Survey Says: Strategies for Responding to Challenging Findings

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What happens when your data tells you something you don’t want to learn?
Action research practices aim to open communicative spaces where people can come together in open dialogue to address issues of concern, and to engage in cycles of action and reflection, so that ideas that are tentatively articulated in reflection phases can be checked out systematically in phases of active experimentation.

Transforming a survey instrument to assess value and impact

- Collaboration with Office of Institutional Research & Evaluation
- Library supplied course-integrated information literacy workshop data
Library instruction data + Course registration data

Goal: connect library instruction to impact and engagement

Added to student demographic profiles
Some of our 2016 findings:

- 95% of students reported that the library contributed to their ability to find sources for course assignments.
- 87% of students reported that the library contributed to their ability to work on projects for student clubs and organizations.
- 98% of students felt comfortable asking a librarian or other staff member for help.
No evidence of increased impact or engagement for students who had library instruction.
2016 Tisch Library Survey
Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Stay open later in general (entire library)</th>
<th>67</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stay open later on weekends</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open earlier on weekend mornings</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consider operating 24/7</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open earlier in general</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extended hours on Friday</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stay open later around midterm and finals period</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Longer hours in general</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stay open later on weekdays</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stay open later (part of the library)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More hours during holidays</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading room should be 24/7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1am is way too early for a university library to close!

10 am is too late to open on the weekend. I wake up early and my library doesn't open until 10. I know that I am not the only student who has difficulty accessing the library this early in the morning.

10am on the weekend is such a time that I am still up around 8 on Saturday and it is almost nothing is open!

Are you in a library right now? Is your library open right now? Do you have any other comments or suggestions for improving the library's hours?
Who Uses Tisch?

Undergraduates
At Least Once a Semester: 98%
Weekly: 77%

School of Arts & Science: 64%
School of Engineering: 50%

Graduates
At Least Once a Semester: 91%
Weekly: 50%

Helpful Services and Collections
33% asked a librarian for help
40% utilized interlibrary loan (average of grad and u.g.)

>50% utilized:
Databases
Print and reserve books

How Are They Using Tisch?

Undergraduates
Studying: 88%
Printing: 77%
Group Projects: 50%
Accessing online resources: 79%
Studying: 72%
Borrowing Materials: 65%

Graduates
Accessing online resources: 74%

A Welcoming Environment
99% of respondents felt welcome, safe, and respected in Tisch Library.
An average of 22% feel that service hours are inadequate.

Concerns
28% of students reported insufficient access to electrical outlets.
32% of students reported insufficient group study space.

What’s The Impact?
96% agreed Tisch has all the resources needed to complete their work

All Students
87% said Tisch helped them with student clubs & organizations projects
95% said Tisch increased their ability to find sources

Faculty & Graduates
64% reported Tisch contributed to their ability to obtain funding
87% boasted that Tisch helped them become more productive researchers
Internal communication was less than satisfying

All-staff meeting and exercise

○ What information from the survey was surprising to you? Puzzling or confusing? Affirming?

○ How can information from the survey guide and align with your work? The work of the library? The institution?

○ If the library were to dive deeper and devote additional study to one topic from the survey results, what topic would you recommend?

○ What can you personally do to raise student and faculty awareness of collections and services?
MUM Effect
A reluctance to transmit bad news.
The feelings people have about working where they work or about the work they are doing or about those with whom they work [...] not only define the climate which prevails but the manner in which communications will be managed.”

Delivery of bad news is a multiphase process

**Preparation**
- Advance warning
- Rehearsal
- Calibrating expectations

**Delivery**
- Timing of delivery
- Medium of delivery

**Transition**
- Public relations
- Caretaking

Have an **anticipatory conversation** before you get your results.

What would constitute good news? Champagne? A crisis? How would you respond to different scenarios?
#1 Let’s practice!
Anticipatory conversations

Your library survey includes a section about climate. Respondents can answer strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements:

◉ Library staff members treat me with respect.
◉ Library patrons (e.g. students, community members) are respectful
◉ I feel safe in the Library.
◉ I feel welcome in the Library.

What would constitute good news? Bad news? How might the library respond?

Handout: https://tufts.box.com/v/surveysays
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% who agree or strongly agree</th>
<th>Undergraduate Students</th>
<th>Graduate Students</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tisch Library staff members treat me with respect</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tisch Library patrons (e.g. students, community members) are respectful</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe in Tisch Library</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel welcome in Tisch Library</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning your medium & message

- Internal (to the library) or external (other campus units)
- Do they care about the big picture, the details, or something else?
- What is their data literacy level?
- How comfortable are they with library jargon?
- What are their communication preferences?
- What do they want to know?
Example constituent concerns

Instruction Librarian

The results don’t make sense to me. How can I learn more? Is my job going to change for the worse?

Provost

What did you already do to solve this problem? Will I need to respond to complaints?
#2 Let’s practice!
Who are your internal & external constituents?
What are their concerns?

What did you already do to solve this problem?
Will I need to respond to complaints?

Provost

Handout: https://tufts.box.com/v/surveysays
Tips for preparing to share bad news

**Do**
- Understand why the decision was made before sharing the news
- Prepare and rehearse what you’re going to say
- Explain the rationale and the process for making the decision

**Don’t**
- Sugarcoat the news — be clear and direct
- Let your body language belie your words
- Allow people to debate the merits of the decision — focus on moving forward

Organizations that focus on appreciating and cultivating positive organizational traits such as hope, resiliency, and optimism prior to a crisis may be more successful in garnering employee support during and after the crisis.

Communication practices in learning organizations

- Central to the organization and its performance
- Regular, not intermittent
- Activities and content are coordinated
- Courageous rather than timid and safe
- Collaborative
- Seen as credible by stakeholders

Our next steps

- Staggered release of results
- Planning data literacy workshops/training for staff
  - How to read a table of data (differences between N, %)
  - How to create effective visualizations of survey data
  - Comparing the 2016 and 2018 data for evidence of meaningful change
  - How to critically evaluate data stories
- Continuing to investigate the impact of library instruction
Since September, I have:

Made an appointment with a subject librarian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course-based instruction: Attendee</th>
<th>No, not a course-based instruction attendee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Senior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Students made an appointment with a subject librarian
- Student was aware of this service but did not use it
- Student did not know about this service

Students had library instruction

No library instruction
We remain encouraged to ask challenging questions.
Your next steps?

What new ideas and concepts will I put into immediate practice?
What other ideas will I need to consider further, but still have potential for use?
Are there colleagues and others on my campus who came to mind?

Adapted from So What Will You Do Tomorrow? reflection exercise from the 35th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience

Handout: https://tufts.box.com/v/surveysays
Recommended reading part 1


Thanks!

Any questions?

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- @meaneyd

Slides & handout:
https://tufts.box.com/v/surveysays

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:
- Presentation template by SlidesCarnival
- Photographs by Death to the Stock Photo