Community College Libraries and Culture of Assessment

A Survey of Library Leaders

Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe,
University of Illinois

Meredith Gorran Farkas,
Portland State University

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"A Culture of Assessment is an organizational environment in which decisions are based on facts, research, and analysis, and where services are planned and delivered in ways that maximize positive outcomes and impacts for customers and stakeholders

A Culture of Assessment exists in organizations where staff care to know what results they produce and how those results relate to customers' expectations. Organizational mission, values, structures, and systems support behavior that is performance and learning focused."

Lakos, Phipps and Wilson (2002) as quoted in Lakos, A. & Phipps, S. E. (2004). "Creating a culture of assessment: A catalyst for organizational change." *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 4(3), 345-361.

Our goal:

A systematic survey of culture of assessment and investigation of factors that facilitate or hinder.

A survey of **libraries**, not librarians

The survey

60 Question Survey

- 10 descriptive questions about the institution or the individual responding for the institution
- 47 yes/no questions
  - inquiry about presence/absence of 16 facilitating factors named in other publications
  - does the presence/absence facilitate or hinder culture of assessment
- 3 open-ended questions about what most facilitates or hinders creation of a culture of assessment
- Respondents presented with different questions depending on their answers to presence/absence of facilitating factors (total questions for each respondent = 41 or 42)

Are there clear expectations for assessment in your library?

○ Yes
◉ No

Has the lack of clear expectations for assessment hindered your library in moving towards an assessment culture?

◉ Yes
○ No

Is assessment a priority of library administration?

◉ Yes
○ No

Has assessment being a priority of administration helped your library move towards an assessment culture?

○ Yes
◉ No

Has your library or library instruction program adopted learning outcomes?

◉ Yes
○ No

Facilitating factors – Presence/Absence

1. Campus-wide assessment initiative
2. Library involvement in campus-wide assessment initiative
3. Clear expectations for assessment in the library
4. Assessment is a priority of library administration
5. Library has adopted learning outcomes
6. Library has assessment plan
7. Library has shared understanding of the purpose of assessment
8. Library staff/faculty are supported in doing assessment
9. Education and training about assessment are supported
10. Library has assessment expertise in-house
11. Library has systems/technologies to support assessment
12. Library leadership offers explicit support to get staff doing assessment
13. Data is available to interested parties
14. Leadership uses assessment data in decision-making
15. Librarians use results to improve practice
16. Library culture is user-focused

Two-Part Study

Stage 1:

Libraries at all U.S. BA/MA/PhD-granting institutions (2012)

Received a 42% response rate (n=672)

Stage 2:

Libraries at all U.S. public community colleges (2014)

Received a 31.5% response rate (n=292)

Results

Would you describe your library as having a culture of assessment, where assessment is a regular part of your institutional practice?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Yes, my library has a culture of assessment		184	63.01%
2	No, my library does not have a culture of assessment		108	36.99%
	Total		292	100.00%

Higher than at 4 year and above institutions (59.23%)

Is there a campus-wide assessment initiative at your college or university?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Yes	████████████	259	88.70%
2	No	██	33	11.30%
	Total		292	100.00%

Higher than at 4 year and above institutions (84.9%)

IS the Library involved in the campus-wide assessment initiative?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Yes		204	79.07%
2	No		54	20.93%
	Total		258	100.00%

Is assessment a priority of library administration?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Yes		231	79.11%
2	No		61	20.89%
	Total		292	100.00%

Higher than at 4 year and above institutions (77.8%)

Does your library have an assessment plan?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Yes		131	44.86%
2	No		161	55.14%
	Total		292	100.00%

Higher than at 4 year and above institutions (40.6%)

Is there a shared understanding of the purpose of assessment in your library?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Yes		187	64.04%
2	No		105	35.96%
	Total		292	100.00%

Higher than at 4 year and above institutions (54.3%)

Are there clear expectations for assessment in your library?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Yes		152	52.05%
2	No		140	47.95%
	Total		292	100.00%

Higher than at 4 year and above institutions (45.7%)

Are library faculty/staff adequately supported in their assessment work?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Yes		185	63.36%
2	No		107	36.64%
	Total		292	100.00%

Higher than at 4 year and above institutions (55.8%)

Does your library have the necessary skills in-house to develop and conduct meaningful assessments and analyze the results?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Yes		181	61.99%
2	No		111	38.01%
	Total		292	100.00%

Higher than at 4 year and above institutions (56%)

Does the library leadership use assessment data systematically in decision-making and planning?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Yes		201	68.84%
2	No		91	31.16%
	Total		292	100.00%

Higher than at 4 year and above institutions (58.5%)

On which facilitating factors did community colleges score significantly (p<0.05) higher?

