



**Chapter Council Presents
Sharing Roundtables
MLA Annual Meeting
San Antonio, TX
Monday, May 16, 2005**

Table 2A: Assessment & Evaluation

Facilitator: Lee Vucovich (UA, Birmingham)

Recorder: Gretchen Hallerberg (Cleveland Clinic)

Additional Participants: Beth Freeman (OSU, Tulsa), Brenda Green (UT, Memphis), Stella Seal (Johns Hopkins), Claire Twose (Johns Hopkins)

Topics discussed & ideas shared:

We discovered we were interested in discussing assessment and evaluation of library programs, services, and staff.

- We're in institutions – in education and/or in health care – where outcomes can be measured; this creates expectations of us to do likewise. “Measurable Outcomes” are needed – but we usually are measuring output instead. “Outcomes” assess impact, behavior changes, benefits; who’s affected, and how? It’s hard to incorporate this dimension into program evaluations without many surveys... but ongoing evaluation of programs and services is becoming a regular part of library operations.
- Surveys: what’s being evaluated, for whom, and for what purpose? What’s measurable isn’t necessarily what’s important. In addition to things we can count, we also need to include qualitative measures, even observational techniques.
 - Participants had used LibQual, AAHSL stats; most had also developed their own surveys, online or not.
 - One website-usability study used quick sessions in the cafeteria, asking patrons to find something on the library’s web site, and observing/recording their behavior.
 - Do libraries ever use surveys to eliminate anything?
- Assessment of library instruction sessions is useful but not easy either. It’s hard to know how effective we are. The timing of the content within the curriculum is important, and certainly affects motivation: we want to hit the “teachable moment”.
- One participant had been involved in peer evaluation of instructors: she was asked to observe a non-library colleague’s teaching of an individual session (with objectives). We

thought this could also have great value the other way around, asking non-library colleagues with teaching experience to observe and evaluate sessions we give.

- Videotaping training sessions is sometimes suggested as a way to evaluate instructors. We felt that this could be of help to an instructor, when done through an “external” group (a MLA CE course, perhaps your Speech & Drama Department) and viewed individually, but not as part of an actual evaluation. (As an aside, those present didn’t like the videotaping of lectures to use for future presentations; they’re hard to listen to, and they’re not customizable. What works well in a “live” setting often doesn’t work online, either, though one participant has used short modules of web-based instruction, and these could be useful as either preparation before or reinforcement after a live session.)
- One participant’s institution does “360° evaluations” for the library director; they’re done anonymously via web survey.

Two books mentioned by table participants:

John Carlo Bertot and Denise M. Davis: Planning and evaluating library networked services and resources. Libraries Unlimited, 2004.

Peter HERNON and John R. Whitman: Delivering satisfaction and service quality: a customer-based approach for libraries. ALA