The

# of Serials
in Academic & Special
Libraries

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THE VALUE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES
A Comprehensive Research Review and Report

ACRL Association of College & Research Libraries A Division of the American Library Association

Prepared by Dr. Megan Oakleaf, Syracuse University for the Association of College and Research Libraries

Products **Service**

Collections **Experience**

Mediation **Enabling**

Resources **Educational Impact**

Access **Sense-Making**

What is **value** in the context of serials?

Satisfaction?

Typical:

23% of faculty are satisfied with the serials collection in their area of research.

So what?

Service Quality?

Typical:
65% of our users think our serials services are acceptable.

So what?

Inputs/Outputs?

Typical:

We increased the serials collection by X.

So what?

Usage?

Typical:
A lot of people downloaded
a lot of things.

So what?

Typical:
A lot of people downloaded
a lot of things.
We're not sure who.
We're not sure what things.
We're not sure what they did with them.
If anything.

Seriously?

Commodity?

Typical:
The value of our serials collection = $$.

So what?

ROI $?

Typical:
We do more with less.

Then can I give you less again?

Typical:
We do more with less.
Well, we do about the same with less.

Ok...?

Typical:

We do more with less.

Well, we do about the same with less.

Uh, actually we do a lot less with less.

I didn't notice....

VALUE

Impact?

Impact:
the value of serials in meeting
the needs of users

Impact:

not how good is the serials collection,

but rather

how much **good**

do users do with the collection

Tell me more!

What do users **do** with the serials in your collection?

What do users do with the serials in your collection?
How much do you know about that?
Do they do the things your institution/organization values?

Context for Value

Context for Value:
institutional or organizational
mission
goals
strategic priorities
focus areas

Tell me more!

What does your institution/organization care about?

Higher Ed Focus Areas:
Student recruitment, enrollment

What do serials contribute?

Higher Ed Focus Areas:

Student GPA, test scores
Student learning outcomes

What do serials contribute?

Higher Ed Focus Areas:
Student retention, completion, graduation

What do serials contribute?

Higher Ed Focus Areas:
Student career success

What do serials contribute?

Higher Ed Focus Areas:
Alumni lifelong learning

What do serials contribute?

Higher Ed Focus Areas:
Faculty recruitment, tenure, promotion

What do serials contribute?

Higher Ed Focus Areas:
Faculty teaching

What do serials contribute?

Higher Ed Focus Areas:

Faculty research productivity

Faculty patents, technology transfer

Faculty grant seeking

Faculty innovation, entrepreneurship

What do serials contribute?

Higher Ed Focus Areas:
Institutional prestige
Institutional efficiencies
Institutional accreditation, program review
Institutional brand
Institutional development, funding, endowments

What do serials contribute?

Higher Ed Focus Areas:
Local, global workforce development
Local, global economic growth

What do serials contribute?

Efficiency Focus Areas:

Time savings

Industrial productivity, Shortened product cycle

Reduced parts costs, Labor savings

Improved quality

Increased sales

Quicker response to threats

Money saved over alternative sources

Risk of inappropriate information decreased

What do serials contribute?

Corporate Focus Areas:

Proceed to the next step in a project

Decide upon a course of action

Improve organizational image

Improve client relationships

Exploit new opportunities

Avoid time lost, bad decisions, loss of funds

What do serials contribute?

Medical Focus Areas:
Handle patient care differently
(diagnosis, choice of tests, choice of drugs, length of hospital stay, advice given)
Avoid hospital admissions, patient mortality, surgeries

What do serials contribute?

Have you thought of anything else?

Activity #26: Library Impact Map

Library Services, Expertise, & Resources

Institutional Focus Area	Reference, Physical	Reference, Digital	Reference, Subject Guides	Reference, Roving	Reference, Embedded	Reference, Consultations	Outreach	Liaison Services
Student Recruitment, Enrollment								
Student Retention, Completion, Graduation								
Student Career Success								
Student GPA, Test Achievement								
Student Learning Outcomes								
Student Experience, Engagement								
Student-Faculty Academic Rapport								
Alumni Lifelong Learning								

Oakleaf, Megan. *Academic Library Value: The Impact Starter Kit*. Syracuse, NY: Della Graphics, 2012. http://meganoakleaf.info/publications.html

Library Contributions in the form of Serials Services, Resources, & Expertise

Institutional or Organizational Needs, Goals, & Outcomes

Impact!

