OLAQ

Volume 19 , Number 1
Measuring Success (Spring 2013) | Pages

July 2014

Volume 19, Issue 1

(2014). Volume 19, Issue 1. *OLA Quarterly, 19*(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/1093-7374.1737

OLA Quarterly is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association | ISSN 1093-7374

OLA Quarterly

Measuring Success

Spring 2013 Vol 19 • No 1

OLAQ

OLA Quarterly
Spring 2013
Vol 19 • No 1

Oregon Library Association
http://www.olaweb.org
ISSN 1093-7374

The ***OLA Quarterly*** is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association. Please refer questions and input regarding the ***Quarterly*** to:

Sara Kelso
OLA Quarterly Coordinator
Cornelius Public Library &
Sherwood Public Library
sara.kelso@gmail.com

Graphic Production:
Tobias Weiss Design
7345 SW Deerhaven Drive
Corvallis, OR 97333
phone 541-738-1897
julie@tobiasweissdesign.com
www.tobiasweissdesign.com

Upcoming Issue

Summer 2013

President's Issue

Measuring Success

Introduction

In this era of Big Data it would be tempting to think that we could just put the vast amount of statistics we possess into the computer and someone—possibly Nate Silver—would come along and make sense of it. But the data are often missing or incomplete. We often find ourselves trying to evaluate something that defies our ability to evaluate it.

The Spring 2013 issue of the *OLA Quarterly* asks librarians how they define and approach the problem of measuring performance and success. Meredith Farkas examines how ACRL wants to measure the value of Academic Libraries, and develop a way to evaluate the impact of bibliographic instruction on student success. Sarah Jesudason and Paula Walker share the insights they have gleaned from the Tigard Public Library's yearly patron survey. Rick Stoddart discusses the new OLA Library Assessment Round Table. Aimee Meuchel shares how she changed the focus of the summer reading program to creating life-long readers and not a race for statistics. Laura Mikowski reflects on 18 years of Children's librarianship and the many subjective measures of personal and professional success. Finally, Bob Schroeder takes a lighthearted look at the difficult task of assessing instruction quality.

Co-editors
Karen Muller
Technical Services and Collection Development Manager
Hillsboro Public Library

&

Chris King
Adult Collection Development Librarian
Hillsboro Public Library

Accountability vs. Improvement:
Seeking Balance in the Value of Academic Libraries Initiative

by Meredith Farkas
Head of Instructional Services, Portland State University
mfarkas@pdx.edu

It should come as no surprise to librarians of any type that academic libraries are facing shrinking budgets and rising collections costs. With the growth of the accountability movement in higher education, academic libraries can no longer take for granted their position as "the heart of the campus." In 2009, in response to these trends, ACRL commissioned a study and developed a program focused on finding ways for libraries to demonstrate value and creating a research agenda around the subject of value. This initiative produced *The Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report* (Oakleaf, 2010) as well as a Summit for twenty-two library administrators, their institutional research heads, and their Chief Academic Officers to discuss value-focused topics.

When I first heard about *The Value of Academic Libraries* report, I was excited. It seemed like this initiative could galvanize libraries to move beyond simply reporting outputs — books checked out, classes taught, etc. — and focus on the value of what we do and provide. While I can't say I ever minded the Director at my previous institution praising me for increasing the number of classes we taught, I always felt that the quantity of classes taught was meaningless if we did not know whether students were developing the skills they needed to be successful. If the Value of Academic Libraries movement was focused on outcomes and assessment, I was on-board.

When I read the full study, including the research agenda, I realized I'd had it wrong. The research agenda was largely focused on demonstrating correlations between library collections, instruction, or use and student or faculty success. This was not information designed to help libraries improve; it was focused on libraries showing a relationship between the library and indicators that are meaningful to campus administrators. When a library can show a significant correlation between library usage and student achievement, or even if they can't, what can they do with that data to *improve* student success?

Since the report was published, a number of institutions have published studies focused on demonstrating a significant relationship between library use and student achievement, student retention, and more (Cox & Jantti, 2012; Haddow & Joseph, 2010; Stone, Ramsden, & Pattern, 2011; Wong & Webb, 2011). However, these studies seem focused on providing evidence of the library's value to outside entities, not on actually improving library services. One slightly more promising study recently came out of the University of Minnesota. Their library was engaged in a major initiative to collect data on how students used library resources — collections, instruction, electronic reference, etc. — and to correlate that usage information to demographic data including status, major, and GPA (Nackerud, Fransen, Peterson, & Mastel, 2013). While primarily focused on the correlation between library use and GPA, the study at least gives the library a better idea which majors use the library a great deal and which hardly use it at all.

The values research coming out of these institutions is very interesting, but more focused on accountability than assessment. I'm curious to hear what the University of Minnesota does with this data next, if anything, since the authors freely admit in their upcoming article that, to date, the data has not been used for anything more than demonstrating library value to administrators (Nackerud et al., 2013). Will they use it to realign their collection development priorities or to make the case for instruction in areas that are not using library resources? Libraries have always collected a lot of data; they haven't always been good at using it.

