



Statistical Consultation

Department of Psychology

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GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE CONSULTATION:

- ➔ **Plan ahead.** Because of the high demand for services, meetings are scheduled at least 1-2 weeks in advance. During certain times of the year, scheduling may take longer. Further, multiple meetings may be required to adequately address your questions. Please plan accordingly if you have an upcoming deadline. In general, the consultation will be more effective the earlier I am involved in the project. Consider setting up a *Project Planning* meeting prior to data collection (see "[Appointment Types](#)").
- ➔ **Expect a meeting.** I try to respond to questions over email when possible; however, some questions may seem relatively simple, but are not sufficiently addressed with a quick response via email. Please be aware that it could take a week or two before you receive an answer to your question. Often, an in-person discussion is more productive and efficient than consultation over email, and I may request a meeting.
- ➔ **Do your homework.** To get the most out of our meeting, it is best to be prepared with as much information about the project as possible. See "[Preparing for the Meeting](#)" on the next page for tips. Students should work with their mentors prior to the consultation to develop ideas about different approaches to data analysis that may be best suited to the content area and methodologies. If seeking an *Analysis Consult*, it is best if you have exhausted other resources (e.g., books, articles, online resources, other team members) before setting up a meeting.

Note: Feel free to contact me to determine whether I have sufficient expertise in the analytic approach you plan to use for your project. **My primary areas of expertise are** path analysis (including moderation and mediation), structural equation and latent variable modeling, multilevel modeling, longitudinal data analysis, analysis of dyadic data (and other cases of interdependence). If I am not a good fit for the project, I will do my best to refer you to other resources.

APPOINTMENT TYPES

PROJECT PLANNING

If you are in the early stages of planning a project, you can set up a meeting to discuss potential approaches to data analysis which may inform project design. Typically 30 minutes is sufficient for a planning meeting.

ANALYSIS CONSULT

Schedule an analysis consult if you are actively analyzing your data, and have encountered challenges, have questions about the best way to proceed with an analysis, or suspect that there may be a better approach to analyzing the data. Meeting times range from 30-60 minutes depending on the extent of the consultation.

COURSE PLANNING

Students can schedule a brief appointment to discuss plans for quantitative training within the psychology department, in other departments at UNL, and at regional and national workshops and conferences.

To schedule an appointment:

Email rebecca.brock@unl.edu with: (a) purpose of the meeting, (b) basic information about the project, and (c) your general availability for scheduling purposes (keeping in mind that the earliest available meeting time might not be for a couple of weeks).

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

A few things to consider prior to the appointment:

TIMELINE AND DEADLINES

Is there a formal deadline (e.g., for a grant or fellowship submission)? By what date do you need the [data analysis section](#) completed? It is important to work out a timeline given that I often have competing demands for similar deadlines.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

What are the primary aims and hypotheses? The more specifics you have worked out prior to the meeting, the better. For example, what are the key variables (IVs and DVs) and the direction of the paths among those variables? Are variables continuous or categorical? Do you have any moderation or mediation hypotheses? What about statistical controls?

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Do you have multiple measures of a construct? Repeated measures? What is a feasible sample size for the project? Are data nested? These details are important for selecting the best analytic approach for your data.

ROLE EXPECTATIONS

What role do you want me to have in the project? Do you need a couple of brief consultations or do you anticipate my direct involvement in the analyses?

WHAT TO BRING

Ideally, you will bring a diagram/figure with the conceptual model to the meeting. Other materials such as output from prior analytic attempts, syntax, etc. are also very useful.

Some of these details will be worked out during the consultation; however, thinking through these issues in advance—to the extent possible—will result in a more productive meeting.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

If you are seeking consultation for a **MERP or dissertation...**

- 🌀 We will discuss the various data analytic approaches you might consider for your project given your aims and hypotheses, which should be developed in advance of the meeting *with your advisor*. Because this discussion often informs the methods and aims of the project, it is advisable to include me early in the planning process.
- 🌀 If you don't have experience in the data analytic approach selected for the project, you will be expected to complete your own training via independent readings, coursework, and/or workshops. It is important that you are able to take the lead when analyzing the data, with the expectation that you may consult with me throughout the process.

If you are planning to submit a **fellowship application or grant proposal...**

- 🌀 I encourage you to meet with me at least 1-2 months in advance of the deadline to ensure adequate time for planning and developing the proposal. Often, I am assisting with multiple proposals corresponding to the same deadline (in addition to other commitments) and need sufficient time to devote to each project. It can also be helpful to consider data analytic approaches early in project development as this often has implications for the methods and aims.
- 🌀 For federally-funded grants, you might invite me to be a co-investigator on the project so that I can assist with preparing relevant sections of the grant. If the grant is funded, as a co-investigator, I will be available to consult with the team; however, I will not necessarily take a lead role in data analysis (see below for more information about involvement in manuscript preparation).
- 🌀 Depending on the content area and methodologies, I may not be the best fit for the project (or may be unavailable), so early consultation is important to ensure adequate time to locate alternative resources.

If you are preparing a **poster, presentation, or manuscript...**

- 🌀 You may want to consult with me about different approaches to data analysis that would capitalize on the unique features of your data. I can refer you to resources (e.g., books, articles, software programs) to assist with the implementation of new analytic methods. Or, I am available if you have encountered a roadblock and need some help problem-solving.
- 🌀 Often, you or someone else will lead the data analysis, and I will provide limited consultation. But, in some cases, you may ask me to play a more significant role (i.e., conducting parts of the analysis, writing sections of the results and discussion, or providing detailed feedback on the write-up of the results). In these circumstances, role expectations, anticipated timeline, and authorship should be discussed as early as possible.