**BACKGROUND**

January 2016, the Dean of LSU Libraries, Stanley Wilder introduced both the Dean’s Council and Advisory Group meeting, his wish for the libraries to create programming during LSU exam weeks. Eight members of the LSU libraries faculty and staff were asked to serve on the committee, including me. Some of the initial ideas for the committee included a game room, postcard writing station, Pet Therapy, midnight pizza, coffee, goodie bags, and a quiet room. The committee resolved to host the first exam week program during Spring 2016 Midterms. With approval from the Associate Dean, we opened a “Relaxation Room” including origami, coloring, puzzles, games, a postcard writing station, and bubble wrap. In addition to the room, we hosted a pizza night and a “Find the General” game in the lobby.

Since the beginning, we have added more activities to the Relaxation Room including a sensory table, bean bag chairs, and relaxing music. We have also expanded our exam week activities to include Pet Therapy, crafts in the lobby, Coffee with a Cop, a 5-Minute Hair, popsicle and more. We have had successes as well as mistakes. Through our growth in programming, we have also grown in our assessment. One question we have asked since the first programming meeting is “How do you measure fun?”

**ASSESSMENT GOALS**

- Forum
- Generate New Ideas
- Event Recurrence
- Determine Attendance Numbers
- Justify Cost of Event

**TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENT**

**Survey**

We have adopted several survey conditions of our survey since its formation of the Programming Committee. Each has tried to get information about who was using the room, their feedback and provided places for comments. We incentivized the survey using a small prize such as a gift card or a free coffee. We drew the winner from the students who filled out a survey.

**Original Survey**

- We originally wanted to learn if students
- supported the relaxation room
- what they liked
- what they would like to see in the future
- provided a place for comments

**Counting**

Counting is a primary form of assessment to the exam week for us to examine student attendance. We count people throughout the day. We count people at the individual events. We count people through the postcards, coffee, craft stations, and games and coffee. We have even attempted to count people on Pet Therapy due to the nature of people in general and large sets of those are there to consume many of these small objects and craft. There, in the main take, is to justify our experience and provide a reasonable way for events.

**Original Counts**

- The Programming Committee counted student interaction and not individual students. We check the Relaxation room constantly throughout the day. Empty spaces in the chart (left) indicates a room without any events.

**Spring 2018 Counts**

In the spring of 2018, we purchased a student activity counter. The counter automatically counts students entering and leaving the number of students entering in half and then counting the visitors from committee members we are now able to get a more accurate idea of room usage throughout the week. We also have app to open to our phones that we can use to help track event attendance.

**Pres**

- module for student feedback
- helps to continue evaluate the effectiveness of the program
- tracks and informs back to programming about any feedback that occurs as part of a feedback loop

**Cons**

- limited to counting students entering and leaving the room
- count the number of people responding to the response throughout the day

**EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE**

Assessing programs helps with decision making. We often host programs and events that have never been done within our library before. Not all of them have been winners. Fall of 2017, we partnered to host a movie night with the East Baton Rouge Parish Library’s Bookmobile. Between the cost of renting parking spaces, issues with location, and trouble with event set-up, the few students who attended were not enough to justify re-attempting this program.

Therefore, we also use assessments to help justify increasing programming. Our students love pet therapy. We would often see over five hundred students during Pet Therapy. Through our assessment on the Fly, as well as comments within the survey, and high numbers during the event, students told us that they wanted more. This information empowered us to expand pet therapy to a second day allowing for even more students to participate.

Overall, our programming assessments demonstrate that students love library programs. Due to the consistently surpassing numbers, our surveys, and positive feedback, the necessity to provide justification has changed. The committee has demonstrated that we are able to outreach to many students while keeping costs low. Thankfully, we no longer must assess as stringently as we have in previous semesters. We now have more freedom to play around with how we assess events.

**CONCLUSION**

Assessing programs can only tell so much of the story. It is important to include comments and feedback into our assessments.

A successful event for us is one where a student attends and gets a positive experience out of it. It doesn’t have to be an educational experience or an information experience. If a student comes to an event and has fun and creates a positive memory of the libraries, that is worth it. It is great to be able to validate the Programming Committee’s existence and show how we measure fun and relaxation but at the end of the day, those quantifiable moments are worth more than anything else.

We utilize assessment not only for growth in our programming but also as a reflection of our growth in assessing as well.