

Systematic Bibliography: Evaluation

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LIS 590-DUL

12 December 2014

SCOPE: This bibliography presents articles and book chapters, written within the past decade (articles appear written between 2004 and 2014), on evaluation and assessment of library services and climates for diverse users.

DISCUSSION: This systematic bibliography collocates and presents articles and book chapters about the assessment and evaluation of diversity and its facets in academic libraries and librarianship. While nearly all articles refer directly to diversity in some form (including racial, ethnic, and varying forms of abilities), some few have been selected for their discussion of evaluation methods and tools rather than for any focus on diversity. It particularly focuses on services, cultural competencies, training of librarians, and evaluation and assessment techniques. In preparing this bibliography, the bibliographer discovered, to her dismay, that while articles on evaluation were legion, and while many included the word “diversity” or related catchphrases, far fewer centered on evaluation of services to diverse users in adult services or academic libraries.

Nearly all articles were selected using a basic Boolean search string: *diversity AND (eval* OR assess*) AND academic*. Several came from Scopus, while others were found in ProQuest and EBSCOHost products. Filters for peer review/scholarly works were frequently deployed. Some few articles appeared as “related articles,” suggested largely by Scopus or Elsevier. When pursued, they proved to be closely related to the theme of diversity evaluations in academic

libraries. Chapters from several books are also used. While all books appeared in searches, two (those by Mestre and Grover, Greer, and Agada) were previously known to the bibliographer. All works were written in the past decade, and an attempt was made to include only those that discussed methodology of studies conducted.

As it is the bibliographer's hope that this bibliography will prove useful to academic librarians creating their own assessments and evaluations of services to diverse users, all included articles were selected for their use as a form of evaluative toolkit. The articles selected are not necessarily "the best" or "highest quality" (Bates, 1976, 20), but rather those which the bibliographer feels will be of greatest assistance to a harried librarian attempting to compile an assessment of climate or services to diverse users. While many articles have high numbers of citations, mentioned by Marcia Bates (1976) as a method "of picking 'most' or 'best' articles" (21), many are so new that there are relatively few citations. For this reason, some articles dealing exclusively with methods of assessment and evaluation have been included. While they do not speak directly to diversity or multiculturalism, the bibliographer believes that they will prove useful in the construction of an assessment paradigm. While the bibliographer hopes these works will prove useful, she would like to stress the importance of ongoing research in the subject area. Publication of additional assessments and evaluations, along with careful discussion of methodologies, will prove useful for advancing the understanding of services to, and workplace climates for, diverse user and staff groups.

WORKS CITED

Bates, M.J. (1976). Rigorous systematic bibliography. *RQ*, 16(1), 7-26. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41354519>

Andrade, R., & Rivera, A. (2011). Developing a diversity-competent workforce: The UA libraries' experience. *Journal of Library Administration*, 51(7-8), 692-727. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2011.601271>

Throughout their article, Andrade and Rivera discuss the importance of assessment for diversity and competencies among library staff. They suggest tools, including ClimateQual as well as assessments directed towards interviewing candidates, to test climate and increase hiring of culturally competent library staff. They discuss ways to evaluate assessment tools and to build upon assessments and evaluations in order to improve service. Both Andrade and Rivera's suggestions and their assessment of the measures taken at University of Arizona libraries will prove helpful to librarians interested in implementing similar evaluation strategies.

Bonnet, J.L., & McAlexander, B. (2013). First impressions and the reference encounter: The influence of affect and clothing on librarian approachability. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 39(4), 335-346. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2012.11.025

The article focuses on users' perceptions of academic librarians. Bonnet and McAlexander use qualitative data to better understand how societally constructed understandings of differences in race, gender, clothing, and mannerisms can affect interactions with users. Such an evaluation could prove helpful at academic libraries attempting to increase approachability of reference staff, as well as provide a better understanding of the ways in which societal constructs affect images and approachability of reference staff. While Bonnet and McAlexander caution against turning their findings into policy, they may prove helpful to librarians looking to change the way they are perceived.

Bonnet, J.L., & McAlexander, B. (2012). Structural diversity in academic libraries: A study of librarian approachability. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 38(5), 277-286.
doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2012.06.002

The study discussed in the article looks at approachability of different librarians as seen by people of different genders, races, and ages, and is an excellent companion to the Bonnet and McAlexander article of 2013. It can help academic libraries better understand conditions for their reference staff, as well as plan their own studies and evaluations. As Bonnet and McAlexander note, all results demonstrate explicit biases or the desire to appear unbiased, which may influence responses. As such, the article provides an interesting look at social constructions of approachability, as well as a template for further evaluations.

