

# Talk Story: Practitioner Inquiry in Public Libraries

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# Introduction



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# Building Community: Opportunities, Challenges, and Innovations

- ▶ How are you organizing and curating your collections to enhance discovery and access?
- ▶ How do you use technology to build community?
- ▶ How are you building relationships with your users, your non-users, your administrators, your funders?
- ▶ How are you using data and assessment to better support your community's needs and aspirations?
- ▶ How does your collection contribute to a sense of cultural identity and community empowerment?
- ▶ How are you advocating and justifying community building activities to your stakeholders?
- ▶ How are creating physical spaces that invite collaborative engagement, e.g., makerspaces, learning commons?
- ▶ How are you advocating for open access and open educational resources as a critical means to share knowledge?

## = Our assumptions

- ▶ Tech Savvy
- ▶ Excellent searchers
- ▶ Knowledgeable about literature
- ▶ Care about people
- ▶ Focused on service



= True truths

- Finger pointers
- Disciplinarians
- Book shoppers
- Web surfers
- Social workers
- Community advocates



## = 21<sup>st</sup> Century public services

- Public librarians engage with citizens from all walks of life
- Information needs of the reading public tend to be traditional, while the demands tend to be technical



Source: [http://www.abbythelibrarian.com/2014\\_12\\_01\\_archive.html](http://www.abbythelibrarian.com/2014_12_01_archive.html)

- Professional services can become personal experiences

# = Professional becomes personal

- ▶ We read. We are readers. We practice reading.
  - ▶ Literarily
  - ▶ Socially
  - ▶ Culturally
  - ▶ Intuitively
  - ▶ Strategically

# = We question the professional

- We study what patrons read
- We read what patrons read
- We see ourselves as patrons
- We become a reading librarian
  - Of community
  - Of ourselves
  - Of text
  - Of media