When I began to hear librarians conflating library assessment and library value research as if they were the same thing, I became concerned that perhaps a focus on demonstrating value might discourage librarians from putting their energies into assessment focused on service improvement. It can be difficult to get instruction librarians — or any educators for that matter — to buy into the value of doing assessment. Like those who have conflated assessment and values research, many associate assessment with accountability. In surveying the literature (Haviland, 2009; Hiller, Kyrillidou, & Self, 2008; Lakos & Phipps, 2004; Marrs, 2009), it is clear that many in higher education see assessment as something demanded from above that is not designed at all for their benefit. They fear getting negative results and how those results might be used against them. Many instruction librarians are already pressed for time and feel they know when and whether their students are learning without doing assessment. I will admit that I felt that way as a new librarian until I came to understand that doing assessment was not just about showing the accreditation team that we were doing assessment. Assessments, when well designed, could lead to learning that improves my own teaching and work. Unfortunately, this kind of epiphany tends to come only from actually doing meaningful assessment and learning from the results.

Getting instruction librarians to internalize the value of assessment is hard enough without the focus of assessment shifting from learning to demonstrating value. With that shift, all of those fears about assessment return, because when the focus is on demonstrating value, poor assessment results become a liability. And when librarians fear negative assessment results, they will tend to design "safe" assessments that will provide positive results, but will not likely provide useful results.

Meaningful assessment of student learning is not as neat and clean as values research. Students do not live in controlled settings where they receive a single intervention whose impact can then be measured. Even instructors who work with students for an entire academic term don't know if they are the sole cause of a student's success or failure. Doing pre-tests and post-tests within a single library instruction session is virtually the only way to know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, what impact library instruction has had on a group of students. However, it is through the authentic assessment of student work — the research papers and other works produced in their class — that we can really measure whether students are able to apply what they have learned.

This summer, my colleagues and I are going to be assessing Freshman Inquiry student portfolios using an information literacy rubric we're developing. We will not be able to tell from our assessment what role library instruction played in their success (or lack thereof), but we will have a better sense of where students are having problems and where we need to focus our efforts in the future. Combined with developing a better understanding — through surveys — of how to better support the instructors and peer mentors in Freshman

Inquiry, we will hopefully be on the road to demonstrating our value to faculty and students through targeted and well-informed support.

I fear that this shift toward value research will not provide us with data or information that informs practice. I also find it difficult to believe that a library can make a compelling value proposition with correlational data. For example, Oakleaf (2010) states that it might be "helpful to know that students who have participated in three or more library instructional episodes over the course of their college career have a significantly higher GPA" (p. 96). Even if this could be demonstrated, it by no means indicates that library instruction was responsible for that success. There are any number of factors at play that could contribute — their major, their choice of courses, their instructors, etc. Perhaps faculty who request library instruction are more likely to scaffold their research assignments, leading to better student outcomes. I recognize that some administrators might actually be convinced of the library's value through correlational evidence, but if the research does not lead to assessment to better understand the why behind the numbers, then the library will not know how to improve.

The Value of Academic Libraries initiative has brought many good ideas to libraries. It has called into question our current reliance on input and output measures while helping libraries focus on those things University administrators consider significant. Values research has made libraries more aware of the usefulness of partnerships with offices of institutional research. Finally, I think the initiative has helped to demonstrate the fact that libraries need staff in-house who have the skills necessary to design quality assessments, analyze the data, and make that data tell a story that is meaningful to administrators.

I am currently conducting a survey with colleagues from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and the University of North Carolina, Greensboro that explores what elements facilitate and hinder libraries in developing a culture of instructional assessment. What I see coming up time and again in the preliminary results is that many libraries do not feel they have the time or expertise to do assessment well. While I would like to believe that assessment and values research can co-exist in academic libraries, I wonder if this will hold true at small and/or understaffed libraries. I fear that, when push comes to shove, libraries with limited resources will choose to focus on values research over assessment. In the current environment, who can blame them?

I recognize the importance of libraries demonstrating value to those who determine our funding levels, but I think a better balance needs to be struck between assessment focused on improvement and research focused on accountability. The Value of Academic Libraries initiative seems focused on getting libraries to answer the question "how can we prove that the library is valuable" when the question I feel we should be asking is "how do we know the library is valuable?" There is a considerable difference between coming from a place where we assume we are valuable and try to find evidence that confirms it and coming from a place where we assume nothing and try to determine whether or not we are providing value. As service-oriented organizations, we should also be learning organizations, focused on learning not only what we are doing right, but also what we could be doing better. Perhaps with such an orientation, we can conduct research that both demonstrates value and helps us to improve.