Think & Discuss

- What are the focus areas of your insitution/organization?
- What serials services, expertise, and resources does the library offer?
- Where do these two things intersect?
- Use the handout if it helps.
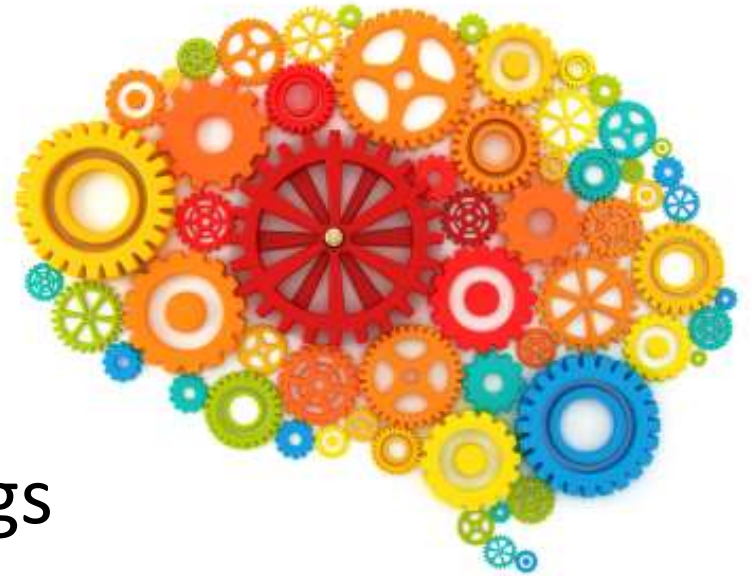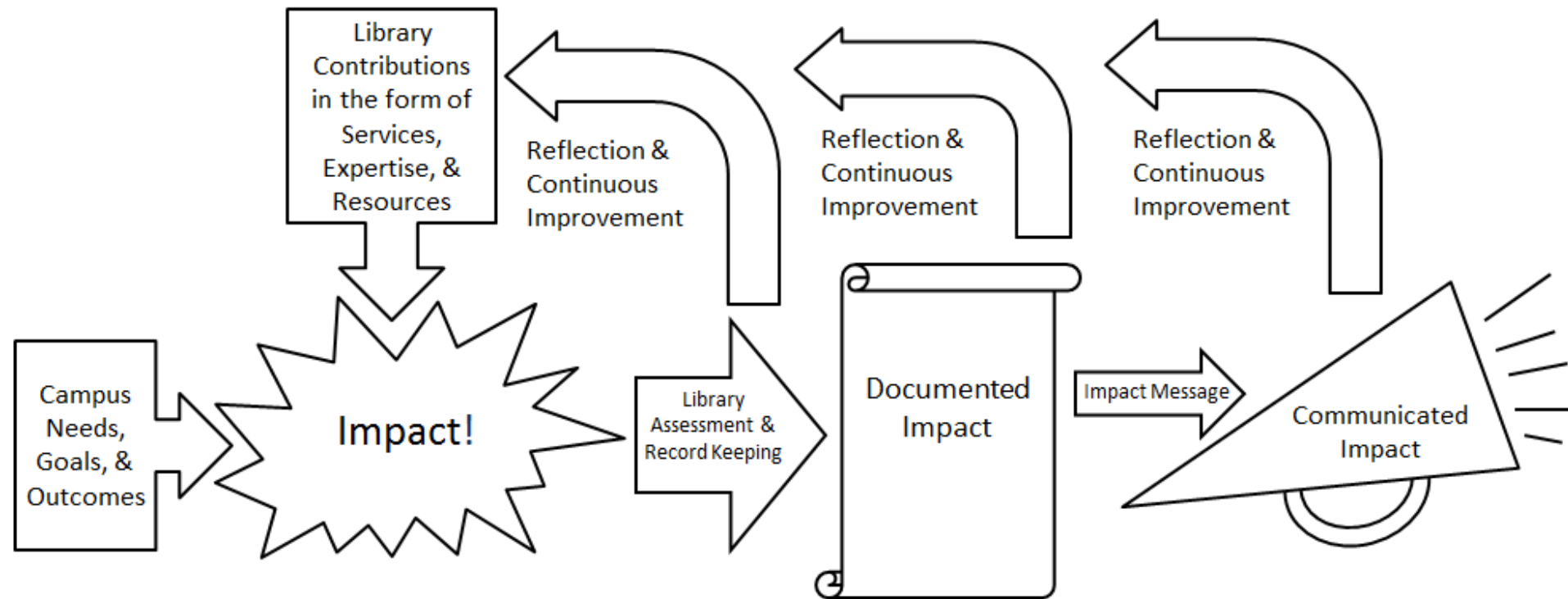
Adapted from: Oakleaf, Megan. "Are They Learning? Are We? Learning and the Academic Library." *Library Quarterly*. 81(1). 2011.

