"I would say, it is best to have a Personal Librarian": using qualitative and quantitative data to assess success

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brocklibrary1styearpersonallibrarian.wordpress.com
Outcomes

- Characteristics of Brock Personal Librarian program
- Advantages and challenges of assessment methods including:
  - Online surveys
  - Participation metrics
  - Email marketing metrics
- Strategic assessment ideas
A bit about Brock ...

St. Catharines, ON

Young, growing, dynamic

18,500 students, including 1600 grads

6,000 first-year students (4,000 new to Brock)

No first-year integration program
James A. Gibson Library

Liaisons for all programs; 11 librarians with liaison roles

High librarian:student ratio

No cash :-(

Personal Librarian program
James A. Gibson Library

2015–16:
9 librarians [opt-in]
29 programs/depts
3,045 students
Mostly undergrad

Your Personal Librarian

What is the Personal Librarian Program?
The Personal Librarian program is designed to introduce students entering Brock University to the many resources, tools and services available through the Library. Students in select programs will be contacted by their personal librarian occasionally throughout the year.
Nuts and bolts

3-person planning team

Partners:

Registrar’s office
Brock Marketing & Communications

3 messages/term

Assessing success

Are we achieving planned outcomes?

- Decreasing student anxiety
- Enhancing use of library services and resources

How assess?

- Survey
- Tracking replies
Surveys

Linked in last April message

Mix of qualitative & quantitative questions

Pool of 360 responses over two years

2 x $25 prizes

2014-15 - 93 responses - response rate of 7%

2015-16 -- 267 responses - response rate of 9%
Having a Personal Librarian increased my confidence using Brock Libraries

- A great deal: 30
- Mostly: 32
- Somewhat: 25
- Not at all: 13
Having a Personal Librarian eased my transition to university.
Qualitative data

capture descriptive data
gain deeper understanding
identify gaps/opportunities

(Given 2006; Vaughn & Turner 2016)
Decrease student anxiety?

“[my PL] was super friendly, so that always helped!”

“She has made me feel welcome to seek her advice.”

“I love the librarian”

“...provided a wonderful and important overview...and I gained more confidence”

“...comfortable…”

“...confident…”

“I know so much more than I did before!”
Emails from my Personal Librarian were helpful

- A great deal: 27
- Mostly: 44
- Somewhat: 23
- Not at all: 6
Are emails helpful/optimal?

“I already get a lot of e-mails from other services at Brock. At least the ones from the library are usually helpful.”

“...easiest and quickest way...”

“...no pressure...”

“...made it easier to know what was going on in the library”

Some:

Nope, just deleted the emails.
1. SuperSearch
2. Library website
3. Silent or quiet study areas
4. Exams from previous years
5. Group study room
What did we miss?

Are there other services/resources you would have liked to hear about? [2015-16]

Most responses: “No. She gave me all the information I needed.”

Book recommendations

What can the help desk do for me?

Workshops

Career resources
Did you contact your Personal Librarian?

I contacted my Personal Librarian

- Yes: 79
- No: 21
Student responses

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“Thank you for your support this year”

“I’d like to book an appointment”

“Can you let me know if we have access to the Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy?”

“Amelia’s Sad Face” by Donnie Ray Jones is licensed under CC BY 2.0
“I haven't required the Library's services to any great extent, but knowing that I have a personal librarian available is incredibly positive.”
What else can numbers tell us?

Email marketing metrics: why?
Another facet of assessment
Provides benchmarks

Image: thebluediamondgallery.com/m/marketing.html
What is email marketing?

“... sending email messages with the purpose of enhancing the relationship of a merchant with its current or previous customers, to encourage customer loyalty and repeat business, [sic] and to acquire new customers...

--Wikipedia
Email marketing metrics

**Opens:**
“Open” refers to an HTML email message whose viewing is recorded by a clear 1X1 pixel image. When a message is opened and images are enabled, the image calls the server and the message is then counted as an open.”

**Clicks:**
“Measures the percentage of email messages that drew at least one click.”

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<th>YEAR</th>
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<th>EDUCATION BENCHMARK</th>
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Positive comments

“Very good program that should be kept to continue making students feel comfortable with the library staff as well as feeling confident in the library”

“I would say, it is best to have a personal librarian.”

“I think this is a great program, very useful for students and one that I hope to use in my future years at Brock!”

“It was fantastic.”
Other comments

Some students wanted:

More frequent emails
More variety of help
More textbooks to rent
Separate emails for graduate students [we do!]
More interactive

Info that was more applicable to my area of study
Issues and solutions

“I was unaware that I had a personal librarian”

“ Didn’t even know that this was a thing to be honest”

Lack of direct student response

Clarify PL objective and role

More promotion?

Expand program to specialized population groups
Librarian feedback

Survey and discussion

How did it go? What can we do differently?

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<th>Thumbs up</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-written messages by PL team</td>
<td>Messages too generic</td>
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<td>Meeting to send messages together</td>
<td>Lack of direct student response</td>
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<td>Great templates</td>
<td>Cumbersome email system</td>
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<td>Staffing challenges</td>
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What about other PL programs?

Little published literature, even less focusing on assessment

Standard response rate is 10–15% (Yale, University of Toronto)

University of Alberta:

Personal Librarian Program for aboriginal students

58.6% open rate, 4% click rate
What does it all mean?

Paints a picture:

- Qualitative
- Quantitative
- Metrics
- Comparisons

Overall, a success
Looking ahead

More empathy, interactivity

Correlation with student retention

Correlation between instruction and opens, clicks, replies?

Program-specific analysis

Targeting more specialized programs?

Wider coverage?
Questions?

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Image: Ernie the emu, by bluegum. Freeimages.com