Works Cited

Cox, B., & Jantti, M. (2012). Discovering the Impact of Library Use and Student Performance. *Educause Review Online*. Retrieved from http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/discovering-impact-library-use-and-student-performance

Haddow, G., & Joseph, J. (2010). Loans, Logins, and Lasting the Course: Academic Library Use and Student Retention. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, 41(4), 233–244. Retrieved from http://www.alia.org.au/publishing/aarl/41/AARL_2010_41_4.pdf

Haviland, D. (2009). Why are faculty wary of assessment? *Academic Leadership Journal*, 7(3).

Hiller, S., Kyrillidou, M., & Self, J. (2008). When the evidence is not enough: Organizational factors that influence effective and successful library assessment. *Performance Measurement and Metrics*, 9(3), 223–230. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/1773/19932

Lakos, A., & Phipps, S. E. (2004). Creating a Culture of Assessment: A Catalyst for Organizational Change. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy,* 4(3), 345–361. Retrieved from http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/0843106w

Marrs, H. (2009). Perceptions of College Faculty Regarding Outcomes Assessment. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning*, 13(2). Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/EJ940619.pdf

Nackerud, S., Fransen, J., Peterson, K., & Mastel, K. (2013). Analyzing Demographics: Assessing Library Use Across the Institution. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 13(2). Preprint retrieved from http://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/143309

Oakleaf, M. (2010). *Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report.* Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries. Retrieved from http://www.acrl.ala.org/value/?page_id=21

Stone, G., Ramsden, B., & Pattern, D. (2011). Looking for the link between library usage and student attainment. *Ariadne*, (67), 1–7. Retrieved from http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue67/stone-et-al/

Wong, S. H. R., & Webb, T. D. (2011). Uncovering Meaningful Correlation between Student Academic Performance and Library Material Usage. *College Research Libraries,* 72(4), 361–370. Retrieved from http://crl.acrl.org/content/72/4/361.abstract

Annual Tigard Library Survey Measures Patron Feedback

by Paula M. Walker
Communications Coordinator, Tigard Library

and

Sarah Jesudason
Adult Services Supervisor, Tigard Library

Paula

Sarah

Libraries frequently get positive feedback from satisfied users. It builds staff morale and gives them a sense of pride. Patrons also suggest improvements and additional services. How do libraries capture those comments in an organized way? How do they determine which services are most valuable to patrons?

For the past 20 years, the Tigard Public Library has conducted an annual patron survey in both English and Spanish. Since 2008, the library has received more than 3,000 completed surveys each year. Although it is not scientific, the responses have prompted library staff to enhance programs and services to meet library users' needs.

The survey has evolved over the years. For the first 13 years, staff handed out paper surveys in the library for two weeks. The personal touch and direct requests proved to be successful. A second plus was that more staff had the opportunity to interact with the public, including those who did not work at the public service desks.

As technology advanced, the library added new formats for the survey. In 2013 patrons had the option to take it from the Library and City websites, public Internet computers, Facebook, Twitter, Wi-Fi, the library's e-newsletter, as well as on paper in the Library and in the City newsletter that is mailed to 27,000 Tigard addresses.

Last year for the first time, we pushed out a follow-up e-mail to the more than 25,000 addresses in our e-newsletter database. We were pleasantly surprised to receive more than 700 responses. That response helped us collect a record 3,818 surveys. This year we received nearly as many responses to the "push" e-mail.

For approximately ten years, we have tabulated responses on Survey Monkey, a significant improvement over the nineties, when we tabulated results by hand, making hash marks for each response. Electronic responses go directly to Survey Monkey, while a team of hardy volunteers enter the results of the paper surveys.

The paper surveys and personal touch are still the most effective way to encourage participation. But electronic methods are gradually gaining steam. In 2012, 63.1 percent of the surveys were paper and 36.9 percent were submitted electronically, a significant jump from 2011 when only 13.2 percent of responses were electronic (Tigard Public Library, Annual Survey).

Over the years the library has asked such diverse questions as "Which online resources have you used in the past year?" to "Do you own an e-reader?" to "How has the reference staff helped you in the past three months?"

Each year the survey asks demographic questions about age and how often people use the library. A customer service question asks patrons to rate their experiences at the public service desks and the availability of Internet computers. The percent of people who rate service as "excellent" or "good" has topped 95 percent since 2009 (Tigard Public Library, Annual Survey).

The survey serves a dual purpose of both eliciting patron reactions and educating them about our services. For example, when the survey asked people what online resources they had used in the past year, the response was low, but several people commented that they had been unaware of them and would try them.

We have always asked for additional comments and often they prove to be the most revealing about what people like and don't like about the library. Out of 1,668 open-ended comments in 2013, nearly 60 percent praised the library or library staff (Tigard Public Library, Annual Survey). We also value the constructive criticism, which helps make us even more responsive to the public.

Last year e-books, online resources, public computers, cell phones, cultural passes and parking won the "frequently commented on" awards. Sample comments included:

"Every time I want an e-book, there's a waiting list. Thought e-books would have more."

"It would be cool if the study rooms could be reserved on the library website instead of having to come to the library to reserve a room."

"You need a bigger parking lot!"

