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Small Library Assessment Hills You Can Climb

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University of Kentucky

From the Selected Works of Julene L. Jones

July 26, 2023

Small Library Assessment Hills You Can Climb

Julene L. Jones, *University of Kentucky*
Anita R Hall, *University of Louisville*
Lee Ann Lannom, *Vanderbilt University*



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Available at: <https://works.bepress.com/julene/53/>

SMALL LIBRARY ASSESSMENT

HILLS YOU CAN CLIMB

Anita Hall, Julene Jones, and Lee Ann Lannom
July 2023

Hosted by ALA Core: Leadership, Infrastructure,
Futures

WHO ARE WE?

Anita Hall



Assessment & Analytics
Librarian, University of
Louisville

Julene Jones



Director of Library
Assessment, University
of Kentucky

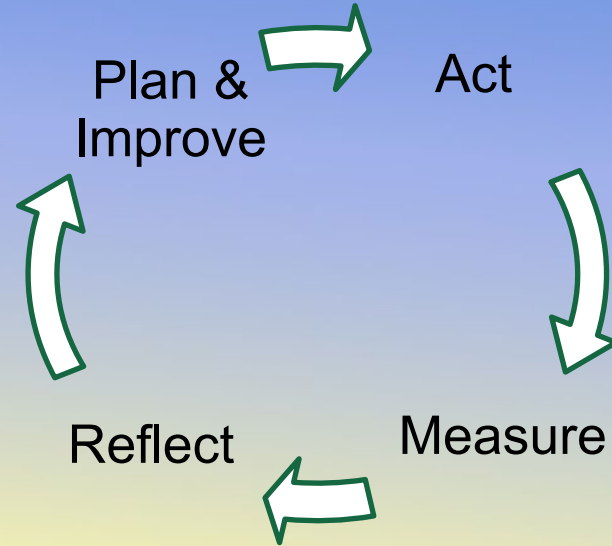
Lee Ann Lannom



Assessment Librarian,
Vanderbilt University

WHAT IS ASSESSMENT? WHY DO IT?

Cycle of continuous
improvement /
evaluation of impact



COMMON AREAS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARY ASSESSMENT



USAGE

Resources, collections, equipment, spaces, services



SERVICE QUALITY

Customer service, timeliness, accuracy



USER EXPERIENCE

Outreach, belonging, web design, functionality, programming/instruction



IMPACT

What did we help you accomplish? Effectiveness, student success, research support

COMMON ASSESSMENT METHODS



USAGE

Observations, Year-over-year statistics, Headcounts



SERVICE QUALITY

Focus groups, Surveys, Feedback forms



USER EXPERIENCE

Usability testing, Heat maps, Focus groups, Needs assessments



IMPACT

Focus groups, Surveys, Data comparisons



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- What are your questions? / Why do you want this data?
- Align assessment activities with library or institutional initiatives
- USE your data, don't just collect it!

CLIMB A HILL!

Examples of small hills we've climbed

The background features a stylized landscape with green mountains and trees against a blue and yellow sky. The mountains are rendered in various shades of green, and the sky transitions from a bright yellow at the bottom to a deep blue at the top. The overall style is clean and modern.

01

CHANGES IN INSTRUCTION:

