AALC Annual Report 2015

Oviatt Library

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The Oviatt Library’s Assessment Team consists of four librarians who are appointed by the Dean. The Assessment Team’s role is to coordinate and report on assessment efforts being carried out by different units throughout the library as well as to carry out assessment that would not be part of the daily operations of a single unit. Librarians and staff within the Oviatt Library perform a wide range of functions from teaching classes of students to cataloging, processing, and shelving books, so assessment activities vary widely. This report discusses three assessment efforts carried out by the Assessment Team that focus on student use of the library, librarian use of student assessment techniques in classes, and statistics collected in different functional areas of the Oviatt Library.

**A. Student Library Survey**

The Student Library Survey was conducted during the 2014 Fall Semester. The survey was intended as a follow-up to the 2013 Student Library Survey designed to assess usage of the following four areas related to the library and its users: Collections, Space, Technology, and Services. Out of a sample of 10,000 randomly-generated students currently enrolled at CSUN, there were 782 responses finishing the survey to completion. A summary of the result are as follows:

1. Library Collections
These questions were designed to assess student use of library materials, including their use of online databases, print and electronic books, print and electronic journals, and audio/video collections. Overall, the use of e-books and e-journals surpasses that of print books and journals. Course Reserves were reported as fairly well-used ( 43%). Lastly, although students are aware of the Music and Media department, (which provides access to multimedia formats), only a small percentage of students actually used multimedia offered by the library.
2. Use of Space
Our 2014 survey asked questions about the use, availability and preferences of the physical space of the library. For individual study areas students do not seem to have a problem finding availability. The most popular individual study areas are tables, partitioned study desks, one person lounge seats, and individual study rooms. Regarding overall furniture use, the most popular are tables with charging stations, small study tables with no charging outlets, and arm chairs with attached writing surfaces. The availability of group study areas is inconclusive, as 42.71% of the respondents reported that group study areas are ‘frequently’ available while 42.07% reported ‘infrequently’ available. Tables, two-person lounge seats, and group study rooms are the most popular group study areas. The charging stations lockers are underutilized, with a large amount of students not aware.
3. Library Technology
Library desktops are heavily used by students with over 72% reporting they use them a few times per semester. 63.63% find them to be “always” and “frequently” available. In contrast to the popularity of library desktops, laptops and ipads offered for checkout are experiencing significantly less proportionate use. Despite the infrequency of laptop and ipad checkouts, students feel strongly that the library should continue to provide these services, including expanding tablet checkout to include non-Apple devices.
4. Library Services
Students reported being satisfied with all of the service points in the library, no student reported being unsatisfied with service they received. The same goes for the library’s online services.

**B. Assessment Techniques used by Reference and Instruction Librarians**

1. Informal Pre-Assessment activities among Reference and Instruction Librarians

After the September 2015 AALC meeting, where informal assessment was a discussion topic of interest, the assessment liaison initiated a discussion among librarians’ practices of information pre-assessment of students for their learning. The discussion occurred during a department meeting and became a focus group of activities and strategies that are practiced among colleagues to assess what students’ prior experiences are with information systems, library services and resources. The following are some of the approaches different librarians take to informal pre-assessment to gauge student’s learning needs prior to a library instruction session.

Some librarians have a ready-made quiz that students are given before they come to the library instruction session. In this quiz, students are asked to locate certain key areas on the library webpage that will be necessary for their accessing of resources including finding the list of databases, locating the library catalog, and locating the contact information for their subject specialist.

Some pre-quizzes are made available to students in Moodle. The availability of utilizing a Moodle quiz is enhanced when a librarian is embedded into the Moodle course.  Still, some librarians use alternative platforms for quizzes such as Socrative, Google forms, or a printed Word document. Similarly, some librarians utilize polling from Poll Everywhere as a pre-assessment to find out if students are familiar with certain types of resources. If technology is not an option at the moment of pre-assessment, many librarians ask for a show of hands during a simple Q&A to identify where students are with their research skills and information literacy knowledge upon entering the one-shot library session.  A more anonymous option used by a librarian is a 3x5 index card where students can write answers to questions posed by the librarian and be collected for brief and initial analysis.

The following are specific examples of the types of questions librarians pose for pre-assessment:

Information systems:

* How many of you have searched (or, are familiar with searching) the Library Catalog?
* How many of you have searched (or, are familiar with searching) OneSearch for articles?
* How many of you have used a named subject specific database for your research?
* How many of you use Google or Google Scholar for your research needs?

