Blowing Up the PLDS

Measuring Impact
PLDS

Public Library Data Service annual survey


Now Counting Opinions collects data, published via https://pla.countingopinions.com/

- Voluntary – 1,800 participating libraries for FY 2014
- Quicker turnaround than states/IMLS
- Additional data (e.g. tech offerings, print vs. media circ)
- Longitudinal review
- Special sections – 2014: performance measurement; 2015: summer reading
Start with what you already collect:
Outputs from Library Services
Community Needs Assessments
Demographic Data
Savannah Dashboard Metrics
Mid-Continent Public Library
Vendor: OrangeBoy, Inc.
Population Accountability

Results

Indicators
Performance Accountability: Effort to Impact

How much?  How well?

Is anyone better off?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Population Accountability of the City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantity of Effort</strong></td>
<td><strong>Quality of Effort</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much did we do?</td>
<td>How well did we do it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantity of Impact</strong></td>
<td><strong>Quality of Impact</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is anyone better off?</td>
<td>Is anyone better off?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result</td>
<td>Population Accountability of the City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens have core literacy skills they need to thrive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 year olds exhibit school readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 5 exhibit age appropriate attention span and impulse control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity of Effort</th>
<th>Quality of Effort</th>
<th>Performance Accountability of the Library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much did we do?</td>
<td>How well did we do it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of patrons who attend early literacy programs</td>
<td>% satisfied with early literacy programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of programs with early literacy component</td>
<td>% of patrons enrolled in early literacy programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity of Impact</th>
<th>Quality of Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is anyone better off?</td>
<td>Is anyone better off?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of patrons who report reading to child daily</td>
<td>% of patrons who report reading to child daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of patrons who report library programs improved child’s early literacy skills</td>
<td>% of patrons who report library programs improved child’s early literacy skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MCPL Summer Reading Program Effectiveness Study

Methodology:
A third party, university-based research consortium:
● Secured MOUs
● Collected data
● Compared reading scores for SRP participants and non-participants

Initial results:
Confirmed that students who participated in the summer reading program fared better in Fall reading scores than a comparison group of non-participating students
MCPL Grow-A-Reader
Kindergarten Readiness Pilot

Hypothesis:
Participants in Preschool Storytime will demonstrate improved skills after 10 weeks

Findings:
- Billed it as best for 4-5 year olds
  3 year olds showed most improvement
- Average number of weeks attended = 7
  Most improvement shown at 8 weeks or more
“We love that storytime is such a great mix of reading, counting/ABCs, body control practice, and social skills. It is a family activity that my children look forward to every week...”

“... [Three year old] has improved in her knowledge of letters, the alphabet, and numbers over the past ten weeks. Her confidence and interest in books and reading has increased as well. I'm glad we're in the habit of attending storytime again!”
Planning the Impact, then the Program
Figuring out the Impact After the Fact
Team-Based Inquiry model

1. Question

This isn’t the question you’re going to ask participants or users. Instead, it’s a question to help evaluate the impact you hope to have.

- What is the point of this program or service?
- Why are we doing this?

For example, if you’re talking about preschool storytime, and you decide you’re doing it to have a positive impact on kindergarten readiness, then your question might be:

“Do our storytimes prepare kids for kindergarten?”
2. Investigate

Collect data to answer your question.

To come up with possible data for collection, develop a theory.

- What would it look like if we were making progress toward our goal?

For example, if your question is, “Do our storytimes prepare kids for kindergarten?”, you might develop a theory:

“After attending 15 preschool storytimes, kids exhibit improvements in reading readiness behaviors.”
2. Investigate

Brainstorm ways to measure whether or not your theory is correct.

If your theory is, “After attending 15 preschool storytimes, kids exhibit improvements in reading readiness behaviors,” how could you measure that?

- Conduct formal pre- and post-testing
- Observe and analyze kids’ behavior in storytime
- Solicit parents’ perceptions of kids’ improvements
Team-Based Inquiry model

- **QUESTION**: Identify your inquiry questions
- **INVESTIGATE**: Collect data to answer your questions
- **REFLECT**: Discuss and analyze your data
- **IMPROVE**: Make changes based on your findings

Your turn!

Think of a program or service being offered at your library that is not currently being evaluated for impact, and talk to your neighbor about it.

- Explain the program or service.
- Describe the impact you’d like that program or service to have.
- Brainstorm together:
  - What inquiry question will help you evaluate impact?
  - What theory might you use to guide your data collection?
Resources

https://goo.gl/2ZEdHz
Lynn Hoffman
Director of Operations
Somerset County Library System of NJ
lhoffman@sclibnj.org

Brian Auger
County Library Administrator
Somerset County Library System of NJ
bauger@sclibnj.org

Mark Asberg
Director, Service Delivery
Calgary Public Library
mark.asberg@calgarypubliclibrary.com

Katina Jones
Statistical Research Analyst
Mid-Continent Public Library
katinajones@mymcpl.org