What do we need to assess the value of serials in academic and special libraries?

The **mission**, goals, strategic priorities, or focus areas of the parent institution or organization.

Defined outcomes that describe the impact of library serials services, expertise, and resources on users, written in terms relevant to the parent institution or organization.

Better **in-house data**.
Better **vendor data**.

"Use" data.

What serial use is there?

Useful for correlating library behaviors with measures of institutional/organizational success.

But what we have right now is inadequate...

Individual level data.

We can aggregate individual data,
but we can't disaggregate group data.

We can clean
personally identifiable information from data,
but we can't add it back in.

The Question of Correlation

Surrogates for serials:

- Library instruction
- Reference transactions
- Downloads
- ILL
- Other?

Surrogates for outcomes:

- Better grades
- More publications, grants, awards, tenure decisions
- Lives saved
- Cases won
- Profit gained
- Other?

Correlations

Writing "Value of Academic Library" Research Questions

Library Service, Expertise, or Resource ➡	Relationship Verb (Impact, Contribute to, Affect, Influence, Relate to, Cause, Determine, Help) ➡	Institutionally Desirable Outcome
Does [library service, expertise, or resource]	Relationship Verb	Outcome aligned with institutional needs, strategic priorities, goals, outcomes, or mission
In what ways does [library service, expertise, or resource]	Relationship Verb	Outcome aligned with institutional needs, strategic priorities, goals, outcomes, or mission
To what extent does [library service, expertise, or resource]	Relationship Verb	Outcome aligned with institutional needs, strategic priorities, goals, outcomes, or mission
How does [library service, expertise, or resource]	Relationship Verb	Outcome aligned with institutional needs, strategic priorities, goals, outcomes, or mission

http://meganoakleaf.info/valresearchquestions.pdf

The Question of Causation

- Umm…you can't actually demonstrate causation, only infer it.
- Do we have the capability to isolate all variables?
- Do we have the need to say we are the only ones contributing to outcomes?
- Is it enough to describe the profile of successful users and seek to increase the number of users that emulate those attributes?
- What is our goal?
  - If it's to "prove," then we may "need" causal data.
  - If it's to improve, we don't.

VALUE

"Use" data that **doesn't exist**.

What use **should there be**
based on the needs/requirements of
the parent institution or organization,
even if that use
doesn't currently exist?

First:

Identify an outcome that represents the intersection between institutional/organization mission and library services/expertise/resources.

Example: [Users] will be able to do [thing that the institution/organization values].

[Users] will be able to do
[thing that the institution/organization values].

- Students will be able to evaluate information found in serials effectively.

- Faculty will be able to teach effectively using serials.

- Faculty will be able to complete competitive grant proposals using serial literature.

- Doctors will make more accurate diagnoses.

- Lawyers will win more cases.

