Assessment Proficiencies in LIS Education

Carl Haynes, MSLIS | Megan Oakleaf, MLS, PhD | Samantha Settimio, MA

School of Information Studies
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Background

In April of 2014, the ACRL Executive Committee formed the *Task Force on Standards for Proficiencies for Assessment Librarians and Coordinators*.

They focused on developing broad areas of proficiency rather than a list of comprehensive skills. Their collaboration resulted in **11 broad categories** with **52 specific proficiencies**.

Research Question

To what extent does LIS curriculum address outcomes related to each of the proficiencies?

Research Design

We generated a list of over 100 potential participants from each of the ALA accredited universities in the field. There were 21 responses from university personnel. Only 8 completed the survey; 5 were professors and 3 were chairs/deans. There were 13 surveys were incomplete.

Conclusion

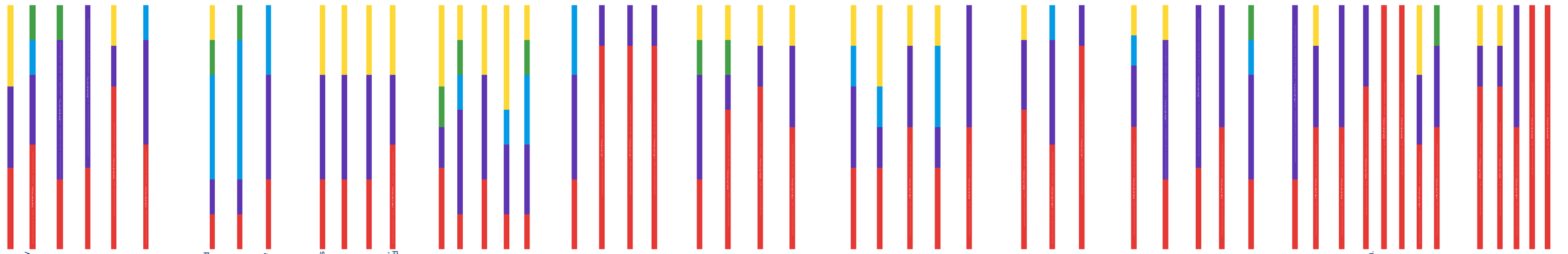
Most respondents frequently said that instructors in their LIS programs: **do not cover the outcomes**; or only **introduce, mention, or allude to outcomes**.

Areas which appear to have **little to no coverage in LIS curricula** include "Data Collection and Analysis," "Management," and "Mentoring, Training, & Coaching."

While this data presents a limited picture of assessment proficiencies included in LIS curricula, one may conclude that additional research is merited as well as substantial communication, outreach, and advocacy to connect professional realities with LIS educational programs.

Results

- Instructors do not cover this outcome.
- Instructors introduce, mention, or allude to this outcome.
- Instructors reinforce this outcome with detailed, in-depth instruction.
- Instructors require students to practice this outcome with relevant tasks or assignments.
- Instructors evaluate this outcome using assessments.



Knowledge of Assessment in Libraries and Higher Education

1.1. Understands the purposes, values, and theories guiding assessment and evaluation methodologies and activities.

1.2. Has a broad understanding of research literature in the field of assessment and the scope, growth, and role of library assessment.

1.3. Recognizes the need to connect library value to university goals and mission through key indicators (learning analytics, library's role in research activity, quality, and visibility). Distinguishes the difference between library and institutional definitions of assessment.

1.4. Monitors and describes current issues related to higher education accountability, multi-institution assessment initiatives, and regional and professional accreditation that guide higher education assessment.

1.5. Stays current with regional and disciplinary accreditation compliance requirements, including data requirements specific to the library.

1.6. Demonstrates familiarity with current national initiatives (LibQUAL+, ROI, NSSE, IPEDS/NCES, Ithaka Survey, balanced scorecard, value of academic libraries, etc.), influential library assessment methods (EBLIP, SAILS, RAILS, Conspectus, etc.) and relevant library standards (ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education).

Ethics

2.1. Protects the welfare and dignity of human subjects and respects the privacy and confidentiality of all library users and library employees. Follows guidelines established by ethical or institutional review boards to maximize benefits and minimize harm.

2.2. Ensures that data is analyzed and reported with integrity and honesty. Displays impartiality and discloses conflicts of interest.

2.3. Abides by professional codes of ethics for librarians such as the American Library Association Code of Ethics and the IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers.

Assessment Methods & Strategies

3.1. Applies quantitative and qualitative assessment methods, with the ability to implement and integrate multiple methods for a mixed-methods approach.

3.2. Selects appropriate influential library assessment methods and applies relevant library standards.

3.3. Designs assessment instruments such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, rubrics, balanced scorecards, and internal data collection forms.

3.4. Manages different approaches to assessment such as action research, ethnographic research, user-centered design, collection and use analysis, citation analysis, usability studies, and evaluation design utilizing input, output, outcomes, and impact measures.

