ASSESSMENT, YOUR LIBRARY, AND YOUR COLLECTIONS

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Why Assessment?
- Moves your library in the right direction
- Aligns your services with your plans, goals, and desired outcomes
- Provides evidence for improvements in services
  - Increased productivity
  - Lower costs
  - Better customer service
- Demonstrates the library value to its stakeholders

Culture of Assessment = Culture of Improvement

This will work in YOUR library!
Culture of Assessment
- Evidence-based decisions
- Decisions are based on facts, research, and analysis

Assessment data allow libraries to...
- Monitor progress toward achieving:
  - Goals:
    - An observable and measurable end result.
    - An ideal state that the library is stretching towards.
  - Outcomes:
    - The situation that exists at the end of an activity of process.
    - The measurable impact on the user.

And...
- Measure effectiveness for different target audiences
- Define problems accurately
- Reveal areas that require more study

Types of Assessment
- **Diagnostic**: Conducted before the proposed action to determine the current status, the needs of patrons, the context, and attitudes toward the proposed change
- **Formative**: Conducted throughout the project to assess the ongoing alignment with goals and outcomes, any gaps and problem areas, suggested areas for revision and refocusing
- **Summative**: Conducted at the conclusion of the project to determine effectiveness and quality

Community: What do you need to know?
- Background
- Interests
- Capabilities
- Areas for growth
- What else?

ASSESSING YOUR COMMUNITY
Community: Sample Methods to Consider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>More Creative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Review existing information</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Surveys</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interviews</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Structured</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Semi-structured</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Patrons or other staff</td>
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<td>• Self-report</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Checklists</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Voting using colored strips of paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• &quot;Posters&quot; where agreement can be registered (and notes made)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASSESSING LIBRARY SERVICES

Services: What do you need to know?

• What services are being used
  • Any that aren’t obvious?
• How the library space is being used
• Which services are perceived as useful
• Which services are perceived as frustrating
• What new services are desired

Services: Methods to Consider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>More Creative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Review of existing records</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Formal</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Informal</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Peer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Self-reports</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Library heat map</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Vote for favorite services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interview each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Card sort activities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Collections: What do you need to know?

• Is the collection meeting the needs of the community
• What needs to change
Collections: Methods to Consider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>More Creative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Analyze circulation data</td>
<td>• Show me…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Look at similar libraries &amp; their holdings</td>
<td>• Tell me…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many other methods…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATA COLLECTION TIPS

Collecting Data – A Few Golden Rules

- Explain everything clearly. Don’t assume.
- Arrange questions in logical sequence.
- Avoid leading questions.
- Always run pilot and revise.
- Analyze all the results.
- Do not make claims data do not support.
- Acknowledge your sources and assistants.

What Goes Wrong?

- Data are not collected.
- Data that are collected aren’t useful.
- Too many data points are collected, preventing timely analysis.
- Data are collected…but no actions are taken.
- Evaluation is done by accident.
- The belief that there is only one right way to conduct evaluation.

- Are the data and results defensible?

Communicating Assessment Results

- Communicate your message in a way that others understand it.
- Communicate
  - Why you did the assessment
  - What you wanted to learn
  - What you did learn
  - Which method(s) you used
  - Any limitations to the data
  - Use text and visuals
  - What’s in it for them (institution)?
  - How does this connect with the institution’s goals?
What if time is an issue?

- If you had 30 seconds to communicate about this project, what would you say?
- If you could use 10 words, what would you say?
- If you could use 3 words, what would you say?

- Who would you deliver this message to?

Q&A