Second:

Determine how you'll know the outcome has been met. What data will you collect?

Put your assessment tool or methodology into action to get the data.

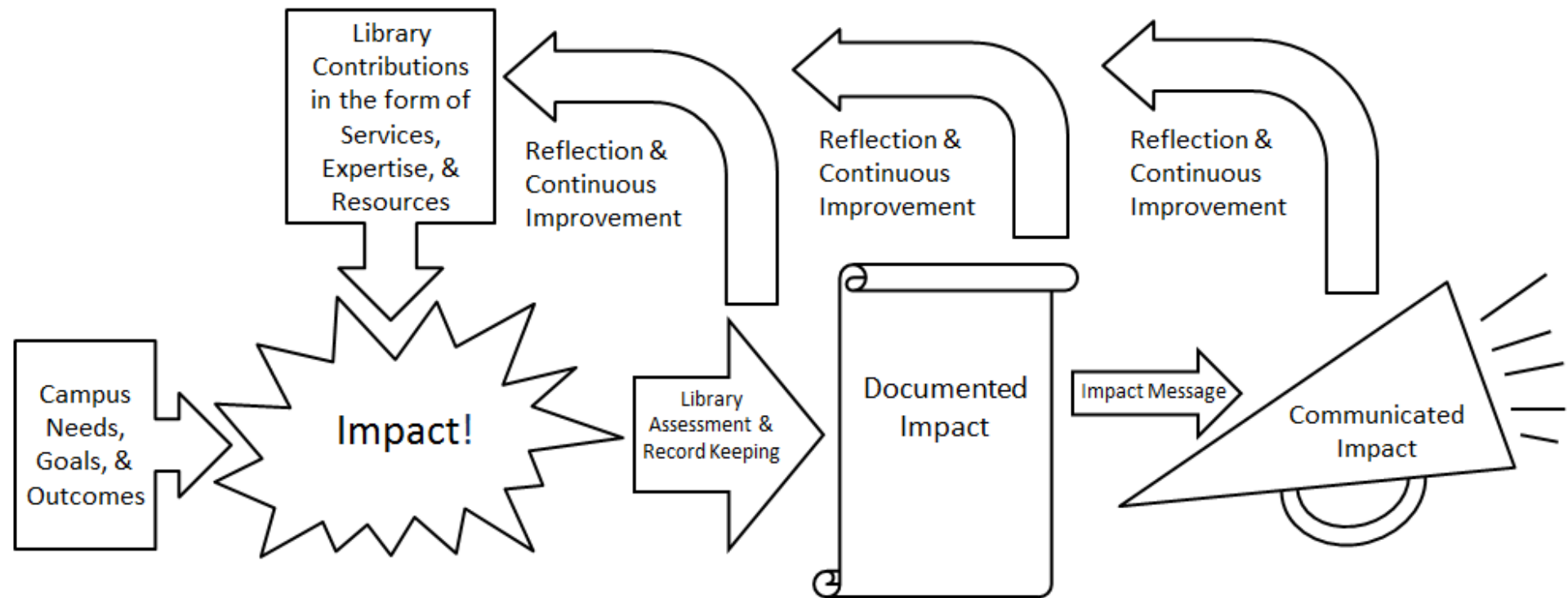Critical Incident Technique? Correlation?

Third:

Report your assessment results to communicate your value!

Use the data to improve!

Adapted from: Oakleaf, Megan. "Are They Learning? Are We? Learning and the Academic Library." *Library Quarterly*. 81(1). 2011.

What should communications about serials value look like?

What do YOUR communications about serials look like?

Which conception of value are they predicated on?

Satisfaction
Service Quality
Inputs/Outputs
Usage
Commodity
Impact

What do your communications about serials look like?

How good we are?

- Good job teaching how to evaluate and use serials.
- Good job advising faculty where to place articles or determine their impact factor.

- Good job preparing bibs and exec summaries of serial lit for grant proposals.

How much good do users do with our serials?

- Get better grades.
- Graduate on time.
- Get more articles published.
- Get tenure.

