Educating Assessors:
Preparing Professionals with Micro and Macro skills
This presentation is about:

• Do we need assessment (evaluation) skills?

  Assuming we do

• How do we get them?
Enjoy Seattle!

I am Rachel Applegate

MLS professor (Indiana U.) (10 years)
LIS Chair (2 years)
Higher Learning Commission (regional accrediting agency) team chair (5 years chair)
Small college library director (8 years)
Reference librarian (10 years)
Practical Evaluation Techniques for Librarians
Managing the Small College Library

LIS-S 505
Evaluation of Information Sources and Services
Assessment or Evaluation?

• In **higher education**, “assessment” is generally used for institution-wide endeavors and climate (“a culture of assessment”) and student learning outcomes; “evaluation” is for individual instances particularly with non-academic areas (e.g. student affairs).

• Evaluation (“program evaluation”) is more common in education, social services, and philanthropy (granting agencies) areas.
I pick....

Evaluation

Arbitrarily and

To break a bit out of the phrase libraryassessment
Why evaluation?

- Philosophy: *it’s the right thing to do*
- Pressure: *it’s what funders want us to do*
- Practicality: There are jobs out there!
Philosophy

ALA Competences of Professional Librarianship (for all graduates of MLS programs)

25% : 8 core areas: 2 mention evaluation
10% : 42 sub-points: 4 mention evaluation
ALA Competences

• 8C. The concepts behind, and methods for, assessment and evaluation of library services and their outcomes.

• 6A. The fundamentals of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

• 4C. The methods of assessing and evaluating the specifications, efficacy, and cost efficiency of technology-based products and services.

• 5D. Information literacy/information competence techniques and methods, numerical literacy, and statistical literacy.
Pressure

Accreditation

“Accreditation assures the public and the government of the efficiency and outcomes of institutions of higher education.”
Funders don’t just want to know what you will do, but want you to specify, measure, and report what you have done. Internally, you want to know how much it costs/the best way to get done what you have achieved.
Practicality

Are there **jobs** that specify evaluation responsibilities and evaluation skills?

Data: Random sample—

- 20 members of the **Association of Research Libraries**
- 20 members of the **Urban Library Council**
- NYPL (ULC) and Boston PL (ARL) separately grouped as “public-research”
Jobs

• 123 total jobs posted (April 2014)
  – Includes all full-time and listed at that library/organization, regardless of MLS or not

• 32% had some mention of an evaluation role (15% minor/in passing, 15% had some; for 2% it was the major role)

  *Mild positive correlation: degree of assessment and salary!*
Evaluation was:

- More than half
- Less than half
- Minimal
- None

Number of Jobs

out of 128

Public

Research

Public-research

Number of Jobs

out of 128
Number of Jobs
out of 128

In the jobs, evaluation mentions were:
Non-evaluation jobs

• Library information assistant
• Major gifts officer
• Senior applications developer
• Public services librarian II
• Librarian
Evaluation Jobs
Minimal mention

• Library Services Manager (Assistant Director): ...Cost effectiveness, monitor expenditures, continually benchmark approaches

• Project Manager: Qualifications: Strong quantitative and qualitative data analysis skills, as well as experience conducting research

• Business Research and Instruction Librarian: Designs, teaches and assesses instruction sessions...

• Staff secretary: Compiling and reporting statistics
Evaluation Jobs
Moderate (less than half)

• Branch manager: Tracks and analyzes operational data and statistics; creates financial, statistical and narrative reports on branch library operations.

• Librarian III-Children’s Services: Collects, maintains and evaluates data relating to Children's Services, branch performance and program effectiveness.

• Social Media Marketing Associate: Generate reports and translate data into actionable insights that will inform editorial decisions and content tactics, Run AB tests to optimize campaigns.
Evaluation Jobs: Major

n = 2 of 128

- Business Analyst: ....professional duties related to the review, assessment, and development of business processes. He/She will focus on the effective use of resources, both people and technology.

- Assessment and Statistics Coordinator ($60,000). (pervasive)
If evaluation, then:
Where do the skills come from?

