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**Educating Assessors: Preparing Librarians with Micro and Macro Skills**

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**Abstract**

**Objective** – To examine the fit between libraries’ needs for evaluation skills, and library education and professional development opportunities. Many library position descriptions and many areas of library science education focus on professional skills and activities, such as delivering information literacy, designing programs, and managing resources. Only some positions, some parts of positions, and some areas of education specifically address assessment/evaluation skills. The growth of the Library Assessment Conference, the establishment of the ARL-ASSESS listserv, and other evidence indicates that assessment skills are increasingly important.

**Method** – Four bodies of evidence were examined for the prevalence of assessment needs and assessment education: the American Library Association core competencies; job ads from large public and academic libraries; professional development courses and sessions offered by American Library Association (ALA) divisions and state library associations; and course requirements contained in ALA-accredited Masters of Library Science (MLS) programs.

**Results** – While one-third of job postings made some mention of evaluation responsibilities, less than 10% of conference or continuing education offerings addressed assessment skills. In addition, management as a topic is a widespread requirement in MLS programs (78%), while research (58%) and assessment (15%) far less common.

**Conclusions** – Overall, there seems to be more need for assessment/evaluation skills than there are structured offerings to educate people in developing those skills. In addition, roles are changing: some of the most professional-level activities of graduate-degreed librarians involve planning, education, and assessment. MLS students need to understand that these macro skills are essential to leadership, and current librarians need opportunities to add to their skill sets.

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## Introduction

Over the last twenty years, libraries in general and academic libraries in particular have experienced a significant pro-assessment (evaluation) cultural wave. This is something that is becoming the norm in academic accreditation in general, and in the library field specifically. The question is whether current practitioners and current students have the opportunities to acquire the relevant assessment skills, which are different from what can be called the “practice” set (such as information assistance and instruction, information organization) and general professional values (such as knowledge of legal and ethical contexts and advocacy).

In this study, the word “evaluation” is used throughout. In higher education, the word “assessment” is generally reserved for a specific subset of evaluation: the assessment of student learning outcomes. When assessment of other areas (such as student affairs) occurs, it is generally termed “evaluation.” Evaluation is also the more commonly used term in K-12 education and social services contexts. Evaluation is distinct from research. According to the definitions for the use of human subjects in research, research aims to produce “generalized information.” In America, the Code of Federal Regulations states that, “*Research* means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009).

Evaluation, on the other hand, is used for internal, organizational purposes, such as demonstration of value to stakeholders, improvement of existing functions, and design of new services, which have been collectively described as “the gathering of information for managerial decision-making” (Applegate, 2013, p. 1). For instance, an analysis of whether mathematics resources can support a new doctoral program in mathematics at University A is evaluation. An exploration of how mathematics researchers access scholarly communication would be research. The distinction between evaluation and research lies primarily in the ends to which the data is put, rather than in the specific techniques used to conduct the evaluation or research.

Higher education has placed increasing value on evaluation in accreditation, both institution-wide and for professional specializations. Educational associations seek to demonstrate the value of their work. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation’s statement on the value of accreditation (2010) spells out the goal of “promoting accountability and identifying successful improvement efforts” (p.2). This followed changes in federal regulation based on the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 and enacting regulations from 2010 and 2011 (Higher Learning Commission, 2014). State and federal governments are keenly interested in accountability, given the significant funds given directly to institutions or indirectly through student aid and loans, as shown in the Accrediting Agency Recognition Criteria, U.S. Department of Education (2014).

The American Library Association's (2009) Core Competences for Librarianship speak to the responsibilities of graduate-level librarians and spell out the importance of both research for understanding of practice, and evaluation for effective management of libraries (ALA, 2009). There are eight core areas, of which two (25%) mention evaluation; of 42 specific sub-points, four (10%) mention evaluation.

- 8C. The concepts behind, and methods for, assessment and evaluation of library services and their outcomes.
- 6A. The fundamentals of quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- 4C. The methods of assessing and evaluating the specifications, efficacy, and cost efficiency of technology-based products and services.
- 5D. Information literacy/information competence techniques and methods, numerical literacy, and statistical literacy.

Evaluation received explicit prominence in the 2008 standards for accreditation of MLS programs, and even more emphasis in the 2015 Standards (ALA Office for Accreditation, 2008; 2015). From the preambles, both the 2008 and the 2015 documents state:

Systematic planning is an ongoing, active, broad-based approach to... (b) assessment of attainment of goals, objectives, and learning outcomes; (c) realignment and redesign of core activities in response to the results of assessment...