# = Practitioner Inquiry

➤ Practitioner =

➤ You

➤ Me

➤ All of us

➤ Inquiry =

➤ Being critical by asking questions of what we do

➤ Being courageous by accepting more questions of what we don't do

➤ Being collaborative in studying questions

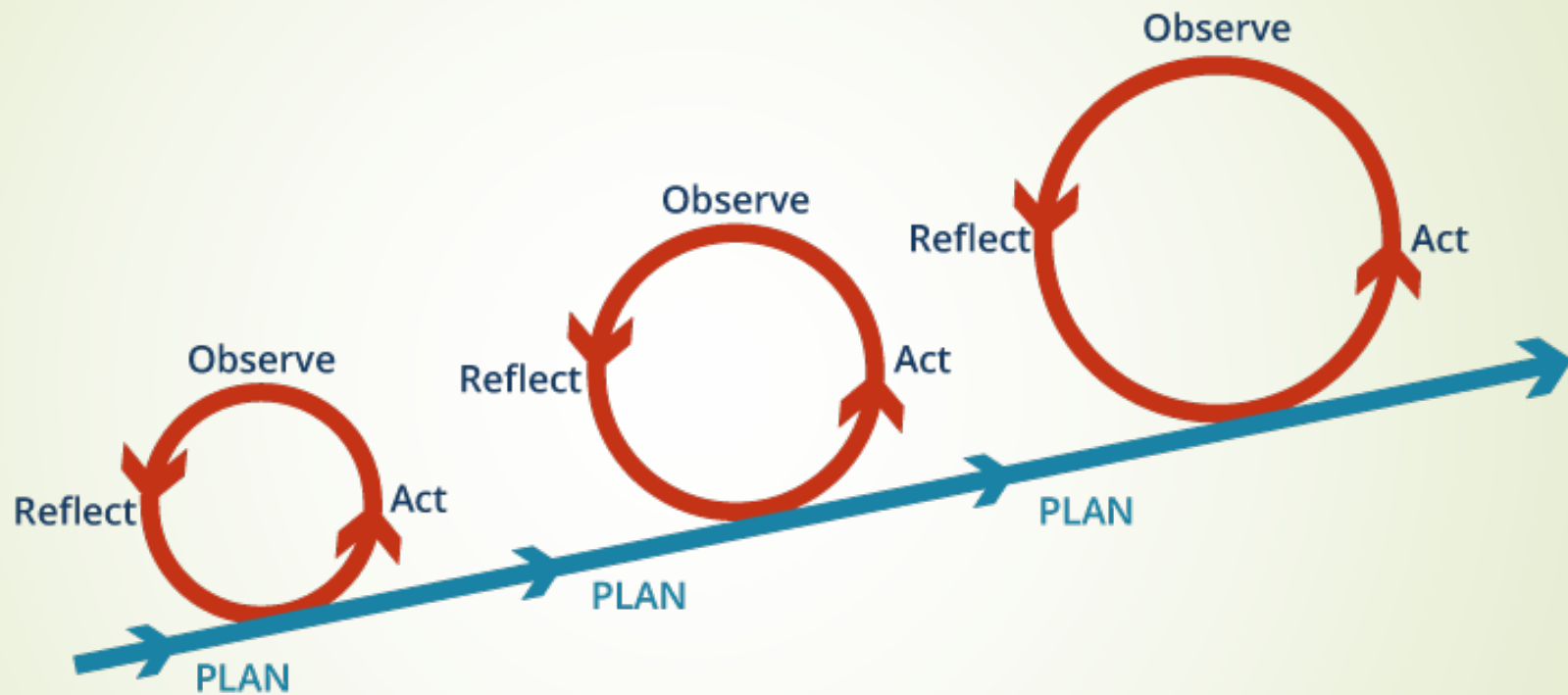
# = Practitioner Inquiry

- Practitioner inquiry is:
  - Strategic
  - Collaborative
  - Process-oriented
  - Research-substantiated
  - Agency affirming
  - Voice activating
  - Reflective. Contemplative.
  - Organic. Messy. Funchaotic.

Ways of Knowing deeply:

- What
- When
- Who
- How
- Why

# = Practitioner Inquiry



## = Practitioner Inquiry

- Reading as data-collecting, data-affirming:
  - “reading from the stacks”
  - “reading what the patrons read”
  - “personal reading becomes professional practice”
  - “read our own response to literature”
  - “leisure reading becomes practitioner research”
  - “talk about / ask questions / inquire”



## = Practitioner Inquiry

- ▶ We consider:
  - ▶ In what ways can what I read inspire me to talk story to reflect on my professional practice?
  - ▶ How do we preserve librarian practices?
  - ▶ How do we study and record what we do for our communities to build legacy for LIS?
  - ▶ How do we learn to be “better” by studying what we do?

## = Practitioner Inquiry

- ▶ We become curious
  - ▶ Reach out to patrons
  - ▶ Reach out to our community
  - ▶ Reach out to one another
- ▶ We collect data
  - ▶ Ask questions of ourselves
  - ▶ Ask questions of our patrons
  - ▶ Ask questions of one another

## = Practitioner Inquiry

- We study our data
  - Reflections in writing
  - Notes in reading
  - Observations in listening
  - Statistics in recording
- We become quantitative to enhance the qualitative

## = Practitioner Inquiry

- ▶ We come together. We gather.
  - ▶ To share our reading experiences
    - ▶ Bringing the solitary to the collaborative
    - ▶ Unpacking questions from the silence
    - ▶ Talking story of our responses
    - ▶ Listening with aloha



## = Practitioner Inquiry

- To listen
- To be heard
- To connect
- To learn
- To become “better”
- To include ourselves
- To holistically construct our professional identity

# = Practitioner Inquiry

- Working with HSPLS
  - Librarians on three (3) islands
  - Phase I: Librarian Talk Story
  - Phase II: Librarian Data Collection
  - Phase III: *The Librarians' Inquiry Forum*
  - Follow Up Interviews
  - Assessment: What did we learn?
    - What worked?
    - What was missing?
    - What do we need to keep?
    - What do we need to release?



