareness and advancing critical citation at UVic as well as engaging learners in the deeper ethical issues around citation.

Reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of this topic, we come from three units across the Libraries: the Law Library, Learning and Engagement, and Special Collections and University Archives. Our different perspectives are reflected in the LibGuide, which includes sections on citing Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, primary sources, and—through collaborations with colleagues Shahira Khair and Zahra Premji from the Advanced Research Services unit of the Libraries—information on data justice and evidence synthesis.[2]

Our process was straightforward: We started gathering information on the politics of citation by searching for formally published literature indexed in *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA)* and *Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA)* as well as grey literature (e.g., blogs, websites, guides) indexed in Google. We exported resources including terms such as "critical citation," "citation justice," or "politics of citation" into a Zotero group library. Through examination of the collected literature, ten broad themes emerged: general works, data justice, decolonization, diversity in course reading lists, diversity statements, ethnic diversity and citation, gender and citation, library instruction, positionality, and searching and research.[3] In addition to a literature review, the second prong of our approach was to do an environmental scan of other postsecondary library websites to see how they were presenting content on the politics of citation. In exploring existing materials found through Google and during our literature review, we came

---

[2] As we define in our LibGuide, "the data justice movement is a response to the historical and current methods of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data that erase, misrepresent, or harm marginalized communities. Data justice seeks to redress and prevent further harm to these communities by ensuring their involvement in the design, management, and dissemination of data" (Mussell, Dean, and Lampreau 2025a). We go on to state that "evidence syntheses such as systematic reviews and scoping reviews aim to gather all available evidence on a topic" (Mussell, Dean, and Lampreau 2025d), promoting citation justice by exhaustively collecting all relevant resources, not just what is most readily discoverable.

[3] It should be noted that many of the categories were not mutually exclusive due to the intersectionality among topics, so we did our best to categorize items based on what they were predominantly about. In our research we did not find substantial literature on citation justice as it relates to linguistic diversity and persons with disabilities—clearly areas for further investigation.

across many exemplary resources from both Canadian and American librarians and subsequently reached out to colleagues to inquire about their work.[4]

The broad themes identified through the literature review formed the basis for the LibGuide. The organization of resources reflected our target audience, primarily students and faculty. We prioritized information of more use and value to students by presenting those first in the LibGuide (e.g., what is critical citation, why does it matter, what you can do, tips for researching), followed by information more useful to faculty (e.g., what publishers are doing, diversifying your course reading lists, instruction materials, further reading). We distributed a draft version of the LibGuide for review to members of UVic Libraries' Information Services Working Group in May 2024 and made several improvements based on their feedback. Content was expanded to include sections on evidence synthesis, data justice, and archives, and our static reading list was put into a public-facing Zotero group to promote easier management and sharing of resources.

To complement the LibGuide, we developed and piloted a workshop based on instruction materials originally conceived by Liz Chenevey from James Madison University (2023). The workshop, geared towards students and faculty, explores challenges faced by historically marginalized groups and ways to uplift their voices through examples, group discussions, and a reading activity. We modified the workshop content to include Canadian examples and adjusted the timeframe to align with the fifty-minute standard length of an undergraduate class at UVic. With the project relatively complete, we undertook a final round of internal review in August with key stakeholders, including writing tutors from LTI, the Academic Skills Centre (ASC), faculty and PhD students who teach in ATWP, and interested librarians. This allowed us to test the workshop's content, timing, and hands-on activities before launching in the fall. Piloting the workshop internally was a highly valuable component of the process as it helped us identify any residual issues before launching. Based on this feedback, we included additional opportunities for participant interaction and simplified terminology to make the content more approachable for undergraduate students.

Lessons Learned: Successes and Challenges

Among the successes of our work developing resources supporting critical citation at UVic—beyond raising awareness of citation justice—are the broad and deep collaborations across the Libraries and campus communities and ongoing interdisciplinary conversations. The inclusion of perspectives from different areas of expertise ultimately strengthened the scope of the LibGuide, and our iterative drafting process alongside our extensive consultation with colleagues from across campus provided invaluable feedback.

