Are They Learning? Are We?
Learning Outcomes & the Academic Library

Megan Oakleaf, MLS, PhD
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2010 Library Assessment Conference
What do we know about libraries and learning?
"You can never learn less, you can only learn more."

- R. Buckminster Fuller
Are students learning?
What do they learn?
INFORMATION LITERACY
• AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes & VALUE Rubrics
• ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Students
• NCTE 21st Century Literacies and Curriculum Framework
• Partnership for 21st Century Skills
• AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner
• Common Core State “College and Career Readiness” Standards
• CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education
• Accreditation Standards
• Institutional Co-Curricular Standards
Oh my God! Today’s comic is about breathing oxygen! THAT’S WHAT I BREATHE!
What's in a name?
That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

William Shakespeare
How much do they learn?
Defining information needs
Finding information
Evaluating information
Using information
Using information ethically
Authentic, Integrated, Performance Assessments

Rubrics

Organization of Assessment Data by Outcome

Assessment Management Systems
Is what (we hope) they’re learning important?
THE VALUE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES
A Comprehensive Research Review and Report

Prepared by Dr. Megan Oakleaf, Syracuse University
for the Association of College and Research Libraries
Does what they’re learning change students’ lives?
you should eat some vegetables. They are probably pretty good for you.

Probably
How can it change their lives?
So what parts of academic libraries help change lives?
student enrollment
student retention & graduation
student career success
student GPA/test achievement
student learning
student experience
faculty research productivity
faculty grants
faculty teaching
institutional reputation

Impact!
Library Contributions in the form of Resources & Services

Campus Needs, Goals, & Outcomes

Impact!
Which of these library services/resources impact student enrollment? retention? etc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus Needs, Goals, &amp; Outcomes</th>
<th>Reference Service</th>
<th>Instructional Services</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Reserves</th>
<th>ILL</th>
<th>Acquisitions</th>
<th>Collections</th>
<th>Special Collections &amp; Archives</th>
<th>Physical Space</th>
<th>Other:</th>
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Impact!

Library Contributions in the form of Resources & Services

Campus Needs, Goals, & Outcomes

Library Assessment & Record Keeping

Documented Impact
Now
What?
Stakeholders need and deserve evidence of impact.

We have evidence of impact.

Hurray! Report impact then think of ways to be even better.

We improve. We learn.
Stakeholders need and deserve evidence of impact. We have no evidence of impact. We have to get it. We have evidence we’re not currently making a discernable impact. Think of ways to change and experiment to get better. We improve. We learn.
What do you mean we have to learn?
PRAGMATISM

- Incorporate discoveries from action
- Reflect on past experiences & interpret environment
- Build knowledge through experimentation
- Engage in inquiry to reduce doubt
- Use reasoning to create new rules for action
Enact decisions to increase learning

Identify learning outcomes

Create and enact learning activities

Gather data to check for learning

Interpret data

ILIAC

Formulate a research question → Evaluate research product → Find sources that help answer the question → Appraise (evaluate) the sources → Apply information gleaned from sources
Who’s job is it to embrace the learning?
Mine.
Yours.
Ours.
Learning: The “TO DO” List

✓ Articulate outcomes for assessment.
✓ Consider non-library centric perspectives.
✓ Articulate the ability of libraries to change lives, and get excited about it!
✓ Increase facility with learning assessment tools, explore existing data, or decide to collect new data.
✓ Roll up assessments into definable, defensible, interesting evidence of library impact on learning.
✓ Develop assessment action plans.
✓ Network and seek assistance from experts as needed.
✓ Embrace the learning.
Are They Learning?

Are We?
When in doubt…
Do something good
Be of good heart
Fail forwards
Bounce back
Celebrate learning and **learn more**.

Adapted from Robert Chambers
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WAIT! WE NEED TO CONSIDER ALL OUR STAKEHOLDERS!