Although we may not always be able to implement patron suggestions because of budgetary or other restrictions, we hope to be able to address some of them in the future. Some issues such as noise complaints help remind staff to be sensitive to patrons' perceptions.

Some comments reminded us why people become library lovers in the first place and why the library plays such a significant role in the community:

"I'm old school. I like to touch books. I need to talk to a librarian. People here are very helpful. This is one of my favorite places."

I" do not have Internet at home anymore, due to economy reducing my income. I have used the Internet at the library to do my Internet banking and searches, etc. Thank you."

Responses to the survey questions have resulted in several improvements. The library has added weekend programming for children; offered Wi-Fi service; created a monthly e-newsletter; added Blu-Rays and created an area for people to pick up their own holds. As a result of patrons' survey responses, we began to provide e-mail notifications about held materials, a service that eventually was implemented countywide.

Patron responses have been extremely helpful over the years in determining service hours. The Tigard Library has changed its hours eight times since 2001, increasing or decreasing them depending on available funding. The "hours question" yielded concrete statistics that were valuable in justifying changes during budgetary deliberations.

Given the number of positive spontaneous comments as well as the customer satisfaction rates, the annual survey has also affirmed that the library is generally serving the community's needs. Daily, we serve over 1,000 people in person and over the phone. Our job is to meet their immediate needs. The survey gives us an opportunity to step back and take a look at the big picture. The results have been informative and encouraging. In addition to providing valuable feedback, it has amounted to a collective pat on the back for our staff and operations.

Each year we post the results of the survey and the additional comments on the Tigard Library website (http://www.tigard-or.gov/library/about/library_reports.asp). Beginning last year we addressed some of the frequent comments in a series in our library e-newsletter. With a twenty-year track record, the library has streamlined the survey process. While it requires preparation and follow-up, it has proven to be well worth it, especially when we get comments like this: "*Awesome. I get 20 or more books every week and I'm 9!*"

Works Cited

Tigard Public Library. (n.d.). Annual Patron Survey, 2006-2013. Retrieved March 19, 2013 from http://www.tigard-or.gov/library/about/library_reports.asp

A Community of Curiosity:
The New OLA Library Assessment Round Table

by Rick Stoddart
Assessment Librarian,
Oregon State University

Sharing best practices in assessment and library advocacy are crucial for 21st century libraries.

—OLA Member

In February of 2013, the Oregon Library Association Executive Board approved the formation of the OLA Library Assessment Round Table (LART). This is an important first step in helping Oregon libraries continue to demonstrate impact and value to the communities they serve. As one OLA member[1] noted in supporting the formation of this new round table, "assessment is becoming a critical component of our culture. People want to see the value of the investments they make, and assessment is one means through which people can see that." A library assessment round table will provide a forum for Oregon librarians to build skills and capacity for effective evaluation of programs and the means to communicate this value to their stakeholders.

Assessment touches on many areas of the library. As such, the OLA Library Assessment Round Table has the potential to assist in documenting impact throughout Oregon. Recent assessment related presentations by librarians at the OLA annual conference and Online Northwest have emphasized library value. These presentations attempted to answer the questions: How does the library save time and money (Vik, 2013)? How does the library justify budget proposals, determine equity of services, and demonstrate value (Ackermen et. al. 2012)? These are just a few of the assessment concerns in public libraries. Academic libraries have embraced the recent *Value of Academic Libraries* (Oakleaf, 2010) and *Standards Libraries in Higher Education* (ACRL, 2011) reports that suggests ways libraries might have impact on student success and faculty productivity in the academic setting. With the recent closure of many school libraries and devaluing of school librarians in Oregon, library assessment takes on an even more critical role. OLA members are keenly aware of all of these issues and have suggested specific areas where assessment plays an important role in libraries:

- library budgeting
- library strategic planning
- accreditation
- demonstrating library value or return on investment
- improving library services
- better understanding the communities libraries serve
- reaching goals
- fund-raising
- marketing

Assessment is viewed as both an essential and challenging activity in Oregon libraries. OLA members communicated the trepidation that librarians often feel when tasked with library assessment: "We all know assessment is an essential piece of marketing the value of what we do in libraries and verifying that we are indeed meeting the needs of our patrons. However the 'how to' of assessment can be intimidating and out of the zone of comfort for many of us ..." Part of the problem is that assessment is not made up of one skill set, but many that touch on every library facet such as services, collection, instruction, programming, and outreach. It is definitely challenging to stay up to speed with the most effective techniques to assess libraries. An OLA member noted: "There are of course a million ways to skin the library assessment cat, and a round table would help us to put our heads together to talk through our motives and methods." Because there is a common need for library assessment across all libraries, a robust and interactive OLA Library Assessment Round Table has the potential to facilitate an increased assessment capacity across Oregon libraries. In fact, when members were asked what value they saw in forming an OLA round table on library assessment, a significant number of the responses included the word *sharing*:

- "A place to share ..."
- "Sharing assessment techniques ..."
- "Developing a shared understanding ..."
- "Sharing strategies for drafting practical assessment plans and assessment tools ..."
- "... share ideas and practical implementations of assessment."
- "Sharing best practices ..."