The Curriculum standard says:

(2008) II.7 The curriculum is continually reviewed and receptive to innovation; its evaluation is used for ongoing appraisal, to make improvements, and to plan for the future. Evaluation of the curriculum includes assessment of students' achievements and their subsequent accomplishments. Evaluation involves those

served by the program: students, faculty, employers, alumni, and other constituents.

(2015): II.5 Procedures for the continual evaluation of the curriculum are established with input not only from faculty but also representatives from those served. The curriculum is continually evaluated with input not only from faculty but also representatives from those served including students, employers, alumni, and other constituents. Curricular evaluation is used for ongoing appraisal, to make improvements, and to plan for the future. Evaluation of the curriculum includes assessment of students' achievements.

And the Students standard (both 2008 and 2015) says:

IV.6 The school applies the results of evaluation of student achievement to program development. Procedures are established for systematic evaluation of the degree to which a program's academic and administrative policies and activities regarding students are accomplishing its objectives. Within applicable institutional policies, faculty, students, staff, and others are involved in the evaluation process.

The Institute for Museum and Library Services (2008) emphasizes outcomes-based evaluation for its grants directly, and through the Library Services and Technology Act funding to states. Its Webography on evaluation contains materials published in 1994 to 2004.

How do current and future librarians educate themselves to meet the need to evaluate (assess) library and information organizations? There is a micro-level of assessment that consists of understanding specific tools, such as survey design and data analysis, both generic (e.g., instructional testing) and library-specific (e.g., bibliometrics). There is also a macro-level that consists of understanding the role of assessment in managing libraries and in communicating

with libraries' users and parent institutions and communities.

In sum, assessment of libraries is something that a variety of stakeholders consider important. It is important internally for effective management, and externally, funders, donors, and governments expect it.

This descriptive study examined the prevalence of micro- and macro-evaluation skills on two sides: the job side, and the education side, for pre-service and in-service librarians. By combining data to provide an overall view of this landscape, this study lays the groundwork for further examination of the most effective and efficient venues for achieving this essential competency for libraries and information agencies.

## Methods

This study explores two descriptive, prevalence-related research questions.

- RQ-1: What is the prevalence of evaluation skills or responsibilities in library-based positions?
- RQ-2: What is the prevalence of opportunities for education for librarians in evaluation skills?

For each research question, a population, a random sample, or a purposive sampling of items made up relevant data sets, and for each data set, qualitative coding was applied to arrive at a quantitative measurement of prevalence. A summary of these data sets can be found later in Table 1.

### *RQ-1 Positions: Operationalization*

There are two data sets for this research question. One is idealized or prescriptive, while the other is descriptive or actual. The first data set (Data Set A) is the set of core competences and sub-points laid out in the ALA Core Competences. The second data set (Data Set B) consists of a body of job position advertisements

retrieved from a random sample (n = 20 each) of member libraries of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), as of spring 2014. This random selection of institutions, and using the institution's own job posting sites, has been shown to provide the best representation of job ads, as opposed to using job-ad sites such as ALA JobList or the Chronicle of Higher Education (Applegate, 2010). All full-time jobs were included, regardless of whether they were librarian-specific or required an MLS.

There were 20 Urban Libraries Council institutions selected by random number generation. Of these, five had no current job openings. The New York Public Library listed 55 openings, while 15 other institutions listed 23 positions. Twenty Association of Research Libraries members were selected by random number generation. Of these, five had no job openings listed while the remaining 15 libraries had 50 jobs listings among them.

It is worth noting that the Boston Public Library (BPL) is a member of the Urban Libraries Council and also the Association of Research Libraries, and was selected in the ARL random sample. New York Public Library (NYPL) is also a member of the ARL but was selected in the ULC sampling. The analysis examined the ads with Boston Public Library positions in the ARL group (as sampled) and another analysis divided the libraries into three groups: public, public-research (BPL and NYPL), and research.

There were a total of 128 jobs identified. The researcher then coded each job at one of three levels of evaluation skills or responsibilities using coding level descriptions developed prior to coding. That is the coding represented an *a priori* categorization rather than a grounded content analysis.

- 0–No mention: Position titles in this category include: Library information assistant; Major gifts officer; Senior

applications developer; Public services librarian II; Librarian.