- Is there a shared understanding of the purpose of assessment in your library?
- Are library faculty/staff adequately supported in their assessment work?
- Does the library leadership use assessment data systematically in decision-making and planning.
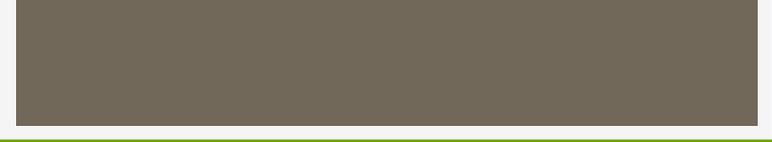
What factors are associated with having Culture of Assessment?

Regional accrediting association is associated with a culture of assessment

	Would you describe your library as having a culture of assessment, where assessment is a regular par...		Total
	Yes, my library has a culture of assessment	No, my library does not have a culture of assessment	
Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools	26 72.22%	10 27.78%	36 100.00%
New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)	11 57.89%	8 42.11%	19 100.00%
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)	11 50.00%	11 50.00%	22 100.00%
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA)	39 46.43%	45 53.57%	84 100.00%
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)	67 74.44%	23 25.56%	90 100.00%
Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)	21 77.78%	6 22.22%	27 100.00%
None of the above	9 64.29%	5 35.71%	14 100.00%
Total	184 63.01%	108 36.99%	292 100.00%

Tenure status is associated with a culture of assessment

	Would you describe your library as having a culture of assessment, where assessment is a regular par...		
	Yes, my library has a culture of assessment	No, my library does not have a culture of assessment	Total
Yes, most are tenure-track faculty	79 71.17%	32 28.83%	111 100.00%
Yes, most are faculty, but are not tenure-track, No one has faculty status	105 58.01%	76 41.99%	181 100.00%
Total	184 63.01%	108 36.99%	292 100.00%

p=0.02
This was not the case in the study of four year and above institutions
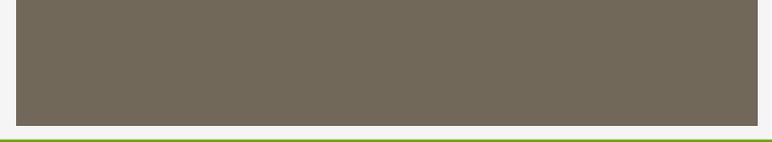
Tenure and faculty status are also significantly associated with library involvement in campus-wide assessment initiatives

P<0.001
This was not the case in the study of four year and above institutions

Having a campus-wide assessment initiative is associated with a culture of assessment

	Would you describe your library as having a culture of assessment, where assessment is a regular par...		
	Yes, my library has a culture of assessment	No, my library does not have a culture of assessment	Total
Yes	172 66.41%	87 33.59%	259 100.00%
No	12 36.36%	21 63.64%	33 100.00%
Total	184 63.01%	108 36.99%	292 100.00%

P<0.001

Without an institutional commitment to assessment, a culture of assessment is far less likely to exist

Institutions with a campus-wide assessment initiative

Institutions with no campus-wide assessment initiative

66% of libraries report having an assessment culture

36% of libraries report having an assessment culture

Library involvement in the campus-wide assessment initiative is associated with a culture of assessment

	Would you describe your library as having a culture of assessment, where assessment is a regular par...		
	Yes, my library has a culture of assessment	No, my library does not have a culture of assessment	Total
Yes	154 75.49%	50 24.51%	204 100.00%
No	17 31.48%	37 68.52%	54 100.00%
Total	171 66.28%	87 33.72%	258 100.00%

$P<0.001$

Having positions dedicated to instruction or assessment is associated with a culture of assessment

