

ACRL -- Baltimore March 29-30, 2007  
Preconference: Assessment Workshop  
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This was a day-long workshop on using ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education to comply with regional accreditation standards. I was interested in getting a broader picture of assessment (beyond information literacy). This was very broad and a bit overwhelming by 3:30 when it ended. I would be happy to go into more depth in a LIBRAS workshop if people were interested. I got lots of handouts and a workbook *Standards and Assessment for Academic Libraries: a workbook*. Below are some references and notes that I made.

- Forthcoming article in *College and Undergraduate Libraries*: Sharon Morrison and William Neal Nelson, "A Library Compliance Strategy for Regional Accreditation Standards: Using ACRL Higher Education Standards with the North Central Association, Higher Learning Commission." Vol. 14:2, Summer 2007.
- Keep in mind two basic principles of assessment for library effectiveness:
  1. The reason: to improve what you're doing
  2. The process: Say what you're going to do (goals); do it; show how you've done what you said you were going to do.
- Library outcomes are "the ways in which library users are changed as a result of their contact with the library's resources and programs" (ACRL taskforce on academic library outcomes assessment report, 1998) For instance, "As a result of collaboration with the library's staff, are faculty members more likely to view use of the library as an integral part of their courses?"
- Accrediting bodies are looking at academic programs, but often don't specify the library. However, the library is an academic program and our services often fit into broader institutional goals. We need to involve the library in the institution's strategic planning and program review processes. Provide better documentation to reinforce link between services, instruction, access, resources, staff and facilities with student learning, educational impact, and continuing improvement. For instance:
  - Distance learning (do you have online tutorials, web pages for distance ed students?)
  - Retention, graduation rates (does the library have any programs directed at supporting marginal students)
  - Does the library computer lab offer more support to students than other computer labs on campus?
  - Committee work of librarians
  - How does the library support new programs or degrees?
- Multiple measures can be used for a given program or activity or initiative (same tool such as LIBQUAL or home-grown survey can provide multiple measures)
- Various methods of assessment can be used, from direct evidence such as portfolios, capstone projects, and course-embedded assessments to indirect evidence such as surveys and interviews.

- Examples of student learning outside the classroom (i.e., not bibliographic instruction):
  - Peer-to-peer (library facilitates this through group study rooms, through social networking websites, blogs,; tutoring/writing center students)
  - Self-initiated learning (reading, navigation through library website and online tutorials)
  - Internships (does library support these in terms of identifying, giving independent research support, etc)
- How do other library functions support student learning?
  - Collections: the arrangement of one's collection to encourage browsing; an example of separating fiction or new books to encourage self-initiated learning
  - Reference services
  - Co-curricular agenda (student services organizations)
  
- On Friday morning there was a session called "Blue Skies Ahead: A Practical and Manageable Approach to Library-Wide Assessment" This fit in well with the previous day's workshop. The library uses their annual retreat to set priorities and define outcomes for the upcoming year (they have done this once and because of the success plan to continue). Each department in the library (not just instruction) was asked to come up with one question they wanted answered: "What do you want to know about how your unit/department/service/program, etc. contributes to faculty research, student learning, or the learning environment?" Then they turn those questions into outcome statements and develop a strategy to come up with the answers.
- The complete plan is at <http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/admin.html>

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