- 1–Minimal mention: Positions that were coded in this category included words such as cost tracking, generic "benchmarking," evaluating effectiveness (no more detail); evaluation tasks comprised less than half of the listed responsibilities. For example, an advertisement for Library Services Manager (Assistant Director) indicated that "The successful candidate... cost effectiveness, monitor expenditures, continually benchmark approaches. Another advertisement for Project Manager included in its qualifications "Strong quantitative and qualitative data analysis skills, as well as experience conducting research". An advertisement for Staff Secretary listed "Compiling and reporting statistics" as one of the position's responsibilities, and a Librarian I position advertisement included "Prepares statistical and/or narrative reports, memoranda and correspondence".
- 2–Significant mention: Positions advertisements in this category includes the words "data" and either "analysis" or "gathering", with related duties reflecting less than half of listed responsibilities. For example, an advertisement for a Branch Manager included responsibilities such as "Tracks and analyze operational data and statistics; creates financial, statistical and narrative reports on branch library operations. Makes presentations to library staff, the Board of Trustees and other groups." An advertisement for Librarian III-Children's Services: "Collects, maintains and evaluates data relating to Children's Services, branch performance and program effectiveness." A posting for Library

Manager listed responsibilities like "Develops and implements strategies to enhance the onsite user experience, including using statistics and metrics to tailor services to meet local community needs and drive circulation and attendance." An advertisement for Social Media Marketing Associate included in its responsibilities "Generate reports and translate data into actionable insights that will inform editorial decisions and content tactics.... Run AB tests to optimize campaigns".

- 3–Primary role: Assessment, evaluation, data-gathering or analysis mentioned as more than half of listed responsibilities. For example, an advertisement for Business Analyst states: "The IT Business Analyst (BA) is a liaison between the Information Technology Group and NYPL business groups. The BA performs professional duties related to the review, assessment, and development of business processes. He/She will focus on the effective use of resources, both people and technology." An advertisement for an Assessment and Statistics Coordinator position included similarly pervasive use of words and phrases associated with assessment and analysis.

### ***RQ-2 Education: Operationalization***

This part of the study draws on three data sets concerned with education for professionals.

#### *Data Set C: Professional Development Courses or Sessions Offered By the American Library Association*

This data set consists of professional development courses or sessions offered by divisions of the American Library Association as of spring 2014. This set included all online courses, all webinars, and listed ALA Annual

meeting sessions. The “archives” were not accessed. These sessions were coded as either including or focusing on evaluation, or not.

Examples of sessions coded as “Evaluation-No” included:

- Personal digital archiving
- Disaster response
- Common Core
- Floating collection: How it can work

Examples of sessions coded “Evaluation-Yes” included:

- Evaluating print book and e-book patron-driven acquisitions
- Holdings comparisons: Why are they so complicated?
- Effective subscription management and alternatives
- A tale of two libraries: Data evaluation through the eyes of an academic librarian and a public librarian

*Data Set D: State Library Association Conference Presentations*

The data set consists of sessions presented at state library association conferences. These were taken from a purposive sampling of seven states for 2014 and one state for both 2013 and 2014, for a total of eight conferences.

- Alabama (April 2014)
- Florida (May 2014)
- Louisiana (March 2014)
- Montana (April 2014)
- New Hampshire (April 2014)
- New York (fall 2013)
- North Carolina (10/2013 and 10/2014)
- Washington (May 2014)

A total of 476 sessions were included. These sessions were coded as Evaluation-No, or into one of two Evaluation-Yes groups, either Results or Techniques. The line between Results and

Techniques was somewhat fuzzy and some analysis combines them.

Evaluation-No: These were primarily how-to and update programs. They included professional techniques (“Basics of Preservation,”), content (“Mysteries Set in Florida,”), management (“Revolutionize Your Library with Strong Partnerships!”), and the community (“Conversations with the Montana State Library Commission.”)

Evaluation-Yes-Results: For these programs, it appears that data was gathered, but the primary focus of the session was on what the data told the researchers and evaluators what to do next.

Example sessions:

- Parents, Alumni and Libraries: What Customers Really Believe about the Library
- Turning the Tables: Assessing Student Worker Satisfaction in Peer- Staffing Models
- Rethinking Reference: If it's Broke, Fix it!
- Patrons on Performance: The Library Web as Users See It
- Redefining Outreach: Creating a Perception of Person Accessibility
- Outsourcing? An Evaluation of Vendor Assistance in Tech Services
- Hispanic Americans and Public Libraries: Assessing Health Information Needs and Working Together in an E-Health Environment

Evaluation-Yes-Techniques: These sessions were specifically about how to conduct evaluation/research and data collection techniques, or, sometimes, explanations of why it should be done. In these cases the focus was on gathering data, not on why the data is gathered. Example sessions include:

- How to Listen to Your Patrons: Maximizing Value and Outcomes Through Community Insight

- Excel With Excel
- Google Analytic with How-to-Directions
- Listening to Your Patrons: Tools and Approaches for Gathering Insight From Your Community
- You've Got Data, Now Use It: Innovative Methods for Better Understanding Public Library Use

*Data Set E: Courses That Are or Were Required In ALA-Accredited Masters of Library Science Programs*

This final data set consists of courses that are or were required in ALA-accredited MLS programs. These were examined at two time periods, 2005 and 2014, as reported to the Association of Library and Information Science Education (ALISE). The first time period was selected as occurring before the spike in emphasis on evaluation in the late 2000s discussed in the literature review; the second was the most recent data available at the time of the study. Three types of courses were captured, those about research, evaluation and management. Management was included because of the tight integration of evaluation into the administration/ management section of the ALA competencies. There were 48 degrees reported in 2004 and 50 in 2014. If a university offered multiple accredited degrees, the requirements for the degree that closest to a general "master of library science" were examined.

## Results

In 2014, both skills and needs represent about 10% of opportunities and requirements.

***RQ-1: What is the prevalence of evaluation skills or responsibilities in library-based positions?***

This research found that approximately 10-30% of positions expect evaluation skills or include

evaluation responsibilities, with no difference by type of library (public or academic/research). In data set A, the ALA professional competencies mentioned some aspect of evaluation in 2 of 8 competencies (25%), and 4 of 42 sub-points (10%). In terms of job postings evidenced in data set B, out of 123 total jobs posted, 32% had at least some mention of an evaluation role. For 15% of postings, the mention was minor or in passing, 15% had a more explicit mention, but at less than half of listed responsibilities, and for 2% (2 positions) it was the major role (more than half of duties) for that position. Conversely, the majority 68% of listed positions had no mention at all of evaluation or data responsibilities. This included professional librarian positions, such as "librarian" or "public services librarian II." Other mentions were relatively meager.

There was a huge range of levels of responsibility in the descriptions, and they did not seem related to whether evaluation was present. Two very different positions coded at the same "minimal" level for evaluation activity were "staff secretary—compiling and reporting statistics" and "library services manager.... Cost effectiveness, monitor expenditures, continually benchmark approaches." The two positions for which evaluation was the primary role included one primarily "librarian" (University of Houston: Assessment and Statistics Coordinator) and one of a professional support person (New York Public Library: Business Analyst).

When analyzed by type of institution, positions at public-research libraries (Boston Public Library and New York Public Library, members of both the Urban Libraries Council and the Association of Research Libraries), and research libraries (ARL libraries excluding ULC dual-members) were the only institutions to list primarily-evaluation positions. However, these institutions were also slightly more likely to have descriptions that had no mention of evaluation: research institutions listed 75% with

Table 1  
Data Sources by Research Question

Research Question	Data Set	N (total), sample type, and date
RQ-1: What is the prevalence of evaluation skills or responsibilities in library-based positions?		
	A: ALA Core Competences	8 core competency sets 42 specific sub-competencies Population 2009
	B: Job postings at ARL and ULC institutions	128 job postings Random sample Spring 2014
RQ-2: What is the prevalence of opportunities for education for librarians in evaluation skills?		
	C: Professional development courses offered by ALA divisions	341 sessions Population Spring 2014
	D: Professional development sessions at state library association conferences	496 sessions Purposive sample of 8 conferences 2013 and 2014
	E: Required courses at ALA-accredited MLS programs	48 programs, 67 courses; 50 programs, 74 courses; Population 2005 and 2014

Table 2  
Level of Evaluation Responsibility in Job Advertisements

Evaluation in described duties	Type of Library				
	Public	Research	Public	Research	Total
None	50	34	64%	76%	68%
Minimal	11	7	14%	16%	15%
Less than half	16	3	21%	7%	15%
More than half	1	1	1%	2%	2%
Total	78	45			

no mention; public-research listed 68%, and public (ULC excluding ARL dual-members) institutions listed only 63%.