Library resources and services:

* How many of you have used library services such as Ask a Librarian? Inter Library Loan?
* How many of you have used citation guides (under Cite Your Sources)?
* How familiar are you with citation management tools such as EndNote Web?
* How many of you have \***never**\* used the Library resources and services?

Research goals:

* What questions do you have regarding your research?
* What do you hope to learn/ accomplish in today’s session?

2. Informal assessment for learning throughout library instruction session

Many librarians continue informal assessment by checking in with students throughout the instruction session to see if they need to go over or review anything that was just demonstrated. The following is what one librarian said she does during, and at the end of, her instruction sessions:

*“During the Class and At the End*:

Based on their responses in the above assessment, I may shift my lesson plan to focus more on topic mapping, database targeting, or empirical articles (what are they?) [for example]. This can get tricky, in terms of making sure I’m still covering everything the instructor has asked me to in my allotted time frame. However, based on follow-up (informal) assessment via word clouds or self-nominated student statements, there’s more clarity on certain Information Literacy topics by the end, and at the end of the day that’s what matters—to me anyway.”

3. Informal post-assessment for learning outcomes among Reference and Instruction Librarians

At the end of the session, students then are asked questions about what they learned:

* How would you search for a book? (How would you find and locate a book?)
* How would you search for an article? (How would you find, locate, and access a book?)
* If you need to consult the APA guide, how would you find the Library’s APA guide?
* How many of you feel confident \***now**\* about using systems to conduct your research?

**C. Statistics Gathered by Library Service Points and Coordinators**

In September of 2015, the Oviatt Library’s Assessment team developed and deployed an online survey in an effort to gather information on the types of statistics various service point or department coordinator’s collect. Respondents were asked to report data and statistics collected, regardless of whether the information would be analyzed or acted upon. The overarching aim of the survey was to gather and utilize this information to inform the Library’s assessment report, as well as to shape and guide the Library’s future assessment plan.

The survey, which consisted of five questions, was designed to gather preliminary information on the following three areas: 1) What statistics are being collected in the Oviatt Library? 2) When individuals gather statistics in their area? 3) How statistics are collected and what tools are used to do so?

In total, the survey was completed by 12 individuals in the following departments or service points: Cataloguing Metadata, Music and Media, RIOS, Guest Services, Creative Media Studio, Interlibrary Loan, CAMS, LCT, Reference Services, TCC and RPM. Survey data demonstrated that the service point and department coordinators at the Oviatt Library use a multipronged approach in which various assessment techniques and methods are applied to assess a variety of services, facilities and programs.

Closer analysis of the results indicates that statistics are being collected regularly in a variety of areas and for various purposes. The majority of statistics are focused on headcounts and usage data, with 8 respondents reporting that they collect usage statistics on physical spaces and or physical and digital resources. In addition to usage statistics, data is also being collected on bibliographic records, circulation, reference services and instructional sessions.

Respondents were also asked about when and how frequently they collect statistics in their specific areas. Results revealed that 11 respondents collect some type of data or information on an ongoing basis. While 6 respondents asserted that they also collect statistics and data annually, 3 claimed to do so if a need arose or existed. Finally, only 1 participant indicated that they collect statistics once per semester.

The assessment team’s survey also enquired about the types of tools and resources respondents used to collect statistics. The survey showed that the same tools were often used to collect statistics for different service points and departments. Millennium, the current Integrated Library System, was being used by several respondents to create various types of reports and generate lists. LibAnswers was also being used to record statistics, predominantly by respondents who supervised a service point that offered reference, information, or directional services. Additionally, manual tabulation was a popular option for those who conduct head counts, gate counts and or collected usage statistics.

The information derived from the survey demonstrates that a large swath of statistical data and information is continually being collected at any given time during the year, across various service points and departments. Additionally, the survey demonstrates that many individuals are using the same tools or similar methods to collect different types of statistics. Although not all of the statistics being collected at the Oviatt Library are being analyzed or shared, the survey reveals a real opportunity for increased sharing of data, between and across all levels. This type of sharing could assist the Library in recognizing and utilizing the full potential of the data, further facilitating a more comprehensive and coherent statistical picture of the Oviatt Library and its patrons.