It is significant that sharing is seen as one of the foundational values of this round table as well as library assessment in Oregon. At first glance, assessment asks libraries to look inward to capture data and translate that into evidence-based change, but true assessment has as much an outward focus as inward. Assessment is not an isolated activity but a participatory and inclusive one that not only captures library interactions from our community but facilitates them. Library assessment does involve numbers, stories, and performance goals, but the end result of these evaluation efforts is sharing with our communities the resulting changes either through meaningful reporting, enacting refinements on existing programs, or developing new services entirely. Assessment is about creating and demonstrating a greater connection to the needs, values, and aspirations of our stakeholders. The idea is to move assessment from being perceived as something that is being *enacted on* our libraries and patrons to something that is being *participated with* our libraries and patrons. Our community members are not only the customers of libraries but also the embodiment of our efforts to make the communities we serve a better place. As such, it makes sense that we should involve our stakeholders more implicitly in the process of library assessment as partners. Library assessment is as much a community-building exercise as one that involves statistical analysis and number crunching.

It is heartening that this idea of community building with Oregon libraries and sharing is embraced in the formation of the OLA Library Assessment Round Table. This approach will allow libraries within the state to begin to share data and data-gathering tools, metrics and key performance indicators, and assessment resources and techniques in order to better engage our patrons in a shared understanding of library value, impact, and return on investment. As one librarian succinctly put it: "We could learn a lot from each other."

To get involved with the OLA Library Assessment Round Table contact Rick Stoddart (richard.stoddart@oregonstate.edu) or visit the OLA website (http://www.olaweb.org) for more information.

Works Cited

Ackerman, W., Barclay K, & Mlidenstein, L. (2012, April) *Measuring now for tomorrow.* A presentation at the annual conference of the Oregon Library Association, Bend, Oregon.

Association of College and Research Libraries. (2011). *Standards for libraries in higher education*. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries. http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries

Oakleaf, M. (2010). *The value of academic libraries: A comprehensive research review and report.* Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association. http://www.acrl.ala.org/value/

Vik, L. (2013). *The dog & pony show (AKA Demonstrating the value of your library)*. A lightning talk presentation at the annual Online Northwest conference. Corvallis, Oregon.

Footnote

[1]All quotes are derived from the OLA member responses to the question: *What value do you see in OLA creating a Library Assessment Round Table?* from the OLA Library Assessment Round Table interest survey.

I Prefer to Count on Success:
A Summer Reading Program that Supports Lifelong Reading

by Aimee Meuchel
Teen Librarian,
Tualatin Library

Just over a decade ago, I began questioning how librarians measure summer reading success. Was it by children who signed up? Children who finished? It seemed like many libraries measured success by finishers, but when I looked closely at those numbers (25–40 percent), they signaled failure to me. A hallmark of many summer reading programs is a free book for finishers preceded by smaller prize incentives along the way. Clearly, the possibility of a single book was not enough to sustain interest in the program. Perhaps our greatest goal as librarians is to create lifelong readers. I wanted to find a way to promote that goal through the Summer Reading program.

I started looking into research on incentives for doing something (practicing piano, reading, chores) and read a lot about intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards are the intangibles that we feel when we do something we like or enjoy. Extrinsic rewards are what others give us for that success. As a young piano student, I was given a lot of extrinsic rewards. Practice an hour, get a sticker. When you have ten stickers, you get another gift. I no longer play piano. I had to attend Vacation Bible School each summer. For every Bible verse we learned, we were given tokens to use at the store to buy prizes. I am an atheist. To the best of my recollection, I was not given rewards for reading (no summer reading programs in small town Montana in the 1980s). Yet I can't not read (yes double negative) every day. Can't. Won't. It is one of the greatest pleasures in my life. Sharing books with others, especially children, is another great joy.

In the early 1970s, psychologists studied the effect of rewards on people's motivation. They discovered that people including children, who were not already motivated to do the activity did perform the desired activity, but, as one might suspect, only as long as the reward was offered.[1] Interestingly, they also discovered two negative effects. In one study, David Greene and Mark Lepper learned that

> Children who expected and received a reward for engaging the target activity [drawing with highly-prized magic markers] showed significantly less subsequent intrinsic interest in the drawing activity than did children who had engaged in the activity without expectation of an extrinsic reward; and, although children expecting a reward tended to draw more pictures during the experimental session than children not expecting reward, these pictures were judged significantly lower in overall quality (Greene and Lepper, 1974).

In 2001, pioneering motivation researcher Richard Deci and his colleagues summed up decades of research on the effects of rewards on children's behavior and intrinsic motivation: "Thirty years ago, the first studies appeared showing that tangible rewards given for doing an interesting activity undermine intrinsic motivation for the activity" (Deci, Ryan and Koestner, 2001). Further research in the intervening 25 years has reinforced this initial experimental result. Deci, Ryan and Koestner (2001) concluded "the use of rewards as a

motivational strategy is clearly a risky proposition, so we continue to argue for thinking about educational practices that will engage students' interest and support the development of their self-regulation."