Since the launch of our citation justice resources in September 2024, we have provided four workshop offerings: two through our public-facing workshop calendar, which attracts a diverse group of participants (anyone can register and attend), and two on request for master's-level courses. An abridged version of the workshop was also included in the events lineup for UVic's British Columbia Academic Integrity Day Celebration. While it is still early, we are seeing traction from faculty who attend our public-facing workshops and subsequently request one-off sessions for graduate courses they are teaching. Our LibGuide is being shared with undergraduates enrolled in ATWP 135, the first-year mandatory academic writing course all UVic students must take to graduate. More recently, our materials were included as one of seventy-two teaching and learning resources for the *Writing & Power: Positions and Policies for Social Change* project led by UVic faculty in the Academic and Technical Writing Program. This project develops effective, accessible, and anti-oppressive forms of academic writing instruction and support for undergraduate and graduate students (Humphreys et al. 2024, 38).

One of the main challenges we experienced throughout this project was ensuring that we integrated critical citation and citation justice resources into course curriculum and standalone sessions carefully and respectfully. As we do not know the lived experience of our audience, moving forward we need to ensure these resources are introduced with a trauma-informed approach. As outlined in the *Culturally Responsive & Inclusive Pedagogy Toolkit*, this approach emphasizes the importance of creating safe, welcoming, supportive, and empowering teaching spaces (Gupta, Liu, and Lanning 2025).[5]

For the three of us, reflecting on the need for thoughtful integration of critical citation and citation justice in our own teaching requires us to reflect on teaching in the Libraries more broadly. Ideally all library instructors would have the time and space needed to meaningfully incorporate this trauma-informed approach on teaching critical citation into their instruction sessions, which goes beyond simply accessing and reusing the workshop slides we have created. Indeed, this topic may spark debate in the classroom, and

---

[4] For a list of critical citation LibGuides that informed our work, see Mussell, Dean, and Lampreau (2025b).

[5] Gupta, Liu, and Lanning's (2025) inclusive and trauma-informed approach to library instruction includes safety; trustworthiness and transparency; peer support; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment, voice and choice; and acknowledgement of cultural, historical, and gender issues.

one challenge instructors might encounter is that not everyone will see the need for or benefit of critical citation practices or how they could practically implement citation justice in their field. Incorporating content into the LibGuide and workshop addressing potential skepticism or pushback was one way we anticipated and sought to provide support for such conversations, but instructors may need more training and support to feel equipped for this work.

Future Plans and Conclusion

Going forward, we see additional opportunities to promote critical citation and citation justice on campus. We could schedule the workshop and promote our resources at times that align with campus events such as Academic Integrity Week, Five Days of Action (an event dedicated to making campus more inclusive), Love Data Week (which promotes the importance of data science and data management), and the Thesis Writers' Intensive (a three-day opportunity for graduate students to make substantial progress on their theses, dissertations, or other graduate projects), all of which invite conversations about the intersection between citation and social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. We may also investigate developing an asynchronous version of the workshop, to provide more access for distance students and allow any user to go through workshop materials at their own pace and convenience.

We recognize the need for deeper engagement with equity, diversity, and accessibility, and we understand that the process of decolonizing and Indigenizing scholarly publishing and cultural heritage work and institutions is complex and nuanced. We acknowledge that while LibGuides, readings lists, and workshops have limitations, we envision these citation justice resources as one of many ways in which librarians and archivists at UVic Libraries can engage locally with this work on campus and as part of the broader community of information professionals.[6] By engaging with ethical questions around citation, we participate in larger professional and cultural transformations that challenge us and our communities to rethink traditional assumptions and understandings about knowledge, which is essential to realizing a decolonial and anti-racist practice.

We are grateful for all the work that has already been done and are excited to see citation justice grow and flourish.

CRediT Author Statement

Jessica Mussell: Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing
Jessie Lampreau: Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing
Heather Dean: Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing

Acknowledgements

Competing Interests

We declare we have no competing interests.

Author Identity

Jessica Mussell (she/her) is a cis-gender, mixed race settler of Scottish and Trinidadian heritage.
Jessie Lampreau (she/her) is cis-gender, Secwepemc, Scottish and French Canadian and a member of Simpcw First Nation.
Heather Dean (she/her) is a cis-gender settler of English and Swedish heritage.

---

[6] For critiques and commentary on the limitations of LibGuides, see Hicks (2015) and Piper, Ameen, and Lowe (2021).

Citation Diversity Statement

We are committed to improving equitable citation practices. Through examination of scholarly profiles publicly available through ResearchGate, Google Scholar, library websites, or conference speaker profiles, roughly thirty of the thirty-four unique authors cited in our reference list (including ourselves) are members of marginalized communities.

References

American Library Association. 2022. "Core Competences." https://www.ala.org/educationcareers/careers/corecomp/corecompetences.

Association of College and Research Libraries. 2016. "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education." https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework.

