

Outreach Services: Impact and Assessment

NERCOMP SIG

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Outreach...

What is it Good For?

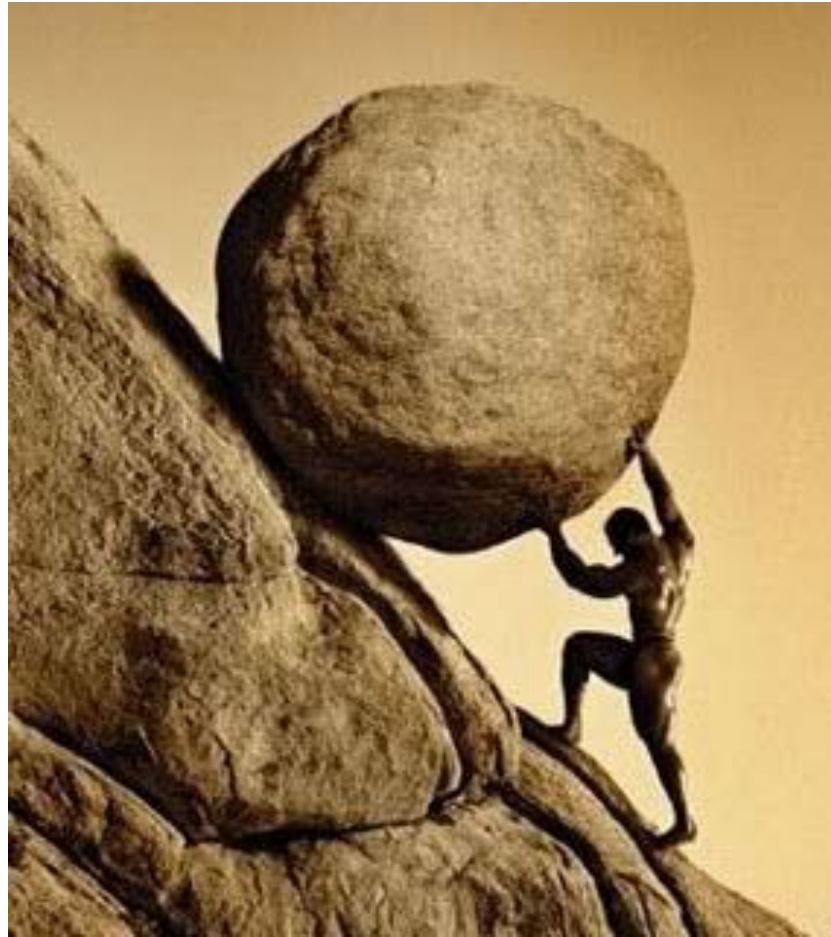
What are our goals/Why do we do it?

Issues

- ▶ Perceptions/misconceptions about libraries & reference
- ▶ Library anxiety
- ▶ Overconfidence in search abilities
- ▶ Staffing issues
- ▶ Accountability



It's an Uphill Battle





Can outreach help?!

Evidence of Impact

Possible Impact Areas

- ▶ Knowledge/awareness of and access to resources
- ▶ Student confidence & abilities
- ▶ Relationships with faculty
- ▶ Overall use of the library (reference interactions)
- ▶ Student retention/persistence



Evidence & Examples

▶ **Greater Midwest**

- ▶ Increased awareness & access
- ▶ Almost 75% of libraries rated outreach services as having moderate to high impact

▶ **Dublin Institute of Technology**

- ▶ Improved performance on IL assessment
- ▶ Increase in correlation between IL and marketing assessments
- ▶ Increased student confidence

▶ **University of Guelph**

- ▶ Librarian became member of teaching team: partnered in instruction & assignment design



Evidence & Examples

▶ Capella University

- ▶ 400% increase in reference transactions
- ▶ Statistically significant relationship- number of embedded interactions and increased number of general reference transactions

▶ University of Florida Gainesville

- ▶ Student-reported increased confidence & abilities
- ▶ Instructor reported less time redirecting students to library and helping them find resources.
- ▶ Wants to make library tutorials mandatory instead of optional & is reusing librarian-generated content.



Results

- ▶ **Curtin University, Australia**

- ▶ Student use of the library correlates with persistence/retention
- ▶ Library use in early weeks of first year students especially important

- ▶ **Emmons & Wilkinson found**

- ▶ Correlation between library inputs/outputs of staff, collections, & circulations, and library instruction (but not reference) with student persistence and graduation rates.
- ▶ Professional staffing is one of the largest impact (librarian student ratio)



Limitations

- ▶ Localized/ small-scale studies
- ▶ Small sample sizes
- ▶ Low response rates



How Do We Know it Works

- ▶ Definitions of outreach services
- ▶ Setting goals

- ▶ Choosing assessment/evaluation tools
 - ▶ Surveys
 - ▶ Focus groups
 - ▶ Tests
 - ▶ Projects/assignments

- ▶ Closing the Feedback Loop




References

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