To put this in summer reading terms, if the offer of books and other prizes is considered a sufficient reward for reading, it will damage actual readers' desire to read. Non-readers will potentially read for reward, but they will not read after the reward is received and the reading they do will not likely benefit them.

So, how was I to use our summer reading program to pass on that love of reading to children? By looking at research on intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards, I needed to figure out a way to move the library away from the extrinsic rewards and into intrinsic. What if we took all of the money we spent on incentives and used it on books given as a present at the start of the program? What would that look like? About ten years ago, this is what Eugene Public Library began to do and continues to this day. They give a book to every child and teen who signs up for Summer Reading! That's it. No prizes at the end, just genuine excitement when a child reports back that he or she loves reading and books. They interact with the children by asking what books they liked best or which series captured their imagination. The Friends of the Eugene Public Library are the financial backers of this program and are committed to continuing it.

I left Eugene almost seven years ago and came to Tualatin Public Library, part of the Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS). While the partnered libraries are not branches of the cooperative, they do participate in many programs together, including summer reading. County staff will typically ask local businesses for incentives like tickets to sporting events or food from a restaurant. How was I going to break free of the incentives and give out books at the beginning? I was committed to the program we had started in Eugene and wanted to try it in Tualatin. I began by educating staff about rewards and asked them to give it a shot for one summer. Not everyone at Tualatin was convinced at my "lunacy", but the staff was willing to try. It is now a favorite part of summer reading. Staff and volunteers love to give the gift of a book to children. When asked what they like about summer reading, it is the book at the beginning. The children are wowed that they get a book to keep for their very own and their joy creates good morale for staff and volunteers.

To pay for the change, we stopped buying other incentives and we spent our Ready to Read grant money on books for children. The Friends of the Tualatin Public Library also generously contribute to this program. One of their missions is to get books into the hands of children. What better way than through our Summer Reading program? I no longer dread summer reading, but look forward to it. I love to give books away and then see kids later in the summer and talk to them about what they are reading and how awesome it is!

WCCLS still gives out incentives for signing up and finishing and Tualatin participates in this part of the program. We don't make a big deal out of these incentives, but for kids and parents who want something for finishing, we have it. As far as I know no other WCCLS library gives out books at the beginning of summer reading.

I view our Summer Reading program as a success! Rather than failing with our abysmal finisher statistics, we are succeeding by getting a book in the hands of every child who signs up to participate in summer reading. What a success story it would be if other libraries followed suit, and we got books in the hands of all summer reading participants!

Of the many librarians I have discussed this program with, I have often heard, "But we couldn't afford to give a book to every child." Yet isn't that what every child who signs up for summer reading is being promised? What if your library had 100 percent finishers? What would you do? Libraries that count on children not finishing are counting on failure. I prefer to count on success. Through book wholesalers, you can find very inexpensive books and give them to children. They might not be the latest, greatest title, but some child will remember that the library gave him/her a book as a kid and how much they loved that book!

Works Cited

Deci, E., Ryan, R., & Koestner, R. (2001). The pervasive negative effects of rewards on intrinsic motivation: Response to Cameron. *Review of Educational Research*, 43–51.

Greene, D., & Lepper, M. (1974). Effects of extrinsic rewards on children's subsequent intrinsic interest. *Child Development*, 1141–1145.

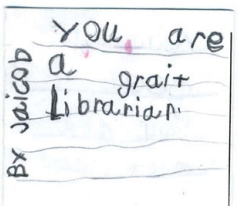
Wiseman, R. (2013). The as if principle: the radically new approach to changing your life. New York: Free Press.

Footnote

[1]Richard Wiseman discusses this idea in his book, The As If Principle: "The message from the studies is clear: rewarding the behavior of schoolchildren, smokers and drivers encourages them to behave as though they don't really want to read books, stop smoking or buckle up. As a result, the moment that the rewards are removed, the desired behavior runs the risk of grinding to a sudden halt, or worse, becomes even less frequent than before incentives were introduced" (Wiseman, 2013).

Looking Back:
The Subjective Assessments of a Children's Librarian

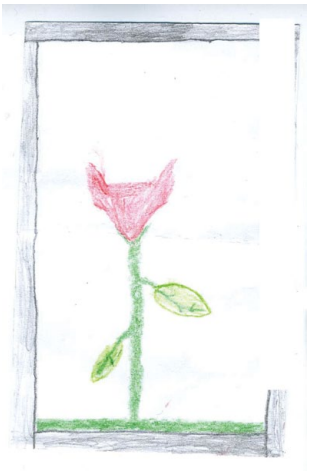
by Laura Mikowski
Youth Collection Development Librarian, Hillsboro Public Library



For the last 18 years, I have been a Children's Librarian at the Hillsboro Public Library. In July of this year, I will assume my new job as Hillsboro's Youth Collection Development Librarian. While I'm looking forward to changes and new challenges, there is much about my work as a Children's Librarian that I will miss.

