

Motivation & Teamwork: Making the Difficult Look Easy

Presented by:

Dr. Juanita Midgette Spence, Director of Library Services, ECSU

Mary Jordan, Technical Services Librarian, ECSU

Cynthia Horne Wise, Circulation Librarian, ECSU

252-335-3427—www.ecsu.edu/library

Presented at the 19th Annual Academic Library Services Paraprofessional Conference @ East Carolina University on May 12, 2023.

ECSU Library \$4M Repair/Reset Project

2016—NC voters approve the NCCConnect Bond, which includes \$4.5M for G.R. Little Library renovations.

2018—It is determined that the library needs more repairs than previously thought and focus becomes repairing the building. Staff begin thinking of ways to maximize the impact on the student experience.

2018—Staff decide to create more floor space through a big weed project and begin collection assessments.

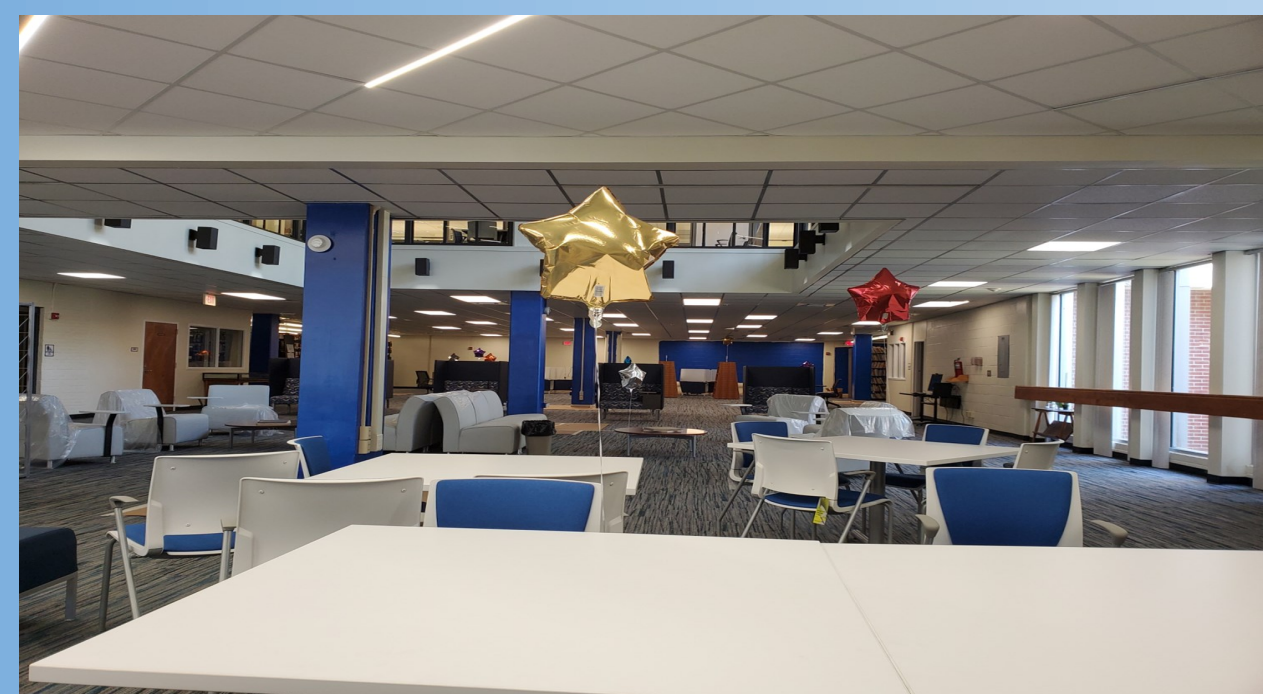


2019—The library begins planning where its alternate service area will be and what service provision will look like. The big weed begins. Plans for collection management during construction are created and packing begins. Library staff, services, and some collections move to alternate location(s). Books and materials are packed.



