

A Learning Analytics Toolkit:

A **NEW** ACRL Resource for Libraries at All Stages of Implementation

Joe Pirillo, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh | Megan Oakleaf, Syracuse University | Library Assessment Conference 2020

Background

The use of learning analytics within the field of education continues to grow at a very rapid pace.

In 2017, the ACRL published, *Academic Library Impact: Improving Practice and Essential Areas to Research*, where learning analytics was identified as a key priority area. Academic librarians were encouraged to think about how their libraries might begin to, “include library data in institutional data collection.”

In order to do this effectively, the report also encouraged librarians to ask the necessary questions and to consider taking a number of actions that included, for example:

- “Research the safeguards needed to ensure student privacy and confidentiality.
- Strategically collect data that can be integrated into learning analytics software.
- Work with stakeholders to statistically analyze and predict student learning and success based on shared learning analytics.” [i]

Creation

Librarians have heeded the call to action, and have subsequently produced numerous investigations. These have yielded numerous helpful insights for libraries hoping to begin exploring how they might approach learning analytics on their campus.

Given the growing myriad of resources, in the fall of 2019 an ACRL Value of Academic Libraries (VAL) subcommittee was tasked with creating a resource that could serve as a bridge to this evolving knowledgebase.

The toolkit was first published in the fall of 2020. It is the hope of the subcommittee that it can provide an overview and serve as a bridge. This toolkit relies heavily on the comprehensive work of the 2018 LILA Report; although, as it continues to grow, it will incorporate new ideas and insights as shared by librarians heeding the call to action by ACRL.

<https://acrl.libguides.com/val/latoolkit>

Elements

Welcome and Definition

The guide begins with a definition of what is meant in higher education when we use the term **learning analytics**:

“collection and analysis of usage data associated with student learning... to observe and understand learning behaviors in order to enable appropriate interventions.” [ii]

Privacy and Ethics

The second tab addresses issues of privacy and ethics. A list of questions that help libraries initiate necessary conversations. It also provides recommendations to mitigate risks to students when capturing and using data internally or externally.



Student Success

The principal goal of learning analytics is to increase student learning and optimize institutional contexts and practices associated with student success. [iii] To this end, the guide moves quickly to the next tab to address potential outcomes.



Outcomes

What do we want to know and how can that knowledge benefit students at our schools? The guide references numerous sample user stories that were generated by library leaders from across the country for the LILA report.

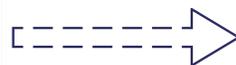
Sources of Data

Armed with potential user stories, one can explore different types of data that could be relevant or irrelevant to their desired investigation and subsequent ability to enhance student learning.



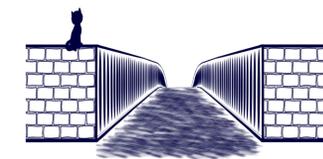
Leading Libraries

The guide ends by directing visitors to the leading libraries and investigations that have recently been done. The final tab is a substantial bibliography addressing the numerous subheadings involving the use of learning analytics in higher education.



Purpose

The purpose of the toolkit is to quickly provide an overview and a bridge to the quickly growing body of literature and insight on the subject of learning analytics.



Future Additions

The VAL subcommittee on learning analytics and privacy responsible for the toolkit is in its second year and is currently exploring new areas to incorporate into the Toolkit.

One area being explored is the intersection of learning analytics and EDI (equity, diversity, inclusion), as well as social justice. We will explore what has been found with respect to how learning analytics is being used to increase success and opportunity for previously neglected groups.

The bibliography contained in the toolkit will be updated to currently reflect the subcategories identified along with any new ones.

Feed back

The toolkit is a work in progress. There is also an embedded feedback form provided on the welcome page of the toolkit. We welcome your feedback.



References

- [i] Connaway, L. S., Harvey, W., Kitzie, V., & Mikitish, S. (2017). *Academic library impact: improving practice and essential areas to research*.
- [ii] Brown, A. (2011, April 13). *Learning Analytics: The Coming Third Wave*. Retrieved November 16, 2020, from <https://library. Edu cause.edu/resources/2011/4/learning-analytics-the-coming-third-wave>
- [iii] Conole, G., Gasevic, D., Long, P., & Siemens, G. (2011). *Message from the LAK 2011 general & program chairs. Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Learning Analytics and Knowledge, LAK 2011*. Banff, AB, Canada.