Bryant, J., Matthews, G., & Walton, G. (2009). Academic libraries and social and learning spaces: A case of Loughborough University Library, UK. *Journal of Librarianship and Information*, 41(1), 7-18. DOI: 10.1177/0961000608099895

The article briefly discusses a study of a new open area for studying and collaboration at the Loughborough University library in the UK, including a largely visual study of diversity that discovers a definite lack of women and a heavily white male user base. The writers offer possible explanations for the gender discrepancy before admitting that they do not know why it exists. Unfortunately, they do not discuss ways in which the situation could be remedied; nor do they theorize on ways they could better reach out to non-white students. Nonetheless, it serves as a reminder to conduct more in-depth studies of uses of academic library space.

Comeaux, D., & Schmetzke, A. (2013). Accessibility of academic library websites in North America. *Library Hi Tech*, 31(1), 8-33. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/07378831311303903>

The article provides a literature review and a careful discussion of the authors' usability evaluation of academic libraries' websites. The assessment conducted relied heavily upon Bobby 3.1.1 to check for usability for patrons with disabilities. While the authors note that accessibility is improving, they caution against complacency, noting that considerable problems remain. Techniques used in the study can be applied to in-house evaluations of library websites and can help with planning more accessible websites.

Eannance Lazzaro, A., Mills, S., Garrad, T., Ferguson, E., Watson, M., & Ellenwood, D. (2014). Cultural competency on campus: Applying ARL's diversity standards. *College & Research Libraries News*, 75(6), 332-335. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eft&AN=96403826&site=ehost-live>

The article discusses the implementation of ARL's diversity standards, including the manner in which they were implemented. In addition, Eannance Lazzaro, Mills, Garrad, Ferguson, Watson, and Ellenwood discuss assessment as a focus of implementation. The writers note that their approach to assessment, which involved questionnaires provided following each training session, enabled them to speak directly to what staff wanted to learn, thus presumably making the implementation go more smoothly. The importance of assessment to the successful implementation of diversity initiatives is made clear.

Glynn, L. (2006). A critical appraisal tool for library and information research. *Library Hi Tech*, 24(3), 387-399. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/07378830610692154>

This article does not speak directly to diversity or even inclusivity. Nonetheless, Glynn's suggestions for critically evaluating LIS research should be consulted before, during, and after any major evaluation or assessment program. Glynn stresses the importance of representative samples, response sizes, bias-free selections, randomization when necessary, informed consent, and clarity of questions, among other things. Finally, Glynn suggests that all research should offer openings for new research, certainly an important element in understudied areas such as services to diverse users.

Grover, R.J., Greer, R.C., & Agada, J. (2010). Extrapolating meaning from community analysis data. In R.J. Grover, R.C. Greer, & J. Agada, *Assessing Information Needs* (137-161). Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited.

The article speaks to an essential part of any evaluation: that of understanding the results gained from an assessment. They discuss the results of a case study performed earlier in *Assessing Information Needs*, noting the importance of groups of people and their common needs. They discuss such elements as lifestyle and race of a patron base. Grover, Greer, and Agada's suggestions, including the acknowledgement that library staff need to feel invested in the assessment process in order to expedite it, are applicable to academic libraries attempting to implement systematic evaluations of their own patron bases.

Grover, R.J., Greer, R.C., & Agada, J. (2010). Gathering data for decision-making. In R.J. Grover, R.C. Greer, & J. Agada, *Assessing Information Needs* (57-74). Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited.

Grover, Greer, and Agada offer practical advice for conducting evaluations and assessments, including suggestions of which methodology to use for any number of assessments. They discuss the differences, and uses, of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Among other things, the authors note the applications of surveys, a common but not always useful tool. The chapter is a strong tool for those preparing to conduct an evaluation or assessment at their own libraries.

Grover, R.J., Greer, R.C., & Agada, J. (2010). Implementing a community analysis. In R.J. Grover, R.C. Greer, & J. Agada, *Assessing Information Needs* (121-136). Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited.

Grover, Greer, and Agada present practical advice for studying users and their needs. They discuss how to survey community needs and where and how best to gather necessary data. The authors suggest a “map survey” in order to understand users, use, and resources. The suggestions offered throughout the chapter will prove useful to librarians attempting to assess their patron communities in order to improve services.

