Context

- Assessment in libraries - relatively new field, drawing upon assessment methods from a variety of other disciplines
- Space assessment as a venue for accessing the needs and habits of patrons related to space use, rather than use of collections or services
- Space as a service? Move towards intentional learning and collaboration spaces
- Often conducted prior to making improvements or renovations
- Context in an academic library - to specific spaces in a building
- Related topics, participatory design and service design

Best Practices

- Researchers benefit from the use of multiple methods for this type of assessment
- Assessment as an ongoing process - continue to reflect and evaluate
- Pilot your instrument vigorously first
- Recruitment methods for participants are important considerations
- Of the studies reviewed, surveys were by far the most common method employed
- This type of research be used to plan for specific environmental concerns or more general perceptions of space
- For observational studies, think critically about the questions you include. Are certain assumptions necessary for your data? Age, gender, ethnicity, etc.

Research Trends

- Foster & Gibbons 2007 Studying Students
  - Anthropological approach
  - Basic question, "how do students write a research paper?"
  - Addressed this question partially through spatial methods
  - Student-designed library spaces, rather than contractor designed
  - New book available, A Second Look, but less use of spatial methods
- Fox & Doshi 2013 "Longitudinal Assessment..."
  - Quantitative data collection
  - Focus on collaborative spaces
  - Implement findings through furniture, hardware upgrades
  - Unexpected conclusions, new renovations ‘steal’ students from other areas of the library
- Montgomery 2014, "User Learning Behaviors..."
  - Iterative process- repeated use of similar instrument
  - Focus on library as an informal learning space
  - “Before and after” model of assessment
  - Assessed students perceptions and feelings about the space

Next Steps

- Develop, pilot and implement an instrument to survey students’ perceptions of existing services and expectations for spaces in the University Library
- Future directions for this research include looking beyond methods to analyze the current and developing theories of space assessment research to better contextualize individual findings
- “Schools of thought” for space assessment, apparent focus on enhancing student learning, but what other philosophies are implemented

Common Space Assessment Methods

- Surveys: 42%
- Observational: 35%
- Focus Group: 4%
- Usability Testing: 4%
- Photo Based: 7.5%
- Interview: 7.5%
- Comment Board: 4%
- Observational: 35%
- Usability Testing: 4%
- Photo Based: 7.5%
- Interview: 7.5%
- Comment Board: 4%

References


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