Canadian Association of Research Libraries. 2020. "Competencies for Librarians in Canadian Research Libraries." https://www.carl-abrc.ca/strengthening-capacity/human-resource-management/core-competencies-21st-century-carl-librarians/.

Chenevey, Liz. 2023. "Teaching the Politics of Citation: Challenging Students' Perceptions." *College & Research Libraries News* 84 (5): 152. https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.84.5.152.

Coalter, Jodi. n.d. "Citation for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Introduction." Michigan State University Libraries. https://libguides.lib.msu.edu/CitationHome/Intro.

Coalter, Jodi H. 2023. "Citation Power: Overcoming Marginalization One Citation at a Time." In *Perspectives on Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Libraries*, 62–77. IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-7255-2.ch004.

Ettarh, Fobazi M. 2017. "Post-ALA Fatigue and 'Nice White Ladies.'" *WTF Is a Radical Librarian, Anyway?* (blog). https://fobaziettarh.com/2017/07/03/post-ala-fatigue-and-nice-white-ladies/.

Furner, Jonathan, Fidelia Ibekwe, and Briony Birdi. 2022. "From Words to Actions: Assessing the Impact of Antiracist Declarations in Library and Information Science." University of Borås. https://doi.org/10.47989/ircolis2202.

Gupta, Aditi, and Sarah Miller. 2021. "Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression." University of Victoria Libraries. https://libguides.uvic.ca/c.php?g=717828&p=5124260.

Gupta, Aditi, Ying Liu, and Robbyn Lanning. 2025. "Culturally Responsive & Inclusive Pedagogy Toolkit." https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/inclusiveteaching/.

Hathcock, April. 2015. "White Librarianship in Blackface: Diversity Initiatives in LIS." *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*. https://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2015/lis-diversity/.

Hicks, Alison. 2015. "LibGuides: Pedagogy to Oppress?" Hybrid Pedagogy. April 16, 2015. https://hybridpedagogy.org/libguides-pedagogy-to-oppress/.

Humphreys, Sara, Loren Gaudet, Jason Collins, and Natalie Boldt. 2024. "Writing & Power: Positions and Policies for Social Change." https://hdl.handle.net/1828/20876.

Kendrick, Curtis. 2023. "Changing the Racial Demographics of Librarians." *Ithaka S+R*. https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.318717.

Liu, Ying, and Aditi Gupta. 2024. "Diversify Your Sources." University of Victoria Libraries. https://libguides.uvic.ca/diversity/home.

Mussell, Jessica, Heather Dean, and Jessie Lampreau. 2025a. "Data Justice." In "Citation Justice: A Critical Look at Citation Practices." University of Victoria Libraries. https://libguides.uvic.ca/critical-citation/data-justice.

Mussell, Jessica, Heather Dean, and Jessie Lampreau. 2025b. "Further Reading." In "Citation Justice: A Critical Look at Citation Practices." University of Victoria Libraries. https://libguides.uvic.ca/critical-citation/resources.

Mussell, Jessica, Heather Dean, and Jessie Lampreau. 2025c. "Citation Justice: A Critical Look at Citation Practices." University of Victoria Libraries. https://libguides.uvic.ca/critical-citation.

Mussell, Jessica, Heather Dean, and Jessie Lampreau. 2025d. "Tips for Researching & Searching." In "Citation Justice: A Critical Look at Citation Practices." https://libguides.uvic.ca/critical-citation/tips-for-searching.

Piper, Gemmicka, Mahasin Ameen, and M. Sara Lowe. 2021. "An Investigation of Anti-Black Racism LibGuides at ARL Member Institutions." *Communications in Information Literacy* 15 (2). https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2021.15.2.3.

Tang, Rong, Xan Goodman, Rebecca Davis, Jia Tina Du, Bridgett Pride, and David Leonard. 2021. "Antiracism in the LIS Profession: Not Just Lip Service." *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 58 (1): 647–50. https://doi.org/10.1002/pra2.519.

"UVic Libraries – Critical Citation – Politics of Citation – Reading List." 2025. Zotero. Compiled by Jessica Mussell, Heather Dean, and Jessie Lampreau. https://www.zotero.org/groups/5424261/uvic_librar-ies_-_critical_citation_-_politics_of_citation_-_reading_list/library.

Winberry, Joseph, LaVerne Gray, Jean Hardy, Baheya Jaber, and Bharat Mehra. 2021. "Conceptualizing Relevance of Information as a Social Justice Issue: An Interactive Panel Discussion." *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 58 (1): 667–72. https://doi.org/10.1002/pra2.524.