Hackett, S., & Parmanto, B. (2005). A longitudinal evaluation of accessibility: Higher education web sites. *Internet Research*, 15(3), 281-294. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/219871368?accountid=14553>

The authors discuss increasing problems of access to academic websites. In some cases, the authors argue that these problems are caused by a rush to use the most up-to-date scripting and html technology. They note that assistive technologies do not keep up with the newest developments in coding, emphasizing the importance of keeping changes to library websites in step with assistive technologies commonly available for disabled students, staff, and faculty. Hackett and Parmanto's methodology can be applied to academic libraries' websites, and serves as a prompt to frequently check websites against available technologies and the Americans With Disabilities Act's regulations for web coding.

Hanna, K.A., Cooper, M.M., & Crumrin, R.A. (2011). Assessing programming and outreach. In Hanna, K.A., Cooper, M.M., & Crumrin, R.A., *Diversity programming and outreach for academic libraries* (95-108). Oxford: Chandos Publishing.

Hanna, Cooper, and Crumrin offer several tools for evaluating programs and outreach in an academic library and recount their own evaluations of programming and tools available. They note that the decision of what to evaluate is important, and will likely vary by location and patron needs. They mention that, while one assessment centered on undergraduate use of space and resources, they also assessed faculty perceptions of this use. The data provided represents both qualitative and quantitative information, as do the tools suggested.

Kanduik, M. (2014). Promoting racial and ethnic diversity among Canadian academic librarians. *College & Research Libraries*, 75(4), 492-556. DOI: 10.5860/crl.75.4.492

In this exhaustive discussion of diversity in Canada's academic libraries, Kanduik discusses the general state of diversity, spending considerable time on discussions of First Nations people in

libraries. She further discusses evaluations and assessments of both librarians and libraries, offering samples of questionnaires and other evaluative tools at the end of the article. The questionnaires may be helpful for other libraries, as will the discussion of librarians of diverse backgrounds and their varying experiences in Canada's academic libraries. Indeed, the discussion of experiences should prove helpful in better understanding the impact of climate on librarians from minority and underrepresented backgrounds.

Matthews, J.R. (2007). Development of a library assessment plan. In *Library Assessment in Higher Education*, by J.R. Matthews. (119-138). Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited.

Matthews does not discuss diversity in his chapter on assessment, yet his suggestions for conducting evaluations of library services will prove helpful to those evaluating specifically for diversity-related issues as well as for more general library assessments. He notes the importance of mission statements of both the University at large and the Library itself. He discusses evaluation of collection and space use, as well as ways in which student outcomes differ thanks to the library. Matthews also points out that an assessment may require approval from an institution's review board, an important factor when planning any assessment.

Mestre, L.S. (2010). Librarians working with diverse populations: What impact does cultural competency training have on their efforts? *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 36(6), 479-488. DOI: 10.1016/j.acalib.2010.08.003

Mestre's study, comprised largely of interviews with ARL librarians, assesses cultural competency training and the lack thereof among the aforementioned group of librarians. She

discusses the meanings of terms such as cultural competency and diversity, providing a solid backbone for those wishing to undertake similar projects. She notes that many librarians admitted that they had been unprepared or underprepared to work with diverse patron groups, which she posits as a failing of LIS curriculums. Her findings, as well as her methodology, will prove helpful for libraries seeking to incorporate additional training in order to better serve their own diverse student and faculty bodies.

Mestre, L.S. (2010). Organization and management of multicultural services. In L.S. Mestre, *Librarians Serving Diverse Populations: Challenges & Opportunities* (98-110). Chicago, Illinois: Association of College and Research Libraries.

Mestre stresses the importance of assessment through the process of implementing services for diverse users, noting that it is equally important among staff as among patrons. She offers suggestions, tools, and methodologies for conducting assessments throughout the process, making the chapter useful for librarians interested in either implementing or assessing existing services. She recommends the use of a consultant to help with an in-depth assessment and urges the creation of a diversity committee. Finally, Mestre suggests drafting a plan of action, and offers suggestions for doing so.

Mestre, L.S. (2010). Staff training and library orientation programs. In L.S. Mestre, *Librarians Serving Diverse Populations: Challenges & Opportunities* (111-122). Chicago, Illinois: Association of College and Research Libraries.

While the chapter focuses upon implementing diversity training for library staff, Mestre discusses evaluations at some length. She notes that assessments must be conducted in order to

determine the content of training programs. Further, she posits that it is essential to conduct assessment of participants' learning at the end of training programs as well. Throughout, she offers suggestions for those who may wish to implement similar programs.