Collection Development is a much more macro, 30,000 feet sort of job. In Collection Development, numbers and statistics figure prominently and are excellent markers of performance. Measuring success can be straightforward: Are the holds lists too long? Are there vast numbers of books that haven't been checked out in years burdening our shelves? Is our library one of Washington County's net borrowers or net lenders?

When thinking about measuring my success as a Children's Librarian, I could use numbers. I have years of statistics about the circulation of the materials that I selected. I have several decades of Storytime and other program attendance statistics that can be charted. But none of these measures would paint a complete picture of how I have done as a Children's Librarian. For that, I think I would need to rely on more subjective criteria.

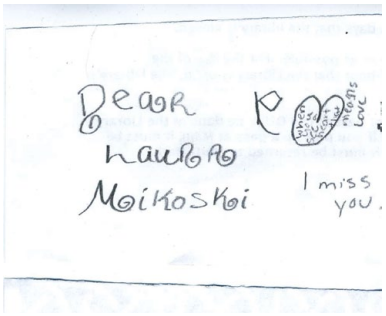


I know that I am successful when I engage with a new family at their first Storytime. I always try to make the connection that will encourage them to keep coming back. As they become regulars, I support parents and caregivers by promoting literacy with their child and find them the best of what their child loves to engage in.

I know that I am successful when I help parents and caregivers find the picture books and board books they will be reading to children for years.

I know that I am successful when a parent offers me their time and listens to my early literacy spiel and then takes it to heart by taking home a large stack of age appropriate items more then once.

I know that I am successful when I help children explore new interests and discover new series. It's especially rewarding when my work inspires a reluctant reader and their desire to read blossoms. Thank goodness for audio books, graphic novels and Garfield!



I know that I am successful when families return week after week. I see the children growing into the adults they will become.

I know that I am successful when coworkers tell me that a young patron was looking for me.

I know that I am successful when, over the course of a reference desk shift, I see familiar face after familiar face. Many come up to talk about what they have been reading, some just say "hi," but I know that I have done my job making an environment that they keep wanting to come back to.

I know that I am successful when the Children's area is, frankly, kind of loud. I think that children are their happiest when the library feels more like a Living Room than a Study Hall.

I know that I am successful when parents come in to update me on their children—children who were in my Storytimes and who have now moved on to college.

I know that I am successful when the same family shows up on the same day at the same time.

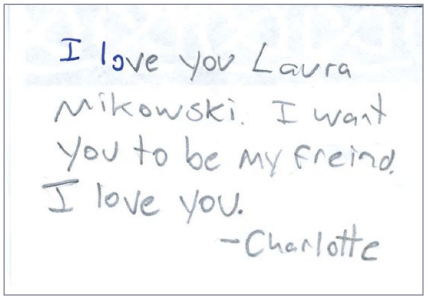
I know that I am successful when I convince parents to make a stop at the library a regular part of their week. Going to the pool? Stop in at the library. Stopping by McDonalds? Come visit us when you are done.

I know that I am successful when I recommend a book to a child and tell them to let me know what they think when they're finished with it. And then see them come back to discuss it.

I know that I am successful when I see a new book come through and know exactly which patron I'm going to give it to when I next see them.

I know that I am successful when I get what I call "love letters" from my young patrons. One little picture from a child gives me all the data I need to know that I am doing a good job.

My new position will lessen my daily interactions with our public here at HPL. As the collection develops in depth and success, I will too, in both familiar and new ways. Intrinsic measurements demand my continued attention to foster relationships that create readers and library users. I'll then continue to reflect on this type of measurement in order to create a greater future here and thus, a more complete community.



Assessing Through Reflection:
Valuing our Wisdom and Trusting our Gut

by Robert Schroeder
Education and University Studies Librarian & Coordinator of Library GenEd Instruction, Associate Professor, Portland State University

{First gentle reader I must beg your pardon for the purplish-hued prose style in which the following essay is penned. When I searched about for proximate causes I could only rally in my defense the recent viewing of seven episodes of Downton Abbey. For best effect I recommend one imagine that the Dowager Countess and Carson are alternately reading aloud the following paragraphs. Perhaps as part of a tableau vivant on Boxing Day?}

Assess — from the Latin assidére, to sit by.

There are many ways to assess our effectiveness when it comes to the teaching and learning of information literacy. And there are many times when student surveys, focus groups, or other qualitative or quantitative means or measurement make perfect sense. But I would like to suggest that there are other ways to get a handle on how well we are teaching and how well students are learning, ways that are equally as useful and valid as these other measures, and ones that we can cultivate within ourselves. Reflection and self-cultivation, holding ourselves up as mirrors to our classrooms can often be a most useful and expedient standard.

