

BUZZ Words for Assessment: (Updated 10 April 2003)

- ∅ **culture of assessment** - An organizational environment in which decisions are based on facts, research, and analysis and where services are planned and delivered in ways that maximize positive outcomes and impacts for customers and stakeholders. A "culture of assessment" exists when staff care to know about the results they produce and how these results relate to customers' expectations. A culture of assessment is an integral part of the process of change and the creation of a customer-centered culture.
- ∅ **efficiency** - Acting or producing effectively with a minimum of waste, expense or unnecessary effort
- ∅ **goals** - The purpose toward which effort is directed; an objective.
- ∅ **input** - Raw materials such as money, space, collection, equipment, staff
- ∅ **mission** -- (def. 1) — statement from an organization that outlines a) why an organization exists; b) who are its customers and how the organization will benefit them; and c) why the customers will be better off with the organization;
mission (def.2) — a statement by an organization of its overriding goals, of how it will achieve them, and of the values it will uphold in doing so.
- ∅ **ongoing process** — Assessment is a circular process that involves systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. (Thomas A. Angelo, *AAHE Bulletin*, November 1995, p.7)
- ∅ **outcomes** - The ways in which library users are changed as a result of their contact with the library's resources and programs
- ∅ **patrons/customers** - People who use the collection and services
- ∅ **performance** - Carrying out the library's central mission in an effective and efficient manner.
- ∅ **quality** - According to Deming, "Quality can be defined only in terms of the agent [or user]. . . The difficulty in defining quality is to translate future needs of the user into measurable characteristics, [and improve our processes so] that a product can be designed and turned out to give satisfaction at a price that the user will pay." (In the library's case "price" includes time spent finding and using an item or service, the learning curve required, the frustration level encountered, etc.).
- ∅ **service quality** - The perceived quality of a service, the consumer's judgment about an entity's *overall* excellence. Service quality is different from service satisfaction which is the consumer's reaction to a single transaction.
- ∅ **service quality assessment** - The environment within which input/output assessment and outcomes assessment operate. Assessment of service quality tells us what input/output measures should receive our time and effort, and tells us immediate perceptions of service quality that can influence the long term outcomes on the consumer.
- ∅ **services** - actions which answer the needs of customers; useful labor that does not produce a tangible commodity
- ∅ **SMART goals** - SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Oriented, and Timely. SMART goals are more likely to be met and to be able to be described than non-specific, non-measurable, non-actionable goals.

- Ø **staff development** - Because improvement can only happen within a system, not to an individual separate from the system, staff development is one of the best answers to continuous improvement. Staff development is the systematic, cross-organizational effort to replenish existing, and teach new, skills and concepts. When staff development is directly supported by the organization it becomes a tool of system improvement, improving both how the individual is productive within the system and the system itself. Staff development efforts can benefit from both external and internal trainers.
- Ø **strategic plans**- Types of planning by which an institution formulates its long-range goals and selects activities for achieving those goals; blueprints for action structuring the future work of an institution according to a long-term plan; plans to help an institution achieve its mission.
- Ø **outputs** - Indicators of the use/impact of the services/programs provided by the library that utilize the library's resources
- Ø **vision** - A vision statement should 1) Set forth a description of a desirable future that would be better than the present or the past; 2) Be achievable in a reasonable amount of time; 3) Take advantage of opportunities the future will afford. A vision statement should be based on the institution's mission and should be shared by those who work for the institution. (Howard D. Mehninger, in *School Reform In The Information Age*)
- Ø **Organizational culture** - A pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

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URL=<http://dataserv.libs.uga.edu/assessment/intro.html>