*Assessing cross-departmental
foundation courses versus
one-off instruction*

MEASURING LEARNING OUTCOMES



COURSE INSTRUCTION

Change to offer instruction in graduate foundation courses



NEW SURVEY

Used Microsoft Forms for quick, mobile-friendly form



FUTURE

With faculty cooperation, add instruction to all foundation courses



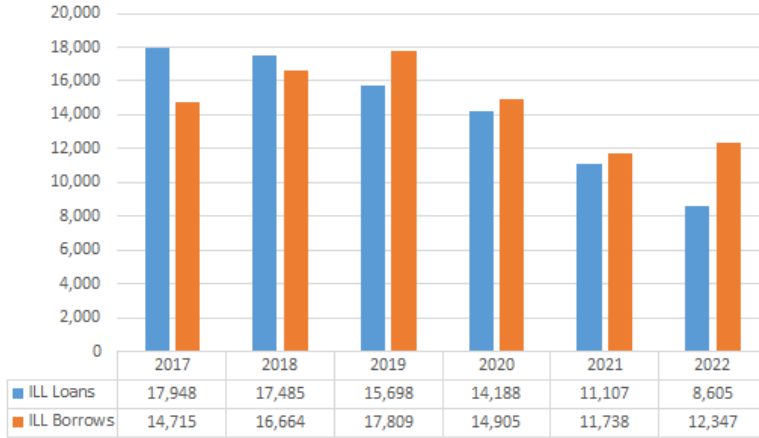
02

BENCHMARK YOUR ACTIVITIES

*Annual internal comparison &
comparisons to
peers or benchmarks*

INSTITUTIONAL FOCUS: INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL

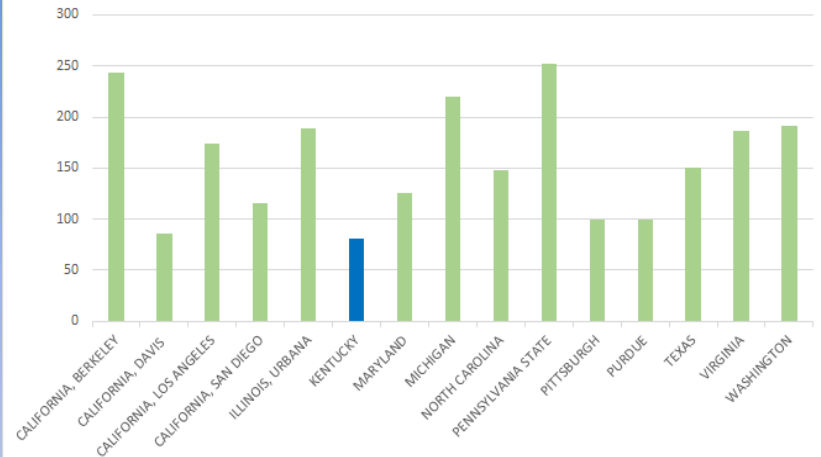
UK ILL Loans & Borrows, 2017-2022 (ARL Q.21)



YEAR-OVER-YEAR

UK's Library Assessment Dashboard:
<https://uky.libinsight.com/assess>

Count of Professional Staff, Aspirational Benchmarks, ARL FY21



EXTERNAL BENCHMARKS

Tip: To compare institutions: normalize data by count of 1,000 students, 100 professors, etc.

The background features a stylized landscape with green mountains and dark green trees under a blue sky with white stars. The number '03' is centered at the top in a large, white, sans-serif font.

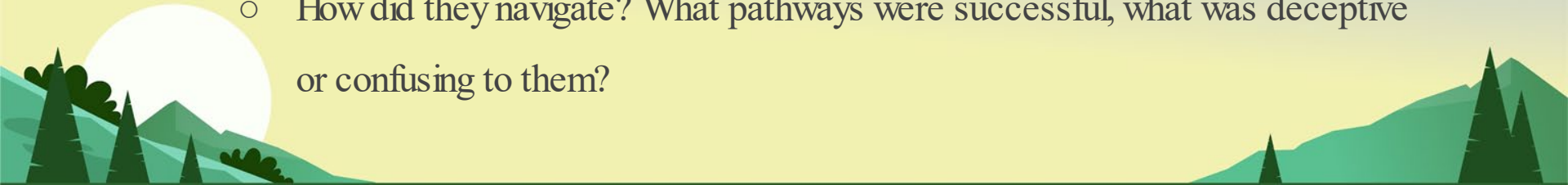
03

WEB UPDATES

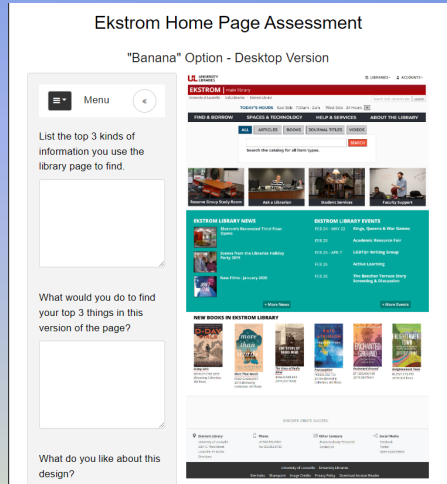
Quick & agile feedback to
make impactful change

DIGITAL “SCAVENGER HUNTS”

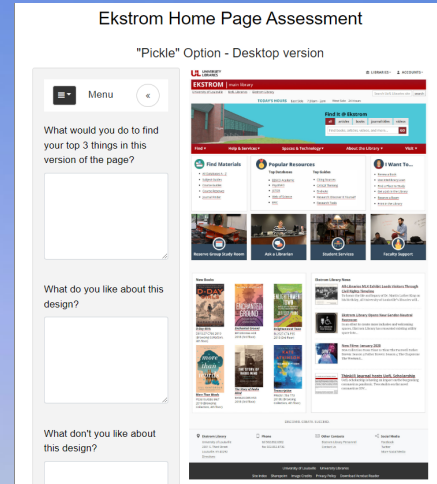
- Start with what you want users to be able to do/find - short list of tasks that are representative
- Ask participants to accomplish these tasks - observe and record without guidance
- Reviewing results:
 - Were they able to complete the tasks successfully? How many attempts did it take?
 - How did they navigate? What pathways were successful, what was deceptive or confusing to them?