***RQ-2: What is the prevalence of opportunities for education for librarians in evaluation skills?***

For professional development, less than 10% of offerings involved evaluation skills. For pre-professional education, “research” and

“management” are common requirements but evaluation is less present. Data set C reveals that, as of spring 2014, there were 341 programs offered by 11 ALA divisions: all online-recorded, live webinars, and conference sessions listed as “continuing education,” of which 24 (or 7%) were about evaluation generally or about a specific evaluation technique. Out of 11 divisions, five had relatively few professional development courses/sessions listed (42 total

sessions) of which none were about evaluation. YALSA had a large number of offerings at 38, of which only one was about evaluation. For the other divisions, the range of evaluation as a percentage of courses ranged from 6% to 18%. Notably, the management-related division Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA) had the highest percentage at 18%.

Data set D includes seven states' professional conference programs, found using a maximum variety purposive sampling varying by state size, region of the country, and presence or absence of graduate library programs. One state (North Carolina) had two years examined (2013 and 2014). Out of 496 total sessions discovered, only 29 (approximately 6%) had some relation to evaluation, either in terms of reporting results, or of teaching evaluation techniques.

Graduate education for librarians typically consists of a wide variety of optional courses and some required courses. The balance between required and optional depends on the goals of individual programs, but the programs are unified here by the common factor of accreditation by the American Library Association. ALISE statistics cover most accredited libraries schools, though there are some gaps in the data for some programs in some years (Association of Library and Information Science Educators, 2010, 2014). Programs are asked to describe course requirements for their accredited degrees. Both management and research course requirements remained stable when compared at two different points in a ten-year period, with 71 (72% of) programs requiring training in management and 58 (60%) requiring research methods. Evaluation had a noticeable increase, with a low of 10% of programs in 2005 to 16% of programs in 2014.

Table 3  
Continuing Education Offerings by ALA Division

<b>Course/Webinar Involves Evaluation</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage Yes</b>
American Association of School Librarians (AASL)	6		6	0%
Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC)	8		8	0%
Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA)	7		7	0%
Library Information Technology Association (LITA)	13		13	0%
United for Libraries	8		8	0%
Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)	37	1	38	3%
Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS)	114	7	121	6%
Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)	30	2	32	6%
Reference and User Services Association (RUSA)	16	2	18	11%
Public Library Association (PLA)	55	7	62	11%
Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA)	23	5	28	18%
Total	317	24	341	7%

Table 4  
State Library Association Conference Sessions

Session Involves Evaluation	No	Yes-results	Yes-technique	Total	Percentage yes
New York	69		1	70	1%
Louisiana	62		2	64	3%
New Hampshire	31		1	32	3%
Alabama	49		2	51	4%
Montana	48		2	50	4%
North Carolina	133	4	7	144	8%
Washington	28	1	2	31	10%
Florida	47	5	2	54	13%
Total	467	10	19	496	6%

Table 5  
Required Courses for Master of Library Science Degrees

Courses	2005 Number	2005 Percentage	2014 Number	2014 Percentage
Management	34	71%	36	72%
Research	28	58%	30	60%
Evaluation	5	10%	8	16%
<i>Programs</i>	48		50	

Across programs a management course was the most prevalent course requirement. Management courses had titles such as "Library/Management/Administration of/in Libraries/Information Organizations," and frequently were by-type (academic, school, etc.). Three others in 2014 were "Achieving Organizational Excellence," "Management and Systems Analysis," and "Organizational Management & Strategy / Management Without Borders."

Almost all research courses had simple titles of "Introduction to Research/Methods" or "Research Methods." Three others were "Contextual Inquiry and Project Management," "Designing Principled Inquiry," and "Educational Research & Measurement."

Courses that were counted as focusing on evaluation were included "Assessing

Information Needs," "Evaluation of Resources and Services," "Evaluation of Information Systems," "Evaluation Methods," and "Library Planning, Marketing and Assessment."

There was some overlap between categories. The course "Management and Systems Analysis," was counted as a management course and as an evaluation course. "Research & Evaluation for LIS" and "Research & Evaluation Methods" were counted in both the research and evaluation categories. Also, in some programs, students could take either research or evaluation courses.

Given that many, and probably most, program requirements involve options and substitutions, with differences by specializations, and also some variation in reporting, this is a very fuzzy data set. Nevertheless, evaluation itself appears in required coursework for at least some

Table 6  
Overall Results by Research Question

Research Question	Results
RQ-1: <b>Need:</b> What is the prevalence of evaluation skills or responsibilities in library-based positions?	
A-ALA Core Competences	10-25%
B-Open jobs at ARL and ULC institutions	32%
RQ-2: <b>Opportunity:</b> What is the prevalence of opportunities for education for librarians in evaluation skills?	
C-Professional development courses offered by ALA divisions	7%
D-Professional development sessions at state library association conferences	6%
E-Required courses at ALA-accredited MLS programs	15% (Evaluation) 58% (Research) 71% (Management)

programs, and has had some slight gains over the past 10 years.

