

Education and Assessment Skills: Preliminary findings from a Survey

Study Background:

- Due to the relative novelty of assessment librarianship there has been little research regarding the nature of these positions.
- Similarly, there has been little exploration of the educational preparation and continued professional development opportunities for assessment librarianship.
- This poster provides a preliminary report on findings from a survey of librarians working in English-speaking academic libraries.
- Position listings for assessment librarians has increased dramatically over the past several years.
- According to Passoneau and Erickson's (2014) analysis of 231 ads, employers seek assessment librarian candidates with a broad array of knowledge and skills (p. 7).
- Askew and Theodore-Shusta (2013) analyzed LIS course syllabi for assessment-related material and skills, finding:
 - Inconsistent assessment-related terminology in LIS course materials
 - "assessment" only mentioned in 10% of course materials (p. 6).
- These two studies raise an important question: how and where are prospective assessment librarians acquiring the knowledge necessary to successfully meet employers' expectations?
- Survey Design:
 - Populated with tasks gathered from Passoneau and Erickson's paper, supplemented with the researchers' own analysis of assessment position ads.
 - Queries respondents about their work, how and where they acquired the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully accomplish work-related tasks.
 - Based on a similar instrument regarding electronic resources librarianship developed by Fleming-May and Grogg (2010).
 - Distributed electronically via email requests on academic library-related lists.

