The Library Learning Narrative: A Pilot Project to Capture Learning Outcomes at the Reference Desk

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Ask Questions

• How can Reference Services articulate its value to stakeholders?

• Could Reference transactions align with student learning outcomes to better articulate the value of Reference Services?

ARTICULATE

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ASSEMBLE

Identify

• Learning trends and other criteria from Reference statistics to determine the types of information currently recorded by librarians

• Framework for aligning Reference transactions with student learning outcomes to articulate value of Reference Services

Review literature

AACU Information Literacy VALUE Rubric. (2014, July 31).

Gather inspiration

• DART
  (Data Analysis Reference Tracker - Hudock & Sullivan, 2011)
  Program to customize locations, patron types, question types and categories, time spent, and communication mode

• READ Scale
  (Reference Effort Assessment Data - Gertich & Berard, 2010)
  Six-point scale that measures skills, knowledge, and techniques used by librarians during Reference transactions.

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The Library Learning Narrative ...

**ASSESS**

**Map Reference Transactions to Learning Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Number of Transactions</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>1,247</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>952</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>2,856</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>1,247</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Literacy</td>
<td>1,247</td>
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</table>

**Create New Transaction Form**

**Produce Data Set from Transactions** *

**ADAPT**

**Reflect on statements**

Re-envisioning Reference Services through the lens of campus or national learning outcomes is a meaningful way for academic libraries to: 1) Document their educational impact; and 2) Demonstrate their contributions to the university learning mission. Moving forward, the library can articulate both the number of Reference desk interactions and time spent supporting student skill-building toward campus learning outcomes.

**Limitations**

1) Differing levels of participation librarians.* Lack of data and librarian participation dilutes the results. 29% of non-directional interactions were recorded as not associated with learning outcomes.
2) Inter-rater reliability. It is unclear whether participating librarians are recording transactions in the same manner.

**Next steps**

1) Recruit more librarians to participate.
2) Work on inter-rater reliability among participating librarians.
3) Map actions to the ACRL’s Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education.

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**AGREE**

**Interpret data**

The project created valuable data that offers evidence of the different types of learning that at the Reference desk, with 62% of non-directional connections mapped to the AACU or Udaho learning outcomes. 33% of these actions can be mapped to more than one learning outcome.

The data showed 1,247 Reference and directional questions recorded by participating Reference librarians during the 2016/2017 Fall and Spring semesters. 952 of these interactions were classified by librarians as Reference questions (76%).

During the 952 transactions, 2,856 Reference-related actions can be mapped to learning outcomes. 53% of the time only one learning outcome-related actions occurred; 32% of the time, two actions occurred; and 11% of the time, three actions occurred.

Of the non-directional transactions recorded (removing all “No Data” questions), the man ACRL Information Literacy Standard associated with Reference interactions was Access (84%).

**Known Item Search**

mapped to learning outcomes for using evidence in critical thinking & communication, accounted for nearly 51% of Primary interactions and 33% of the overall interactions with patrons.

**Database/Catalog Demo** (transfer and learning) accounted for 15% of overall learning outcome interactions and is mapped to the Udaho learning outcome of Transfer.

**LC Call Number Overview and Summit/ILL Borrowing Process** each accounted for 14% of learning outcomes-related transactions. The transactions can be mapped to the Udaho learning outcome of Transfer.

**AACU Learning Outcomes**: 42% were associated with Transfer (Integrated Learning), 44% were associated with Evidence (Critical Thinking).

**Udaho Learning Outcomes**: 42% of learning outcome actions were associated with Using Sources & Evidence to Accomplish a Purpose (Communicate); 42% were also associated with Transfer (Learn & Integrate); and 11% were associated with the Think & Create outcome developing Evidence.

**Produce statement**

The 2016-17 dataset produced evidence-based statements about the library’s value and impact on student learning, for example . . .

- Udaho librarians average about 100 patrons interactions (98.8) at the Reference desk per semester that support campus-wide learning outcomes.
- 42% of interactions can be associated with the Udaho learning outcomes of Transfer, such as developing skills like searching a databases (Learn & Integrate).
- Udaho librarians spend almost one credit hour (13.85 hours) on non-directional questions per semester.