Finding a 'new normal' for library assessment: Lessons & reflections from COVID-19

BACKGROUND

● COVID-19 and movements for equity and racial justice affected assessment activities at the University of Washington Libraries.
● Lessons learned will continue to shape our program.
● There is a need to explore questions about the role of library assessment in the context of continued change and uncertainty.

LITERATURE REVIEW THEMES

● Establish partnerships with students: "...students' lived experiences should drive the planning of student academic support services" (Jankowsky & Bheda, 2022).
● Practice equity-informed assessment to advance equity (Jankowski, 2022).
● Collaborate with faculty, students, and administrators across the organization (Jankowsky & Bheda, 2022).
● Empathy and care are crucial for trauma-informed practices (Venas & Woosley, 2020; Breslin et al., 2020).
● Less assessment/data gathering, more improvement & action
● Explore the full literature review at tinyurl.com/UWNewNormalLitReview

LESSONS LEARNED

Prioritize equity:
● Make intentional project choices
● Raise the visibility of external data sources
● Focus on action-oriented conversations about how libraries can respond to wider trends in student needs.

Use existing library data more effectively:
● Surface existing data sources in order to reduce survey fatigue
● Highlight the potential of data already collected for ongoing insights.

Strengthen capacity for online assessment projects:
● Build skills in online methods and interactive, participatory methods.
● Continue to engage students online, with a view to equity and inclusion.

Invest in partnerships:
● Nurture library and institutional partnerships to support taking action on results and reduce duplicative efforts.
● Explore ways to foster ongoing conversations with students about actions arising out of their feedback.

CASE STUDIES*

● Student experiences during COVID-19 & Black Lives Matter: review of institutional, library, and higher education data sources, with a focus on local action.
● Data portal: multiple sources of previously siloed information to strengthen data-informed decision making.
● Student needs during reopening: a year-long mixed methods study, including an online diary study.
● Online participatory design project: 11-week project focused on online students.
● Institutional survey participation: a campus-wide survey on student preferences for online, hybrid, or in person campus services.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

● What skills are necessary to do library assessment work now?
● What does it look like to center student voices in our work?
● What does healing-centered libraries assessment look like?
● What measures would help us understand the impact of libraries on equity and collaboration with students?
● What is the role of library assessment in the context of continued change and uncertainty?
● How do we balance equity issues in online assessment activities?

*Learn more about our projects at tinyurl.com/uwlibprojects

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