

Sorting Out Library Programs and Services:

A STRATEGIC SERVICE REVIEW

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THE METHODOLOGY:

Step 1: Every library department/team created a work inventory. Each item listed on the inventory was termed an activity; these activities were printed on individual cards.

Step 2: Departments gathered individually to review the definitions and the Libraries' mission, and to complete a card sort activity.

While the participants were completing and sorting the cards, members of the project team listened to conversations and noted discussions and insights during the participants' decision-making processes.

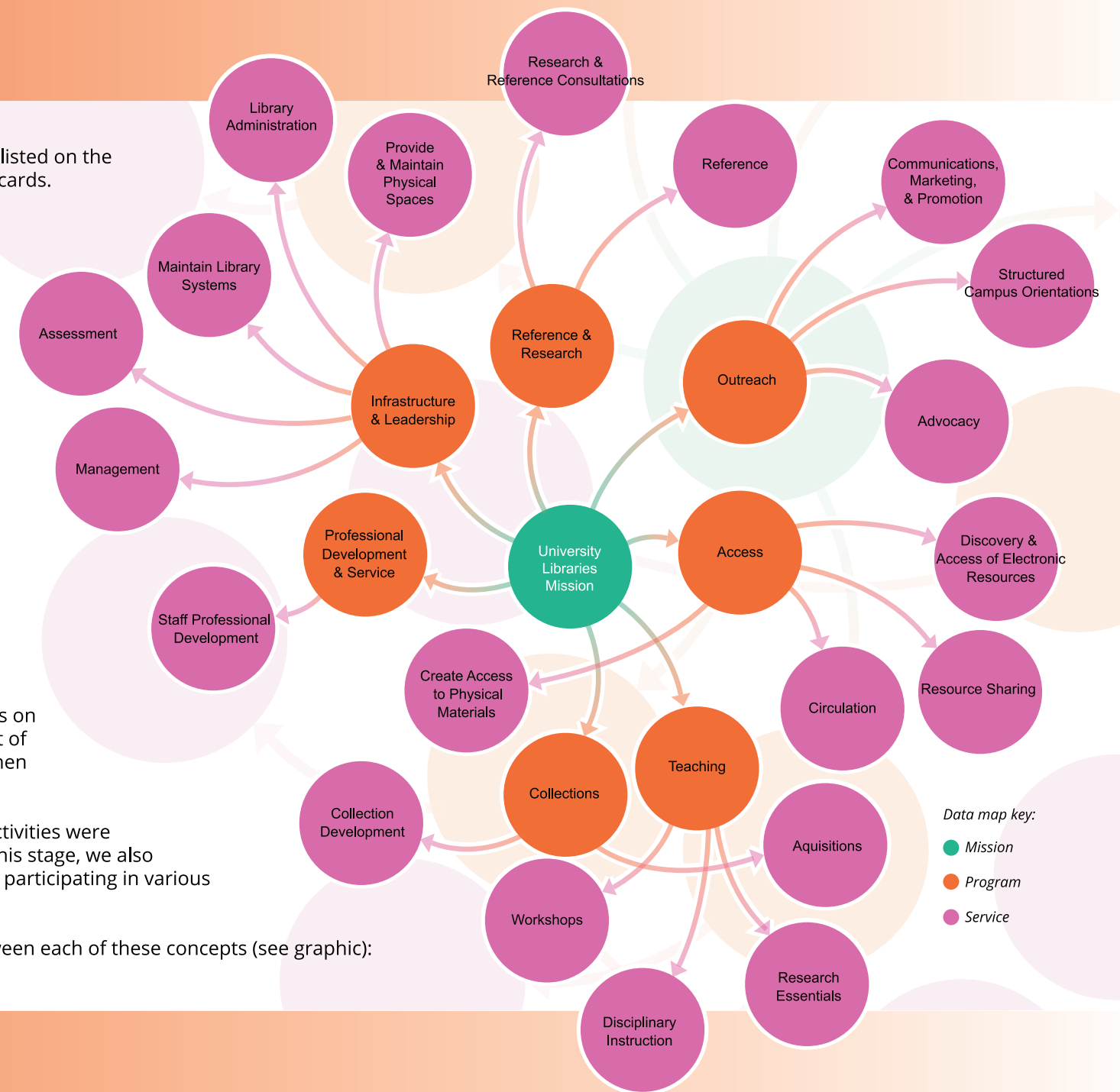
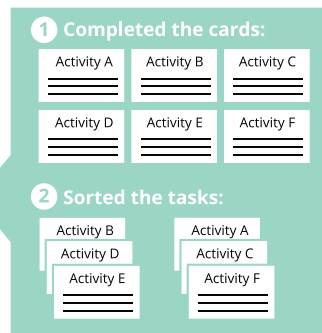
Step 3: To build consensus for library programs, small focus groups looked at the programs identified by all departmental card sorts together with the department names removed.