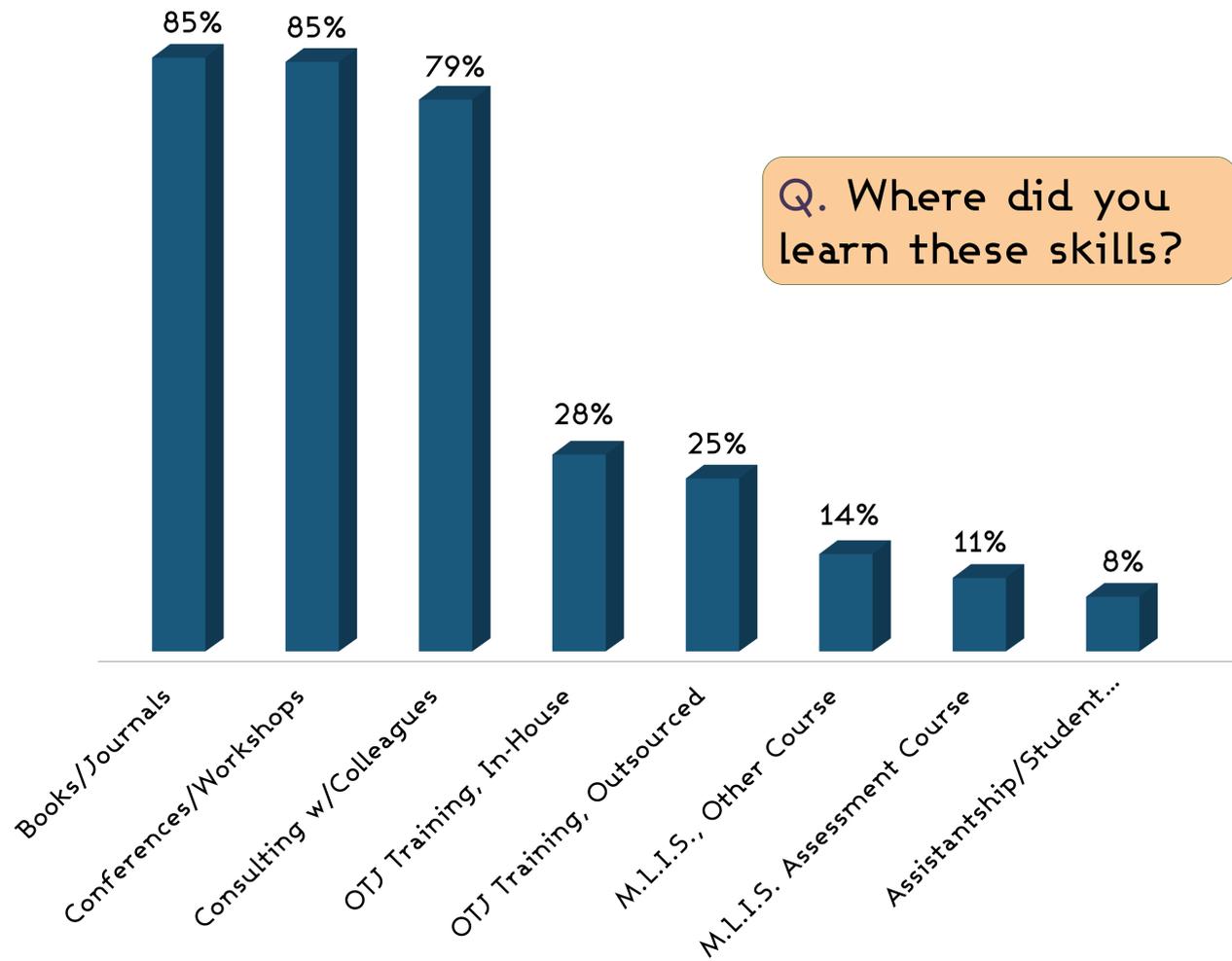
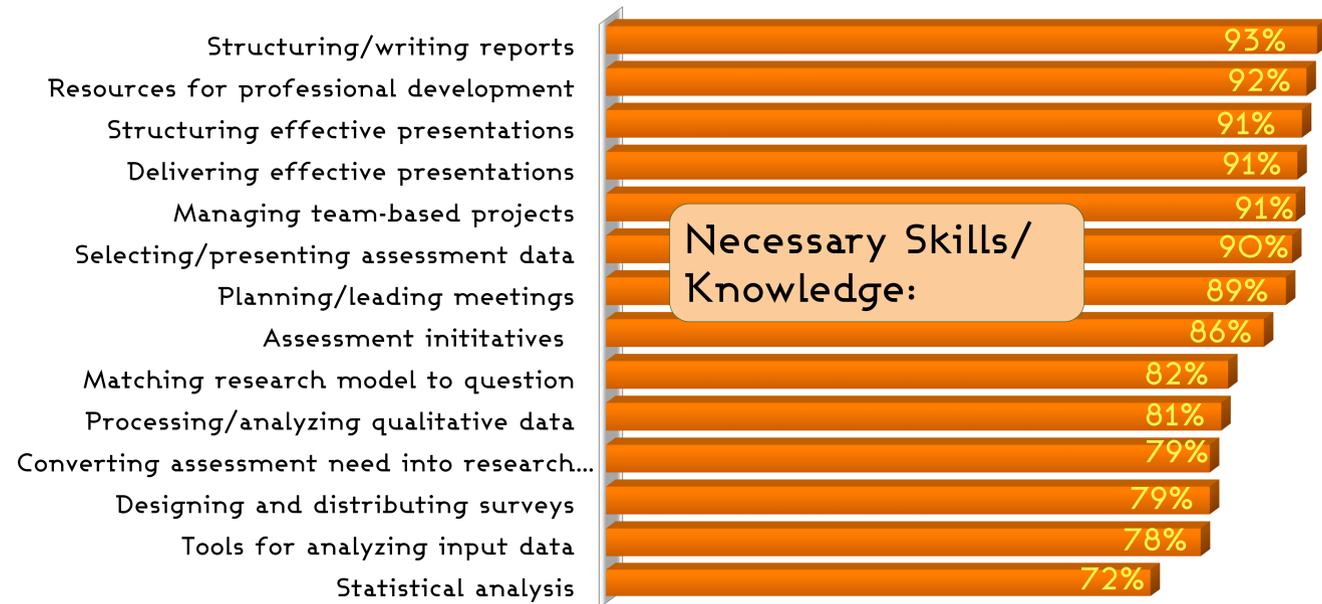
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Survey Findings:



Q. Where did you learn these skills?

I have found [assessment is] something you pick up as you move along in your career, not something easily taught in Library School (though I have come to value my statistical analysis class, lo these many years later).

Assessment seems like a very scary thing for people who know nothing about it, especially people who come to librarianship from a humanities discipline. I felt very under-prepared to conduct assessment. It has taken me years of proactive dedication to learn what I have learned up till now, and I still feel like I have huge gaps in my knowledge.

General Comments from Respondents:

...too many library programs mistake "research methods" for truly qualified assessment techniques, when these courses are taught by instructors poorly qualified in mathematical statistics and sociologically sound survey design and interpretation.

I graduated from a highly ranked library school in 2005...I certainly hope that programs have gotten better about incorporating assessment.

- Future Directions:**
- This research will:
- Inform employers about assessment librarians' capabilities, skills, and support needs.
 - Apprise LIS education programs of the educational and professional development needs of students and alumni in this growing field.
 - Inform prospective assessment librarians about employers' expectations and requirements.
 - Inform assessment librarians of the types of tasks that occupy their colleagues at other institutions.
 - Provide assessment librarians with welcome information about opportunities for professional development.