L-Index: Designing a New Method for Measuring Library Impact in Canada

Presented by

Bill Irwin, Assistant Professor
Huron University College
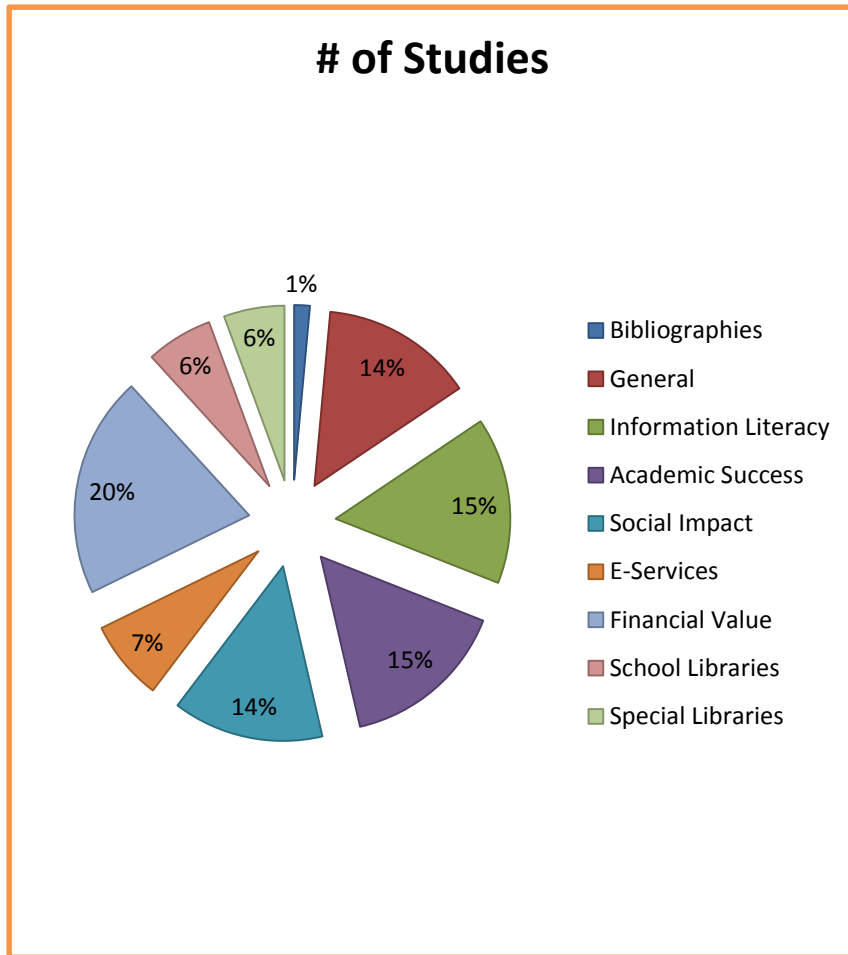
and

Kimberly Silk, Special Projects Officer
Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN)

Measuring Impact…so far

- Lots of libraries have conducted impact studies
  - Predominantly economic impact studies
  - Extensive use in Ontario of the economic impact model used in Toronto Public Library study

- BUT: Economic impact is only part of the story

Distribution of Studies by Type in Poll (2014)

# of Studies

Legend:
- Bibliographies
- General
- Information Literacy
- Academic Success
- Social Impact
- E-Services
- Financial Value
- School Libraries
- Special Libraries

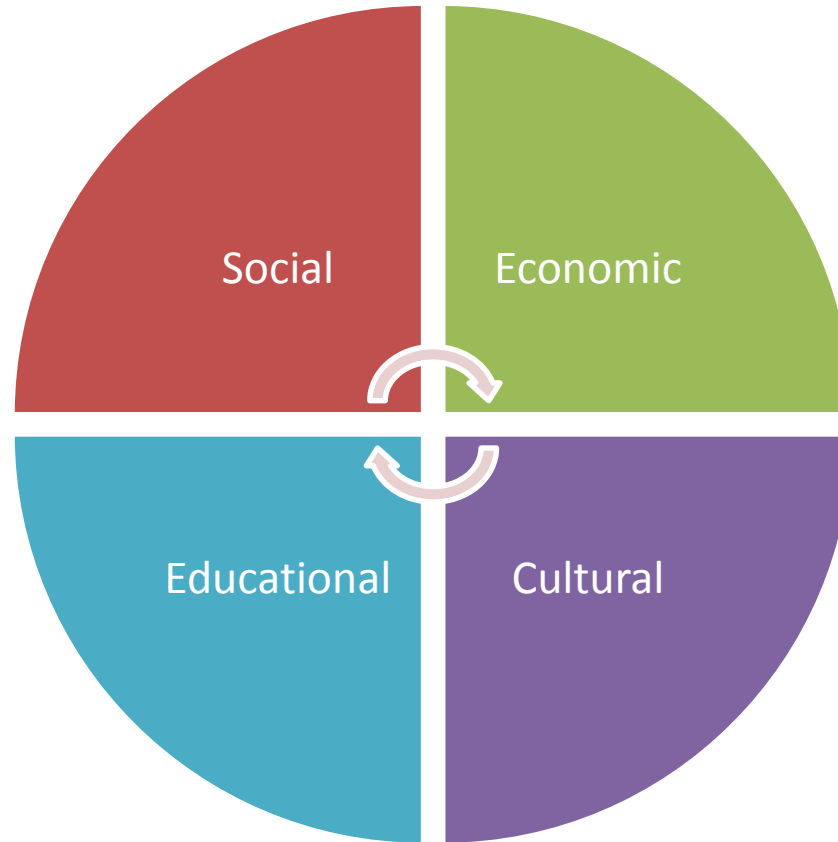Pie chart values: 1%, 14%, 15%, 15%, 14%, 7%, 20%, 6%, 6%