**How are  
we "better"?**

ME "PEIPEI" J  
HOM AIG

## = Practitioner Inquiry

- ▶ Learning from “Being”: TALK
  - ▶ Librarian – to – Librarian
  - ▶ Social media
  - ▶ Coming together. Gathering.
- ▶ Learning from “Reading”: OBSERVATION
  - ▶ reading what the patrons read
    - ▶ Journaling
    - ▶ Marginalia
  - ▶ reading professional practice
    - ▶ Field notes / Memos
    - ▶ Critical Incidents

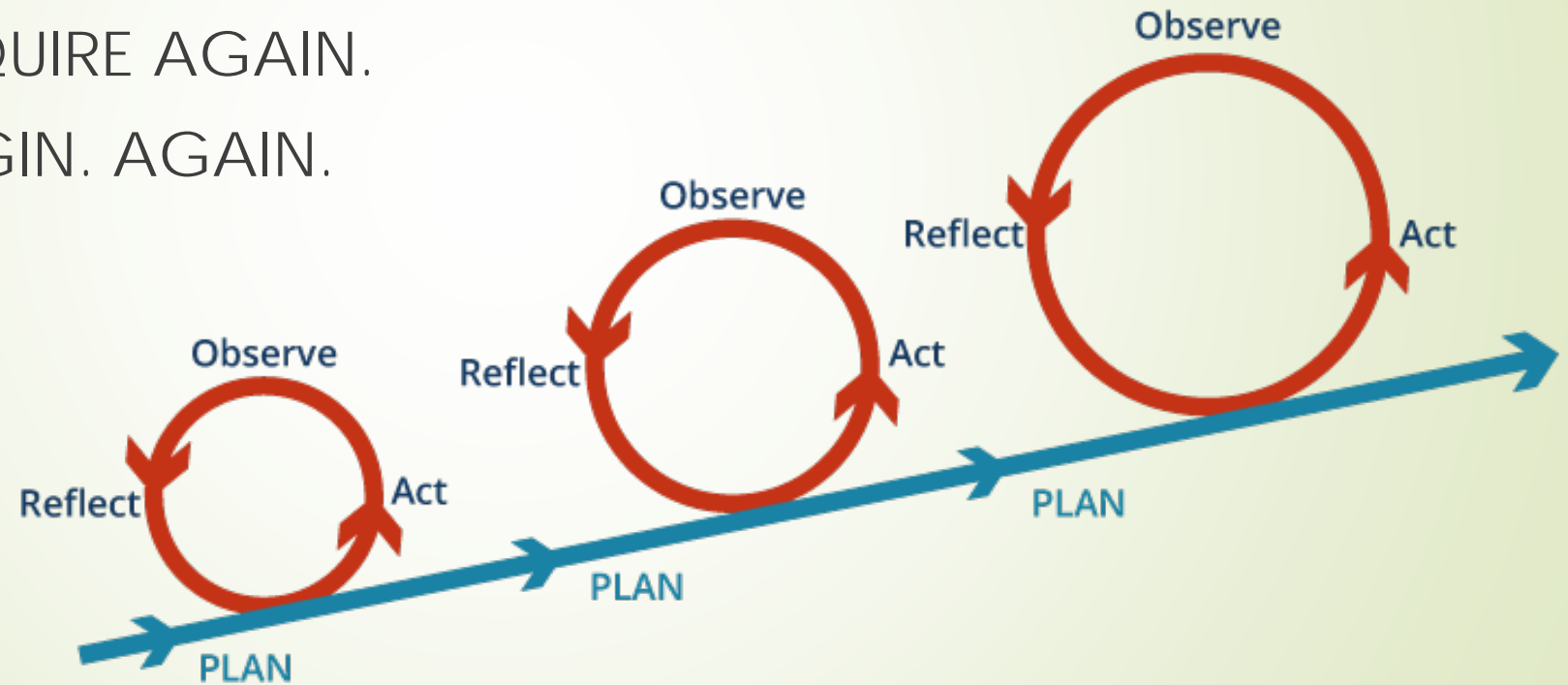
# = Practitioner Inquiry

- Learning from “Questioning”: INQUIRY
  - Collaborative discourse
  - Processing discomfort
  - Enjoying laughter
- Learning from “Assessing”: REFLECTION
  - Pregnant Silences
  - Risking vulnerability
  - Trusting the moment / space / what we don't know



# = Practitioner Inquiry

- ASK AGAIN.
- QUESTION AGAIN.
- INQUIRE AGAIN.
- BEGIN. AGAIN.



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