- ALA continuing education options
- State library association conference sessions
- Graduate library science program courses

Small study showed that for digital issues, not-born-digital librarians preferred state library conferences to gain new skills. (Long & Applegate, 2008)
ALA Divisions

• Spring 2014: 341 programs offered by 11 ALA divisions, of which 24 were about evaluation generally or about a specific evaluation technique

• All online-recorded, live webinars, and conference sessions, listed as “continuing education.”
No mention

- Seven divisions had relatively few professional development courses/sessions listed, and almost none (just 1, YALSA) were about evaluation
- AASL (6 total), ALSC (8), ASCLA (7), LITA (13), United for Libraries (8), YALSA (37, 1 evaluation: “Demonstrating impact through teen summer reading”)

No mention
Other divisions

• Out of 238 programs, 23 (10%) had something to do with evaluation

• 18% for Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA) offerings
Professional Development Programs

- RUSA
- LLAMA
- ACRL
- PLA
- ALCTS

Not  Evaluation
Non-evaluation PD offerings

• Personal digital archiving
• Disaster response
• Common Core
• Floating collection: how it can work
• Introduction to data management plans
• Creating leadership development training
PD courses for Evaluation

• Evaluating print book and e-book patron-driven acquisitions
• Holdings comparisons: Why are they so complicated?
• A tale of two libraries: Data evaluation through the eyes of an academic librarian and a public librarian
• Leveraging national data to advocate locally
• How to conduct usability studies: A librarian primer
State Library Association Conference Sessions

• Purposive sample of 8 conferences
• 7 states; 1 state, both 2013 and 2014
• Varied by region, size and presence of graduate library programs

• 476 total sessions: 6% had a relation to evaluation
Association Sessions

Not evaluation:

Primarily how-to, updates

• Basics of preservation
• Revolutionize your library with strong partnerships
• Conversations with the [State] Library Commission
Association Sessions

**Results** sessions: where the primary focus was on what an evaluation had found out: 10 sessions

- Parents, alumni and libraries: What customers really believe about the library
- Turning the tables: Assessing student worker satisfaction in peer-staffing models
- Patrons on performance: The library web as users see it
Association Sessions

**Techniques:** specifically about how to conduct evaluation (or why one should).

- How to listen to your patrons: Maximizing value and outcomes through community insight
- Excel With Excel
- Google Analytics with how-to-directions
- Response requested: Better surveys for better Decisions
MLS
Graduate Library Education

• Program requirements for:
  – Research
  – Management
  – Evaluation

• 2004 (from 2005 ALISE statistics); n=48
• 2014 (from webpages); n=50
• ALISE members reporting data; degree requirements for closest to “MLS”
### Required courses:

#### Percent of Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Required in 2004</th>
<th>Required in 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation*</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Evaluation courses were sometimes an option for “research” not an additional course
Management course names

• Almost all were “management of” “libraries”/“information centers” or by-type

• Others:
  – Achieving Organizational Excellence
  – Management and Systems Analysis
  – Organizational Management and Strategy
Research course names

• Almost all are “Research” “Intro to” or “Research in…”

• Also:
  – Contextual Inquiry and Project Management
  – Designing Principled Inquiry
  – Educational Research and Management
Evaluation course names

• Counted as both research and evaluation:
  – Research & Evaluation for LIS
  – Research & Evaluation Methods

• Counted as both management and evaluation:
  • Management and Systems Analysis
Pure-Evaluation Courses

- Assessing Information Needs
- Evaluation of Resources and Services
- Evaluation of Information Systems
- Evaluation Methods
- Library Planning, Marketing and Assessment

The only instances of “assessment” in listings of required courses
If Evaluation Skills Are Needed and they are needed

Do MLS program research courses provide graduates with appropriate skills?
Questions?
Comments?

What do you want to see in the paper?

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If you’re curious

The jaguar head is for IUPUI: Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis.

The MLS program in Indianapolis is part of the MLS offered by Indiana U. as a whole

Zoom in on the photo (xray) to see why I can’t join you. (not gory, I promise)