- In 2015, Cavanagh & Silk mapped the library impact studies cited in Poll's 2014 bibliography to identify & cluster performance indicators and methodologies;

- 20% of studies focused on financial value

- 88% of studies done between 2000 and 2014

Libraries Impact So Much More

Social Development
- Reading Clubs
- Parent & Tot Programs
- Teen Programs

Economic Development
- Job Workshops
- Skills databases
- Small Business Support

Educational Development
- Homework Clubs
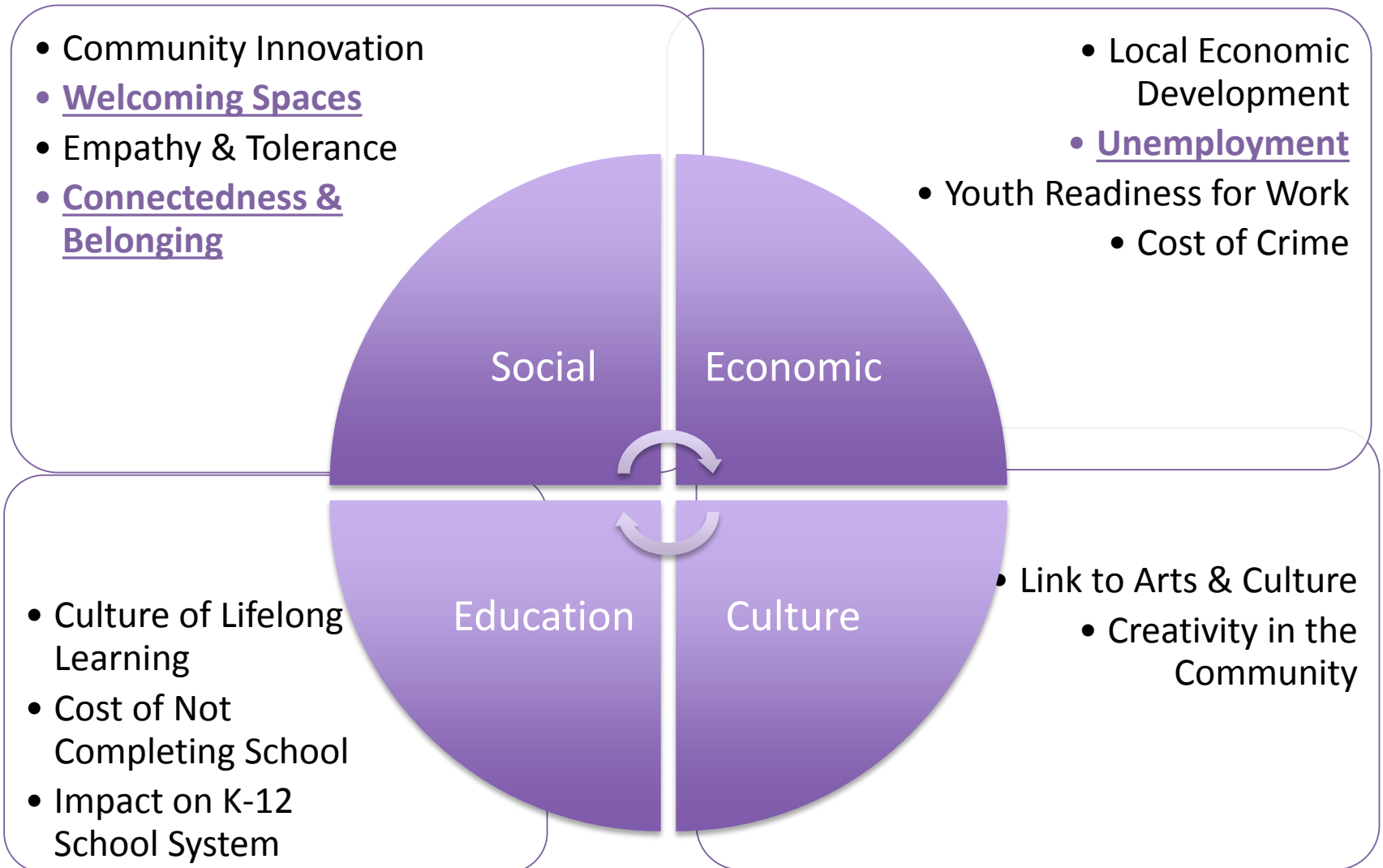- Early Literacy
- ESL Programs