Mestre, L.S. (2011). Visibility of diversity within Association of Research Libraries websites.

The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 37(2), 101-108. DOI:

10.1016/j.acalib.2011.02.001

Mestre evaluates the presence of diversity on ARL websites, noting that results were poor as little information pertaining to diverse patron groups was readily available on websites. She argues that diversity should be prominently displayed on library webpages, making the library more welcoming to diverse users. She also notes that while many libraries have diversity initiatives, very few of these were represented on their websites. The suggestions, tools, and methodology provided throughout the chapter will prove helpful for libraries evaluating their own websites, as well as for those trying to achieve more representative websites.

Neely, T.Y. (2009). Assessing diversity initiatives: The ARL leadership and career development program. *Journal of Library Administration*, 49, 811-835. DOI:

10.1080/01930820903396830

Neely provides a qualitative assessment of the ARL's leadership and career development program. She notes participants' feelings and discusses their general increases in confidence. The qualitative methodology may prove helpful for libraries attempting to evaluate their own mentorship programs. Further, Neely's general discussion will be useful for those planning to

implement mentorship programs in their libraries. Her article also serves as a reminder that mentorships can prove helpful to all parties in professional settings.

Royse, M., Conner, T., & Miller, T. (2006). Charting a course for diversity: An experience in climate assessment. *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 6(1), 23-45. DOI: 10.1353/pla.2006.0010

The article discusses an evaluation conducted as part of a diversity initiative at the University of Texas libraries, providing survey documentation and responses as well as noting that not all staff felt comfortable enough to participate. Royse, Conner, and Miller discuss results broken down by race and gender, noting that men seemed more resistant to the implementation of diversity initiatives than women. They note the continuing importance of the survey in diversity initiatives at the University of Texas. Finally, the inclusion of documentation may prove helpful to those planning similar assessments, as will the discussion of the survey and its implications.

Shachaf, P., & Horowitz, S. (2006). Are virtual reference services color blind? *Library & Information Science Research*, 28, 501-520. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2006.08.009

This evaluation of virtual reference services, focusing largely but not entirely upon email reference services, notes poorer reference service to non-white patrons, particularly Arab and African American, than to those known or presumed to be white. Of the names chosen for the study, Ahmad and Latoya, stereotyped as Muslim/Arab and African-American, respectively, had the worst responses; the best were consistently sent to the fictional Moshe Cohen. Shachaf and Horowitz's data makes clear the need for assessment of online reference services. The authors

provide a discussion of methodology, which could be useful for librarians wishing to assess their own strengths and weaknesses when catering virtually to diverse patrons.

Smith, P.M. (2008). Culturally conscious organizations: A conceptual framework. *portal:*

Libraries and the Academy, 8(2), 141-155. DOI: 10.1353/pla.2008.0015

Smith, stressing the importance of workplace culture, recommends several tools for evaluation and assessment of a library's culture and climate, as well as its tolerance or readiness for diversity initiatives. She discusses diversity goals of both the ARL and the ALA, as well as realities in the profession. She notes the flaws of climate surveys, and encourages the implementation of diversity committees. Finally, Smith offers suggestions for culturally conscious libraries, as well as ways in which to assess them.

Whitmire, E. (2004). The campus racial climate and undergraduates' perceptions of the academic

library. *Libraries and the Academy*, 4(3), 363-378. DOI: 10.1353/pla.2004.0057

Whitmire, arguing that academic libraries can be a safe, or "third," space for minority students, provides an assessment of campus racial climates and their influence upon students' use and perceptions of their library. The article reminds librarians to take their campus' racial climate into consideration. The author notes that perceptions of the university's dealings with racism and sexism impact how undergraduates see not just the university but the library as well. Finally, Whitmore posits that the hard work of creating services for diverse users and training staff in cultural competencies can indeed pay lasting dividends.

Young, C.L. (2006). Collection development and diversity on CIC academic library web sites.

The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 32(4), 370-376. DOI:

10.1016/j.acalib.2006.03.004

Young's evaluation of representations of diversity on selected ARL websites, which found a lack of easily found representations of diversity or diverse materials, offers a methodology for evaluating academic libraries' websites. The author also offers suggestions for changing existing websites to better reflect diverse student, faculty, and staff populations. Young provides in-depth discussions of each library website surveyed, and notes the difficulty of finding information on each. Young urges more conspicuous placement of information relating to diversity on library websites, noting that libraries are the gateways to information and, as such, it is even more important that diversity be reflected on their webpages.