A/B TESTING WITH LIBWIZARD



Allow users to view a demo site (image mockup and/or HTML) and provide feedback



For live HTML, could also do a task-based assessment like scavenger hunts!

04

UTILITY OF SMALL SURVEYS

Non-generalizable data is still
useful!

SURVEY RESULTS MAY NOT BE REPRESENTATIVE, BUT ARE USEFUL!

COMPARE AGAINST
PAST RESULTS



PROVIDE VALID, ACTUAL
PERCEPTIONS



DEMONSTRATE TRENDS





05

ADVISORY BOARDS / FOCUS GROUPS

Dive deeper into topics of interest

IN-DEPTH, QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

STANDING ADVISORY BOARDS

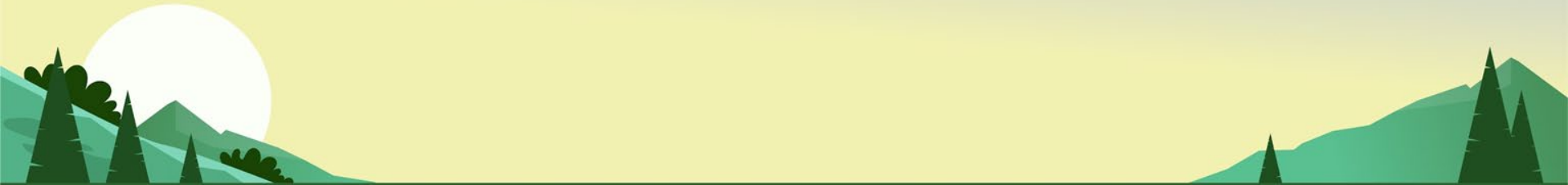
- Allow you to build trust/relationships for more meaningful conversations
- Can return to topics over time
- Require “care and feeding”

TOPICAL FOCUS GROUPS

- Allow you to recruit for specific populations based on goals
- May not be as forthcoming without long-term relationship
- Need to recruit new participants each time

FACILITATING A FOCUS GROUP

- Plan, plan plan! Prepare questions/ feedback activities in advance
- Develop “conversation-deepeners” to prompt and probe on initial questions
 - But be willing to stay quiet as well!
- Offer multiple ways to give feedback, including non-verbal
- Be flexible: prepare, but be willing to let the conversation guide you
- Having a second facilitator to keep time, take notes, etc. is a game-changer!



06

COLLECTING STUDENT FEEDBACK

Using QR codes during events

QR CODE + ICE CREAM SOCIAL + STUDENTS = FEEDBACK, MAYBE

QR CODE

2 question survey
created

STUDENTS

Flyer posted at signature
ice cream social event.
Attendance is usually
>500

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Survey not promoted well
enough to generate
feedback

OTHER SMALL HILLS ARE OUT THERE!



**INFORMATION LITERACY
ASSESSMENT**



**SPECIFIC SPACE
ASSESSMENT**



**SPECIFIC COLLECTION
ASSESSMENT**



STATISTICS INVENTORY



QUESTIONS OF THE DAY



DATA VISUALIZATION

THANKS!

What questions or comments do you have?
What small hills have you climbed?

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SUGGESTED RESOURCES

ALA Core's LibGuide "Library Assessment Fundamentals"

<https://ala-core.libguides.com/assessmentfundamentals>

which includes the [Core Library Assessment Repository](#)

SAAL free student-affairs MOOC: Applying and Leading Assessment in Student Affairs, at

<http://studentaffairsassessment.org/online-open-course>

Presentations and papers from past conference proceedings from [LAC](#) and [LibPMC](#)

Ann K. Emery: [Great Graphs in Excel Course](#) (\$) and her blog, [Depict Data Studio](#)

[Library Juice Academy's Assessment courses](#) (\$)

[LibraryWorks](#) webinars (\$)

(\$)=associated fees

SUGGESTED READING: ARTICLES

Chrzastowski, T. E. (2008). Assessment 101 for Librarians: A Guidebook. *Science & Technology Libraries*, 28(1–2), 155–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01942620802097109>

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Horowitz, L. R. (2009). Assessing Library Services: A Practical Guide for the Nonexpert. *Library Leadership & Management*, 23(4), 161-167. <https://llm-ojs-tamu.tdl.org/llm/index.php/llm/article/view/1793>

Levy, J. (2021). 41 Ways to Earn More Responses to the Surveys You Send Out to Students and Staff. Retrieved June 5, 2023 from <https://sapro.moderncampus.com/blog/41-ways-to-earn-more-responses-to-the-surveys-you-send-out-to-students-and-staff>