Step 4: LPST Team members reviewed the identified programs from Step 3 and consolidated the thematic ideas into a single set of programs. We described rather than named programs at this stage, to focus on the idea rather than the terminology. This was shared with all library staff through a report, which invited feedback from everyone to check our work.

Step 5: With programs determined at least roughly, LPST Team members began to focus on Services. We went through the complete list of activities once again with the new context of information gathered thus far, and resorted those activities back into services or tasks, then assigned them again to programs.

Like services were grouped together with generic (not departmental) terminology, more activities were identified as tasks, and programs were tweaked based on the actual included services. At this stage, we also introduced new terminology to address ideas that were often sticking points for individuals participating in various activities: **Initiative**, **Tool**, **Outcome**, and **Project**.

Step 6: Translated the work from Step 5 into a data map to better visualize connections between each of these concepts (see graphic):



THE OUTCOMES:

- 1 Create** a definitive list of library services that are mapped to library programs
- 2 Encourage** an understanding of the interconnectedness of library work
- 3 Build** consensus for core library services and inform the prioritization of services
- 4 Develop** a shared language around programs, services and tasks

WE BEGAN WITH THESE DEFINITIONS

PROGRAM: general area of responsibility/work in the Libraries in support of the mission

SERVICE: specific area of responsibility/work in the Libraries in support of a program

TASK: specific work completed in the libraries in support of a service

ACTIVITY: generic term for anything we do in the libraries - all programs, services, and tasks are activities

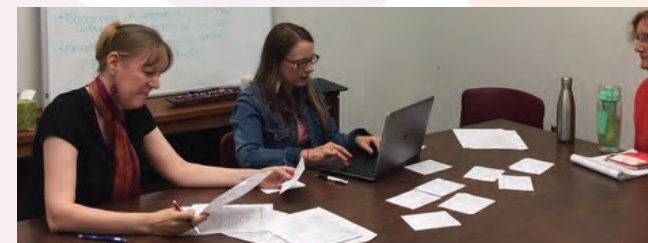
AND ADDED THESE DEFINITIONS

OUTCOME: while we use the classic definition of outcomes for assessment in this activity, it is important to note that we determined that all services should be able to be mapped to an outcome, though many services will share outcomes (this is a future step for the research).

INITIATIVE: a major new area of work for the Libraries driven by mission and strategy that will require new services and programs and/or significant new investment from existing services and programs, which is intended to become part of ongoing operations.

PROJECT: a specific set of work that requires investment from at least one existing service or task (though it could involve many services in many programs) that has an end date.

TOOL: a thing we use to do our work; distinct from programs, services, and tasks in that they are verbs, whereas tools are nouns.



Library Programs, Services & Tasks (LPST) Committee members at a training session.



LPST teams activity during a sorting session.

THE NEXT STEPS:



The LPST Team members will introduce the resultant hierarchy of programs and services (and whatever tasks remained in the sort) to administration and department heads for member checking and for assignment of Outcomes, then will make adjustments based on their feedback. Department heads and library leadership will also review the sorted cards and make additional connections between departments.



The project provided critical information for discovering and exploring the libraries' internal connections, enabling us to take a fresh look at our structure and priorities. This services list is being used to drive priority setting for Libraries Administration, and the Outcomes list will be used to establish a direct library impact on University and Libraries' mission and strategic plans.