Cultural Development
- Culture Days
- Author Talks
- Access to Collections

Social

Economic

Educational

Cultural

L-Index in Action: CULC

- The Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) is a collaboration among 43 of Canada's urban libraries

- In June 2015, CULC members gathered to discuss what values and impacts they wanted to communicate to their stakeholders

- This brainstorming exercise helped CULC libraries prioritize their research interests.

L-Index: CULC Priorities

- Community Innovation
- **Welcoming Spaces**
- Empathy & Tolerance
- **Connectedness & Belonging**

- Local Economic Development
- **Unemployment**
- Youth Readiness for Work
- Cost of Crime

Social

Economic

Education

Culture

- Culture of Lifelong Learning
- Cost of Not Completing School
- Impact on K-12 School System

- Link to Arts & Culture
- Creativity in the Community

CULC Research in Progress

1. What is the impact of library programs and services focused on assisting patrons to re-enter the job market? Do patrons feel that these programs and services assisted in them finding employment?

   – Halifax PL, Oshawa PL, Windsor PL

2. What conditions need to be present to achieve employee happiness and engagement in a public library setting?

   – Burlington PL & Fraser Valley Regional PL

3. How are people using the different spaces in the library? When they are in the library, what are they doing when they are there?

   – Brampton PL, Calgary PL, Markham PL

We Need Your Help

- Bill & Kim are writing a book this summer, on How to Measure Impact in Your Library
- We need your help to co-construct the Table of Contents
- Tentative title:
From Talk to Action: From Research to Impact
- What are your needs?
- How would you use it?
- What are your stories to share?

L-Index in Action:
Brainstorming Next Steps

References – so far

Huysmans, F., & Oomes, M. (2013). Measuring the public library's societal value: A methodological research program. *IFLA Journal*, *39*(2), 168–177. http://doi.org/10.1177/0340035213486412

Irwin, B., & St. Pierre , P. (2014). "Creating a culture of meaningful evaluation in public libraries: Moving beyond quantitative metrics", *Sage Open* , October – December 2014:1-14, http://sgo.sagepub.com/content/4/4/2158244014561214

Markless, S., & Streatfield, D. (2014). Recent developments in library evaluation, statistics and measurement – and why they are important. Presented at the IFLA WLIC 2014, Lyon, France. Retrieved from http://library.ifla.org/891/

Matthews, J. R. (2011). What's the Return on ROI? The Benefits and Challenges of Calculating Your Library's Return on Investment. *Library & Leadership Management*, *25*(1). Retrieved from https://journals.tdl.org/llm/index.php/llm/article/viewFile/1861/1623

Missingham, R. (2005). Libraries and economic value: a review of recent studies. *Performance Measurement and Metrics*, *6*(3), 142–158. http://doi.org/10.1108/14678040510636711

Poll, R. (2003). Impact/outcome measures for libraries. *LIBER Quarterly*, *13*(3/4). Retrieved from http://liber.library.uu.nl/index.php/lq/article/view/URN%3ANBN%3ANL%3AUI%3A10-1-113350

Poll, R. (2014). *Bibliography "Impact and Outcome of Libraries."* Munster, Germany: IFLA. Retrieved from http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/statistics-and-evaluation/publications/bibliography_impact_and_outcome_2014.pdf

Stolarick, K., & Silk, K. (2013). *So Much More: The Economic Impact of Toronto Public Library on the City of Toronto*. Toronto: Martin Prosperity Institute. Retrieved from http://martinprosperity.org/2013/12/06/so-much-more-the-economic-impact-of-the-toronto-public-library-on-the-city-of-toronto/

Thank You

Questions?

Bill Irwin, Assistant Professor
Huron University College
birwin6@uwo.ca
Twitter: @drbillirwin

Kimberly Silk, Special Projects Officer
Canadian Research Knowledge Network
ksilk@crkn.ca
@kimberlysilk