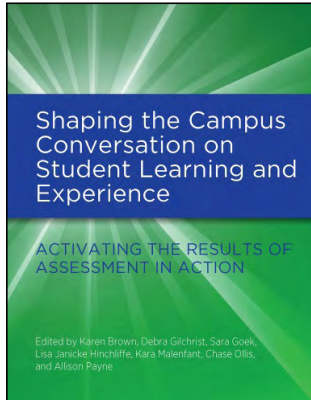


Book Reviews



Shaping the Campus Conversation on Student Learning and Experience: Activating the Results of Assessment in Action. Karen Brown, Debra Gilchrist, Sara Goek, Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, Karen Malenfant, Chase Ollis, and Allison Payne, eds. Chicago: American Library Association, 2018. 288p. Paper, \$70.00 (ISBN 978-0-8389-8994-4).



Assessment is not a new theory or concept. Moreover, libraries have been collecting data and conducting assessment in various forms for decades. We count materials and patrons, gauge learning outcomes and program accomplishments, assess usability and physical space. Library staff work diligently to find the best method of evaluating what we do to advocate for our profession and our institutions.

In 2012, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) was granted almost a quarter of a million dollars from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to establish the “Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success (AiA)” initiative. According to ACRL, the program was designed “to strengthen the

competencies of librarians in campus leadership and data-informed advocacy.”

For those not involved in an AiA project, the wealth of information gathered may seem overwhelming. The three-year project involved hundreds of projects and institutions and touched on subjects related to student success, student engagement, retention, instruction, reference, collections, and personnel, to name a few. The breadth and depth of the information is this research and instruction librarian’s dream!

The authors have identified a wide audience for their book including academic librarians with varying levels of comfort and experience with assessment and library advocacy. As a department head, it is my job not only to chart the course for my department, but also to represent and advocate for that department. In this age of data-driven decision making, it is not enough to rely on anecdotal evidence or loose assessment activities. Being able to easily review well-researched activities and vetted results is essential for a busy library administrator.

The book has three sections and 11 appendices. The first section focuses on results of program activities. With such diverse academic libraries involved with this expansive project, the first section of the text is a valuable reference, as it synthesizes the methods and results employed in the more than 200 projects undertaken by the participating libraries. The results detailed in these chapters provide vital information to support libraries in a data-driven environment. Additionally, the first section ends with the invaluable “Value of Academic Libraries Statement.” Having recently gone through the process of evaluation and revising our libraries’ mission statement, the ACRL Value Statement can help novice or experienced academic librarians retool their mission and vision statements.

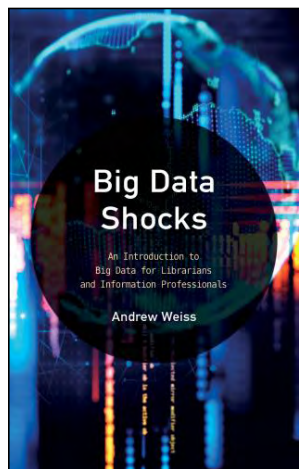
The second section, “Reflections,” begins with a statement from the editors that the themes in chapters 7 through 16 are communication, flexibility, and diversity. Appropriately, chapter 7 references an old folk tale, the story of Stone Soup. The author of this chapter, Mary

O'Kelly, offers her reflection on the AiA project at Grand Valley State University, where they measured the effectiveness of a collaborative program designed to support students through peer-learning services. The reference to Stone Soup, for me, is such a terrific metaphor not only for Mary O'Kelly's project but also for the Assessment in Action (AiA) projects as a whole. The sharing and support exhibited in the various libraries mirrors the traditional tale of the Stone Soup, where all the villagers contribute to the broth creating a delicious soup. The ten reflections in this section are each appetizing additions to the scholarship on assessment in academic libraries.

The third section looks forward and offers insights into how academic librarians can share the compelling evidence gathered through the AiA program with critical stakeholders as well as how "ACRL offers opportunities for growth and advocacy within the profession into the future." The 11 appendices offer not only historical information about the AiA program but also a comprehensive bibliography and listing of individual activities with exemplary design elements.

Charting a course for the future of one's library can be daunting, and the climate of data-driven decision-making might seem overwhelming for those without a background in assessment. The collection of results of the Assessment in Action program in this book offer suggestions and insights at your fingertips. Having this go-to reference will be helpful for academic librarians at any points in their careers as they navigate the world of assessment in academic libraries.—Kelli Johnson, *Marshall University*

Andrew Weiss. *Big Data Shocks: An Introduction to Big Data for Librarians and Information Professionals*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2018. 194p. Paper, \$45.00 (ISBN: 978-1-5381-0323-4).



In Andrew Weiss' book *Big Data Shocks: An Introduction to Big Data for Librarians and Information Professionals*, the author skillfully explores the intersections between libraries and big data by examining how this powerful technology is transforming and impacting (shocking) the world of libraries and information. The book is timely, given the intensity of the ongoing debates focused around campaigns of misinformation (Facebook and Google are two examples) coupled with the erosions of individual privacy that have been enabled by the use of big data technologies. *Big Data Shocks* consists of twelve chapters, and the chapters are grouped into four sections: "First Shock," "Reality Shocks," "Library Shocks," and "Future Shocks." The work is well written and thoroughly researched, and the ideas explored in the book

are fully developed and supported. Highlights of the book include Weiss' description on the rise of big data and his narrative on the challenges surrounding these powerful and mostly unregulated technologies, as well as his robust examination of what our roles as librarians in this new era of big data can be, especially in light of libraries' commitment to patron privacy. This scholarly publication is a welcome and notable addition to the growing body of works that focus on data, information technologies in the twenty-first century, core library values, privacy, and information seeking. It is written for all academic librarians, although especially those interested in data, big data, open science and data, science, technology and society, privacy in the twenty-first century, or anyone who is interested in learning more on this topic.