	Would you describe your library as having a culture of assessment, where assessment is a regular par...		
	Yes, my library has a culture of assessment	No, my library does not have a culture of assessment	Total
Instruction/Information Literacy Coordinator/Head	83 73.45%	30 26.55%	113 100.00%
Assessment Coordinator/Head	13 86.67%	2 13.33%	15 100.00%
Our library does not have any of these positions	100 56.50%	77 43.50%	177 100.00%
Total	184 63.01%	108 36.99%	292 100.00%

P<0.001
Significantly fewer community colleges report having these positions

Having committees dedicated to instruction or assessment is associated with a culture of assessment

	Would you describe your library as having a culture of assessment, where assessment is a regular par...		
	Yes, my library has a culture of assessment	No, my library does not have a culture of assessment	Total
Assessment Team/Task Force/Committee/etc.	32 86.49%	5 13.51%	37 100.00%
Instruction Team/Task Force/Committee/etc.	46 70.77%	19 29.23%	65 100.00%
Instructional Assessment Team/Task Force/Committee/etc.	24 96.00%	1 4.00%	25 100.00%
Our library does not have any of these committees or groups	114 56.44%	88 43.56%	202 100.00%
Total	184 63.01%	108 36.99%	292 100.00%

P<0.001

Significantly fewer community colleges report having these positions
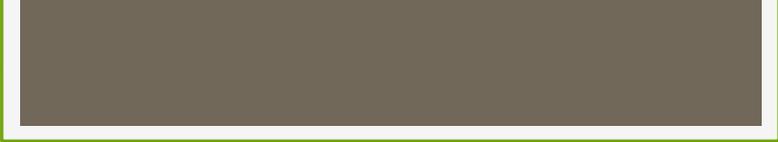
All of the facilitating factors are significantly associated with a culture of assessment

Factors whose presence is most strongly associated with a culture of assessment

- Clear expectations for assessment in the library (90% who have it have an assessment culture)
- Assessment plan (82%)
- Shared understanding of the purpose of assessment in the library (81%)
- Library leadership uses assessment data (78%)
- Library leadership offers explicit support (77%)

Factors whose absence is most strongly associated with not having a culture of assessment

- Assessment is a priority of administration (77% who don't have it don't have an assessment culture)
- Librarians use assessment data (72%)
- Assessment data available to interested parties (74%)
- Library leadership uses assessment data (70%)
- Shared understanding of the purpose of assessment (69%)

What factors are most often perceived as facilitating?

- Clear expectations for assessment in the library (94% who perceive that this facilitates their assessment culture)
- Library has an assessment plan
- Librarians use assessment data to improve practice
- Library leadership uses assessment data
- Existence of learning outcomes

Open-ended responses: What are the most important facilitating factors?

- Institution-wide emphasis on assessment (42)
- Administrative priority and/or support (32)
- Accreditation (24)
- Organizational culture (12)
- Information literacy as a campus-wide outcome (8)

Open-ended responses: What are most hinders creating an assessment culture?

- Lack of sufficient staffing (35)
- Faculty or staff have not made assessment a priority – either due to lack of interest or resistance to assessment (21)
- Lack of time (18)
- Lack of expertise/access to training (12)
- Institution doesn't prioritize assessment (11)

Having a plan matters

Of libraries reporting clear expectations and an assessment plan, **92%** report having a culture of assessment (versus 32% of those who report the absence of both)

Of those indicating assessment is a priority of administration

74% report having a culture of assessment

Of those indicating administration uses assessment data in decision-making

78% report having a culture of assessment

Of those indicating administration adequately supports faculty/staff in assessment work

69% report having a culture of assessment

Of those indicating a library has all three factors

88% report having a culture of assessment
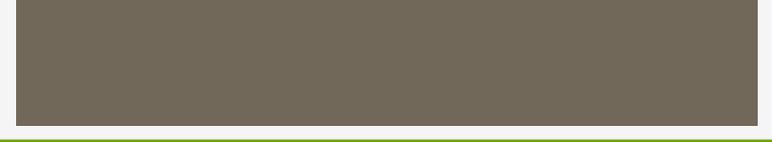
Community college libraries scored higher than libraries at BA/MA/PhD-granting institutions on 13/16 of the facilitating factors.

Why?

Questions? Thoughts? Challenges?

Meredith Gorran Farkas

Portland State University

Gmail: mgfarkas

Twitter: librarianmer

Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe

University of Illinois

Gmail: lisalibrarian

Twitter: lisalibrarian