Most librarians, by their bookish nature (if I may be so bold), are inveterate readers and researchers. And we read about issues that affect our classrooms — learning styles, teaching strategies, the digital divide, and the latest technology du jour. Day by day, and by leaps and bounds our knowledge of classroom techniques and student learning grows, and I would venture that our concern for student learning and our passion for our students' success oftentimes acts as a catalyst to this knowledge and, like the alchemy of old, turns our understanding into wisdom.

I submit that we are wise in many ways; we need only to reflect and realize this fact. And our wisdom reveals itself in the very fact that we do strive to learn about learning, and it shows itself in our earnest desire to improve. But what use do we make of this great virtue, or do we squander it away? The sad fact, as I see it, is that we frequently ignore this treasure at our fingertips. When confronted with questions about how our students are progressing, instead of relying on our hard-researched knowledge, we immediately start to devise a new survey or focus group to see how our students measure up.

I will give a hypothetical example. Say I am newly teaching a group of students who come from Saudi Arabia, and who have learned English as their second language. Challenges may be arising that I have never experienced before. So I read a half a score of articles on the subject of teaching information literacy to ESL students, and a passel of the articles even mention some cultural competencies to help with teaching students from Saudi Arabia. If I make what I see as appropriate adjustments to my teaching based on the suggestions from the articles, and *reflect* upon the teaching and learning as it happens, might that not be assessment enough?

This is not to say that no assessment is happening, but more correctly that the assessment is rather more subjective, anecdotal, and internal than what most often is meant by this term. I may see that student involvement has increased just by the hubbub in the classroom, or perhaps the groups seem now to be progressing more smoothly and quickly through the exercises. Checking in with teaching faculty who may be present, either at the time of the class or by a quick e-mail later, may also be an easy way to ascertain if the learning goals are being met. But instead of considering my sole option for assessment to be a full-blown survey of these students, I am suggesting that we pause to acknowledge the value of our wisdom.

This wisdom consists of a combination of our focused search for, and recovery of appropriate and tested models that we rely upon in augmenting our lessons, and our earnest and focused intentions to create more effective learning situations for our students. If we value our wisdom, and the collective wisdom of the librarians who have done the studies upon which we rely, then I would ask do we need to nearly always feel compelled to do a full-blown quantitative assessment? Rather we might take a breath, and realize that yes, all of our study was for a good reason, and yes we are smart enough to see our students confirming the results of those many other studies upon which we based our class.

At this juncture I would hazard to say that we must not only raise the value we place on our wisdom, but we must also begin to trust our gut. This trusting our gut will color our instruction more an art than a science, but I would estimate this tint not to be a muddied shade, but rather a dazzling hue that spreads upon the canvas of our pedagogy. If our focus is clear and our attention is on our students in the classroom as they learn, then we will be learning with them. What we will be learning will be how to better teach our students — by sitting beside them, and reflecting, they will teach us how to teach them.

Coda

Here I must give credit to two sources of inspiration for this essay. One is the ever-entertaining and eternally enlightening Dale Vidmar of Southern Oregon University. He has worked many years developing his model of reflective peer coaching, and has written an excellent article on it titled, "Reflective Peer Coaching: Crafting Collaborative Self-Assessment in Teaching. While Dale's focus is on developing pairs of librarians as peer coaches, I sense that his ultimate goal might be for us to internalize this reflection, so that we can in a way be peer coaches unto ourselves. The other educator I must credit is Paulo Freire. He opened my eyes to a fact that should come as no surprise to most librarians, as the collaborative nature our work at the reference desk embodies it. He says that both the "student" and the "teacher" are always both teaching and learning, or as he put it in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers" (Freire, 2000, p. 80).

Works Cited

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

OLA Quarterly Publication Schedule 2013

The *OLA Quarterly (OLAQ)* is the official publication of the Oregon Library Association. The *OLAQ* is indexed by *Library Literature & Information Science* and *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts.* To view PDFs of issues, visit the OLAQ Archive on the OLA website. Full text is also available through HW Wilson's *Library Literature and Information Science Full Text* and EBSCO Publishing's *Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts (LISTA) with Full Text.*

Each issue is developed around a theme determined by the Communications Committee and Guest Editor(s). To suggest future topics for the *OLA Quarterly*, or to volunteer/nominate a Guest Editor, contact the OLAQ Coordinator.

Vol./No.	Theme	Deadline	Pub. Date	Guest Editor
Vol 19 • No. 2 Summer 2013	*Creativity Happens*	June 1, 2013	July 15, 2013	Michele Burke Chemeketa Community College Library

Oregon Library Association Inc.
PO Box 3067, La Grande, OR 97850

Advertising Rates

Space	Size	Single Issue	Multiple Issue
Full page	**6.375" wide x 10" high**	**$200**	**$175**
1/2 page (horizontal)	**6.375" wide x 4.25" high**	**$115**	**$100**
1/4 page	**3.5" wide x 4.25" high**	**$60**	**$50**

The OLA Communications Committee

Chair & OLA Hotline Coordinator
Anne Scheppke

OLA Quarterly Coordinator
Sara Kelso

Advertising Coordinator
Vacant

Association Manager
Shirley Roberts