2020—Packing completed. Building turned over to construction management personnel. Pandemic prompts services to online platforms.

2021—Construction draws to a end. Library staff begin the unpacking process. Library reopens to campus community in Fall.



Our Motivators:

- Remembering the end vision: A beautiful, vibrant, versatile STUDENT space.
- Little Debbie Afternoon Breaks. Refrigerated, of course.
- Cupcakes at milestones.
- Our motto: "In the end, it's going to be beautiful."
- Games: Tape Roll Bomb (using empty tape rolls to bomb each other randomly), and a daily step-count war.
- Canary Cactus, our mascot: if she was thriving, we could too.
- Set up the Staff Lounge early on for an escape space.
- Verbal appreciation and empathy, validating feelings and efforts, encouraging each other. Be specific.
- Touching base and checking in with each other often.
- Letting team members walk away for a break when needed and taking short breaks throughout the process.



Optimal Time to Motivate

What next?:

Build on your success and forward movement. Projects do not have to get bigger and bigger, just moving your department or library forward. The evolution of your space/services/department/library is an upward spiral, not a closed circle.

Closure or "Was the outcome achieved?":

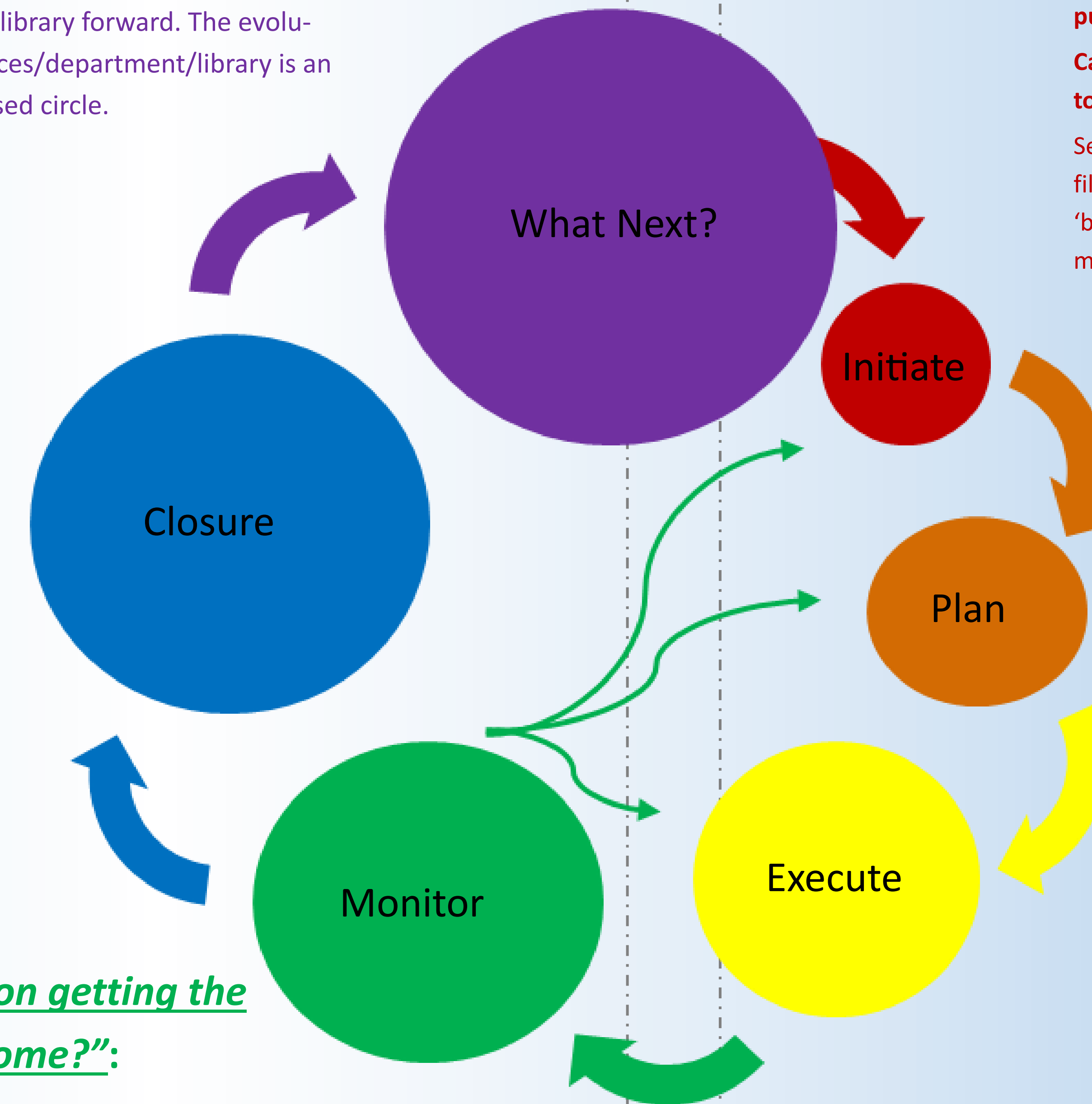
Evaluate the end result. Did you fill your need? Does the end of this project uncover new needs or lead to new projects? Remember to celebrate your accomplishment and those who were involved.