- Get funded grants.
- Earn awards.

VALUE

What if we could demonstrate the contribution of serials..

- To students completing academic work successfully and completing their programs/degrees?
- To actually learning how to be good, lifelong, sophisticated users of information?
- To quick and lucrative employment of students?
- To recruiting great new faculty?
- To improving teaching?
- To placing articles in the right publications?
- To the awarding of grants?
- To tenuring and promoting successful faculty members?
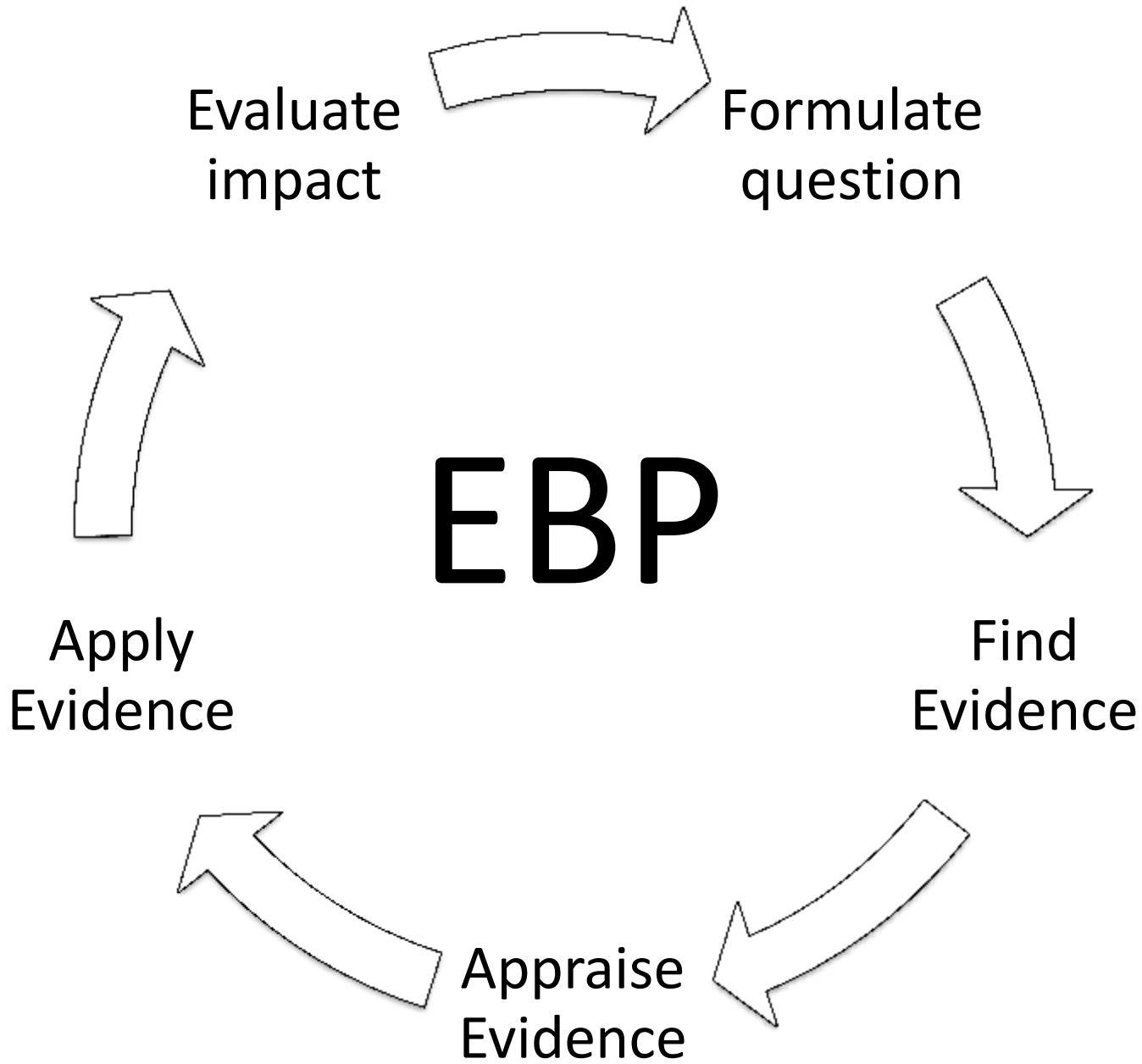- To the profile, prestige, reputation of the institution in the global and local community?
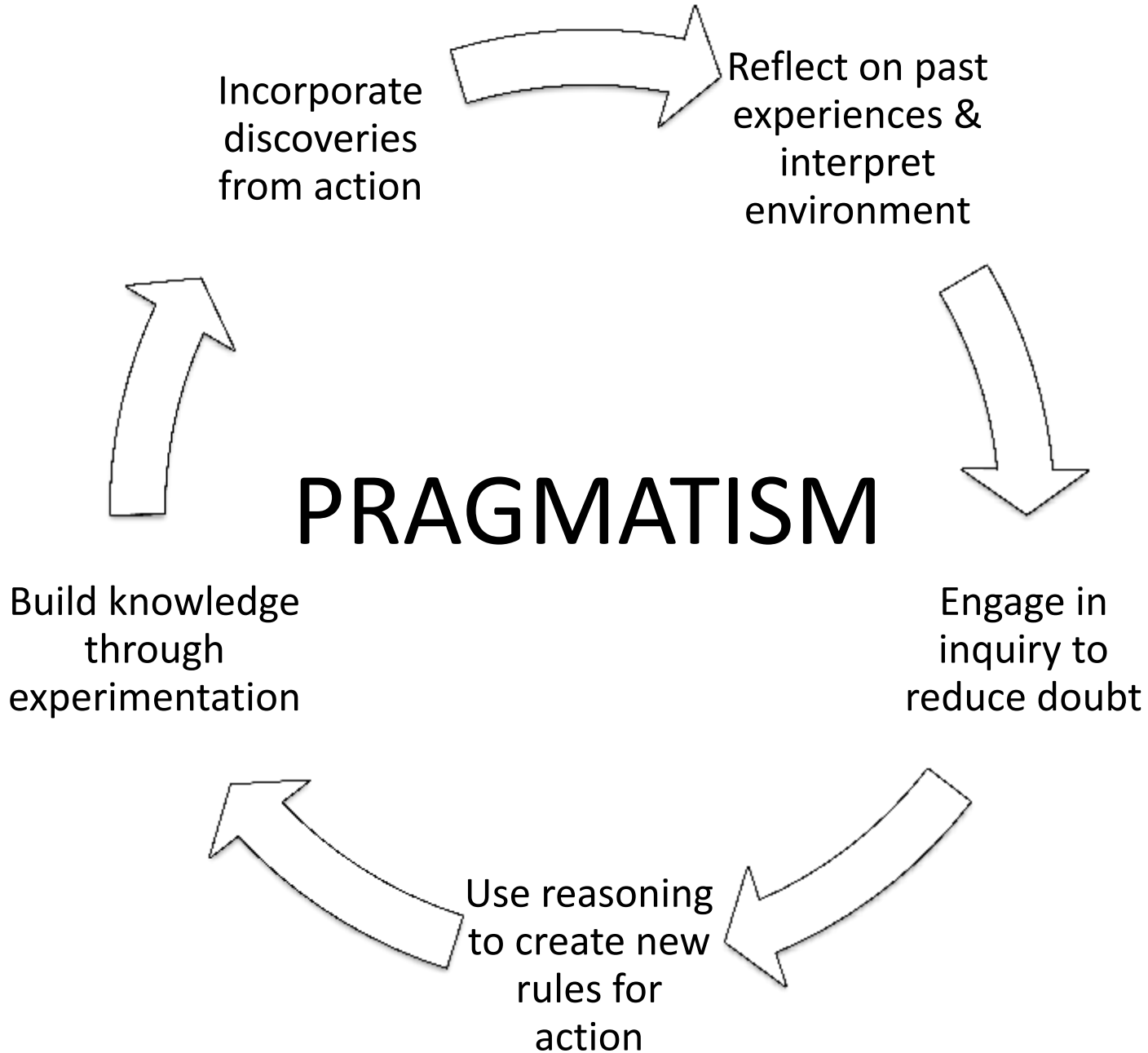
More importantly…
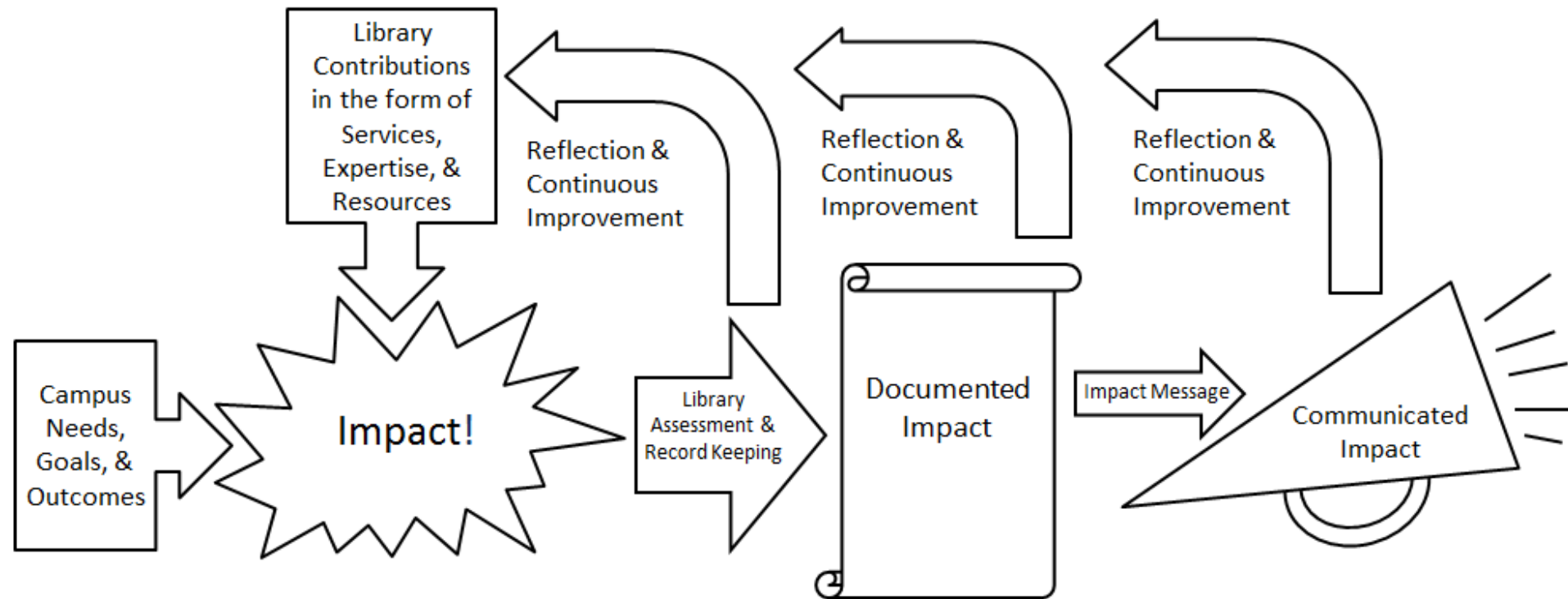
Adapted from: Oakleaf, Megan. "Are They Learning? Are We? Learning and the Academic Library." *Library Quarterly*. 81(1). 2011.

What if we could use what we learned about the contributions of serials…

- To teach users to be better, lifelong, sophisticated users of information?
- To help students do their work even more successfully and achieve their goals in greater numbers or more quickly?
- To assist students to gain faster and more lucrative employment?
- To recruit more and better new faculty?
- To help faculty produce more articles in higher-impact publications and get more and bigger grants?
- To the grow the profile, prestige, reputation of the institution/organization in the global and local community?

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