### Discussion

Within these data sets, and accounting for their limitations, there appears to be a mismatch between the need for evaluation (assessment) skills and the formal opportunities for librarians (library staff) to obtain those skills. While few library positions, even at very large systems and institutions, are solely dedicated to evaluation activities, data collection and analysis is part of about one-third of positions advertised at these libraries. However, less than 10% of continuing education opportunities, whether by state associations or by American Library Association divisions, focus on evaluation skills (or results).

Association events, conferences, and courses are an important way for current information professionals to keep up to date, especially when life-long learning is not just a motto but an essential part of an information professional's life (Long & Applegate, 2008). There appears to be an opening for increased attention to this area of education. This is also an area for a cumulative virtuous circle. Experts in evaluation can present results and instruction in techniques to a widening pool of practitioners who in turn

spread a culture, capability, and commitment to the use of data in decision-making. Over the years the ARL Library Assessment Conference has grown in prominence and size, supplemented by the launch of the ARL-Assess listserv in 2014, and the development of a public library assessment workshop.

Besides professional continuing education, there is pre-professional preparation. That is, programs of library and information science have the responsibility to prepare graduates to perform, understand, and develop further in the principles and practices of their profession. Library education at the graduate level has had a high level of interest in or requirements for research-specific skills, undoubtedly influenced by the place of the MLS degree as a graduate or professional degree at universities. There is a perennial discussion about the relevance of the MLS to professional practice, and this paper avoids entering that broad debate here.

There is, however, a specific issue that is relevant to understanding the place of evaluation education in professional preparation: the distinction between research and evaluation. Conceptually, are these the same, and pragmatically, does coursework in

research methods prepare a student to conduct managerially-oriented assessment?

On the conceptual question, the Assessment in Higher Education listserv ([ASSESS@LSV.UKY.EDU](mailto:ASSESS@LSV.UKY.EDU)) has a user population made up primarily of people working at colleges and universities, in academic programs and also in centralized assessment offices. One perennial question and debate in this forum is whether evaluation or assessment is “research” as defined by the federal government or the institution’s Institutional Research Board (IRB) or other office for the protection of human subjects in research. Federal definitions define “research” as generalized knowledge, and on campuses that in turn can be operationalized as something to be published, presented, or disseminated to an external audience. In contrast, non-research evaluation is often treated as internally oriented: “If the investigator does not intend to use the information for publication or presentation outside of the investigator’s department or organization, the research will not contribute to generalizable knowledge and IRB review is not required” (Indiana University, 2014).

This leaves a gap in understanding the dissemination of methodology and of case-instances that may contribute to a generalizable understanding. For example, suppose you conduct a study with your math majors of their use of your e-book collection on mathematics. This is for one’s own use in collection management. Yet, an audience may want to know how to conduct such studies. Or another scholar may want to know the status of e-books about mathematics and other science areas: using the specific to illuminate the general. Methodologically, there can be important and useful overlaps in research or evaluation data techniques and data collection designs. Faculty in library programs that require or offer research methods courses can use the practical importance of evaluation to educate their students about the overall value of such courses: many library students believe they will not

conduct formal “research” so tend to think of this as entirely theoretical.

This prevalence study describes in part the role and place of evaluation in library practice, showing the degree of importance accorded to assessments skill in institutions and in library professional development. It forms part of a larger, ongoing conversation about the preparation and function of MLS-educated librarians in information organizations. The extent to which the MLS is managerial, evolving in addition to, and perhaps away from purely technical professional skills, is reflected in the description of evaluation as an essential component of leadership (component 8C).

### **Conclusion**

It is hard to design a quantitative equation encompassing offerings and needs, where A equals B, or even where A results in B, for the concerns under consideration in the study. Even the percent or prevalence of evaluation mentions in courses or in job ads are far from exact. The trend is clear, though, that there seems to be more extensive need for evaluation skills than there are structured offerings educating people in those skills. When LIS educators organize their programs of study to prepare graduates to meet the needs of practice, they need to thoughtfully consider what the core requirements are. Evaluation is specifically mentioned and indeed emphasized in the ALA competences document, and is reflected in new job position descriptions.

For existing librarians, roles will change. Just as a wave of RDA and FRBR workshops, webinars, and books were published to assist technical services librarians in making the transition to newer forms of organizing information, opportunities are needed to continually enhance the ability of library leaders to manage and to meet external demands for accountability and improvement.

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