Monitor or "Is the plan's execution getting the results needed to reach the outcome?":

Keep an eye on the effectiveness of your plan at regular stages while doing the work. Is it going smoothly? Does anything need to be tweaked to stay on track? Address any problems or new circumstances with all stakeholders and adjust the plan and execution as needed. Celebrate the small wins. Even small celebrations or a small treat (brownies, cupcakes, etc) can renew the spirit. Be willing to accept failures as long as you learn and build from them. Lose a battle or two to win the war.

Motivation Tips:

- Celebrate the small victories or milestones, both individually and team.
- Use encouraging words and positive language.
- Make each member feel 'seen' and valued.
- Develop a project motto or chant.
- Allow for fun, like small, goofy challenges or games that can be played while the team works.
- Remediate stressors.
- Recognize effort, both in the moment and at closure.



Initiate or "What is your Outcome?":

What is your ultimate outcome?
What are the needs that this project is fulfilling?
Who are your stakeholders?
Who will this impact?
Does the outcome make sense for the effort and resource output it will need/cost?
Can you get to your outcome with one project, or does it need to be broken into stages or smaller consecutive projects?
Seek input from all stakeholders on needs and options for fulfillment to develop your outcome. Make sure your stakeholders 'buy into' your vision. Decide as a group on the best project to meet your needs. Prioritize.

Plan or "How are you going to achieve your outcome?":

Can you get to your outcome with one project, or does it need to be broken into stages or smaller consecutive projects?
Start at the optimal outcome (end) and work backwards. Break down the project into 'bite-size' pieces.
Communicate everything. Invite and be open to feedback.
Include all in the planning process but one person needs to take ownership of a task and be the head coach.
Does the team have special talents that can be used for this project? Match tasks to talents.
Attention to detail in the planning stage may save a lot of time and frustration. Overthink, over-plan, look for the minute details.

Execute or "Do the work.":

Do a trial run of the process. Does the workflow work? How long did it take you to do it? Extrapolate a project completion time. Are there any possible snags in the process? Is the process as effective/efficient as possible. Is there any duplication of effort that can be removed?
Is the work plan the right work plan? Do not be afraid to bounce between planning and executing to ensure the process is right.
Are the parameters of the work sufficient to reach the goal?

Team Building Tips:

- Include everyone who needs/wants to be involved.
- Listen to their thoughts and ideas and incorporate them when it is best for the project or the desired outcome.
- Play to each team member's strengths and align their tasks with their talents.
- Communicate even the smallest things, and ensure that all are in the loop with all aspects of the project.
- Let the team have some fun once in a while.

Optimal Time to Build a Strong Team