Research Design

4.1. Identifies problems or questions that can be answered by available data sets.

4.2. Demonstrates knowledge and skills of analytical tools (databases, spreadsheets, statistical analysis, qualitative analysis, and data visualization).

4.3. Is trained in ethical or institutional review processes, specifically data management, sharing, security, and ethical conduct in human research.

4.4. Designs research projects to generate data to address a research problem.

4.5. Applies statistical or quantitative research methods to a research problem.

Data Collection & Analysis

5.1. Visualizes and implements a roadmap for attaining optimal data collection and reporting processes, including data automation and integration of multiple data sources.

5.2. Utilizes available time-stamped system data, library data, institutional data, and third party data to enable integrated library reporting capabilities and analysis across multiple data sources.

5.3. Identifies and defines metrics and data sets needed to measure assessment outcomes that are considered high priority.

5.4. Ensures accessibility and appropriate distribution of available data to staff and stakeholders.

Communication & Reporting

6.1. Utilizes data visualization tools and techniques with both qualitative and quantitative data to communicate assessment results. Understands the purpose of charts, graphs, and tables and uses them correctly.

6.2. Prepares and formats data for decision-making processes by both internal and external stakeholders. Demystifies basic metrics and statistics for users.

6.3. Writes compelling narratives, creating reports that follow basic graphic design rules and include evidence-based, actionable analysis. Consults with units or departments to frame needs, outcomes, and next steps. Develops well-crafted business cases for stakeholder buy-in.

6.4. Communicates effectively in oral and written communications. Uses multiple channels to communicate results, such as presentations, as well as staff meetings, via email and LibGuides, etc. Regularly "closes loops" with users, reporting 'what you told us' and 'what we're doing about it.'

Advocacy & Marketing

7.1. Provides data and communications that market the library's value to academic faculty, administrators, staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders.

7.2. Demonstrates persuasive skills to justify resources needed for improvement of the library, and to build institutional capacity and buy-in for projects.

7.3. Encourages participation in library assessment activities (e.g. advocating for key stakeholder participation, managing response rates, etc.).

7.4. Promotes library value and library contributions to the institution's mission and priorities through evidenced-based narrative for deployment by library employees.

7.5. Frames and communicates library impact on institutional focus areas. Demonstrates benefits of library programs and services to the University's current and aspirational state through key indicators. Supports strategic communication.

Collaboration & Partnerships

8.1. Determines key collaborative partners around issues related to assessment, accountability, and impact on campus and beyond. On the campus level, this will include offices responsible for institutional research, assessment, and learning analytics, as well as student support groups.

8.2. Proactively establishes, develops, and maintains partnerships. Contributes to joint initiatives. Seeks advice and consults with others when appropriate.

8.3. Integrates library assessment and data gathering with institutional and national initiatives related to research and learning in higher education.

Leadership

9.1. Acts as a catalyst for change by establishing a shared vision for assessment, conceiving an assessment action plan, and designing and implementing an assessment program that will meet library and institutional goals.

9.2. Takes a systems approach to assessment, recognizing that the library is part of a larger institution with a shared mission and goals. Identifies institutional context, priorities, and decision-making processes. Monitors assessment activities across the institution. Commands a 'place at the table' for library initiatives and contributes to institutional initiatives.

9.3. Gains organizational support and advocates for resources for the assessment program.

9.4. Leverages library and institutional politics and team leadership to persuade managers and colleagues to accept and act on recommendations regarding assessment.

9.5. Utilizes assessment results to inform decisions, solve problems, make plans, and set policies.

Management

10.1. Manages and coordinates library assessment activities.

10.2. Conducts program evaluations, assessing the need for a new program and the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of existing programs.

10.3. Develops, implements, and maintains systems for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting assessment data. Schedules recurrent assessment tasks. Manages assessment data using appropriate tools (e.g. assessment management systems). Develops data reporting forms for efficient internal reporting. Creates dashboards.

10.4. Provides data for reports and surveys (e.g. ACRL, ARL, and NCES IPEDS surveys and accreditation library reports).

10.5. Serves as assessment consultant and provides expertise to managers and librarians.

10.6. Analyzes staffing needs for assessment and develops a staffing strategy.

10.7. Applies principles of project management to assessment projects.

10.8. Prepares and manages the assessment budget allocations.

Mentoring, Training, & Coaching

11.1. Builds capacity for assessment in the library through training and mentoring activities.

11.2. Trains others throughout the library in order to develop expertise, knowledge, and skills in assessment.

11.3. Promotes a culture of assessment and encourages broad engagement by all level of staff in assessment projects.

11.4. Acts as a point of contact for support on assessment projects, providing technical expertise in a selection of assessment measures

11.5. Mentors librarians engaged in assessment activities.