

Wonderful World of Workshops: Integrating Research Consultations and Active Learning into a Traditional Workshop Model

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The launch of a Library workshop series was attempted several times over the years by McMaster Librarians, most notably in 2014 and 2017. Due to staff departures, position relocations and lack of uptake these previous iterations were ultimately unsuccessful.

In the Fall of 2019 three early career librarians decided to work together on relaunching a Library workshop series focused on information literacy. These librarians were drawn to the workshop series due to their own varied interests but ultimately due to the fact that all three engage in information literacy instruction at McMaster Library.

Upon deciding to launch the workshop series the librarians proceeded to meet several times over the fall semester to determine the best topics and dates for their sessions. They further worked together to design their own marketing plan and advertisements for the series.

This poster presentation will take you through the semester long process undertaken to launch the workshop series including both trials and tribulations.

WORKSHOPS OFFERED

LinkedIn Learning

- An introduction to LinkedIn Learning for personal and professional growth
- 4 attendees in 2 sessions.

Research Assignment 101

- Exploration of how to create a research question and search strategy, conduct database searching, and citation mining
- 2 attendees in 2 sessions.

Citation Management Software (CMS)

- A brief overview of what CMS. A walkthrough Zotero, Endnote, and Mendeley, with a working session with participants tool of choice
- 53 attendees in 2 sessions.

Information Literacy Framework for Educators

- A workshop that facilitated instructor interaction with ACRL's Framework for Information Literacy// 20 attendees in 1 session

Over the course of the last century, “drop-in” workshops have been a major feature of college and university library services¹. Such sessions exist outside course related instruction and are typically implemented at the discretion of the library². These workshops, provided in conjunction with course-based instruction, tours and reference services provide to introduce library patrons with access to information literacy education, and orientation around the particularities of the individual library system

Workshops exists in liminal space between instruction, library orientation, and technical training. While ALA makes mention of workshops in Characteristics of Programs of Information Literacy that Illustrate Best Practices as a part Category 6: Communication and Advocacy with competing demand for instructional services and traditionally low participation, workshops are oft the first service to be paired back^{1,3}.

However, there is reason to believe that workshops might be the best available mechanism to address underserved undergraduate, graduate, staff and faculty populations in decentralized teaching environments^{2,3}. By allowing participants to act on a recognized learning need, workshops can play an important role in library instruction programs that seek to promote information literacy education as part of lifelong learning¹.

While much discussion on workshops centers on offerings, and marketing more attention needs to be paid to how best asses need in the institution or community, best teaching modalities, and what partnerships (faculty, services, populations) can facilitate a robust workshop series.

SWOT

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- weekly check-in meetings kept things moving
- teamwork and reflective practices
- optimal variety of workshops (only 4 types, hosted multiple times)
- balance of breadth and depth
- responded to need on a campus (CMS)
- space on campus (active learning, technology enabled in classroom)

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- marketing
- utilizing services on hand for help
- technology
- experience
- small team
- snacks
- registration not required; drop-ins welcome

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- partnerships: internal (Library Assistants with MLIS); external (Student Success and Residences)
- lead time with workshop content created and workshop dates scheduled
- market to under-served populations (graduate students)
- commuter school (webcasting)
- “take home” resources (i.e. libguides)

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- Teaching and Learning AUL position vacancy (conversations not happening on a larger/higher level)
- not a campus priority (minimal foundation for information literacy framework among larger campus community)
- global underfunding of student support services
- library social media strategy is limited (hindering the efficacy of our own posts)

LESSONS LEARNED

The campus community has so much to offer marketing pros, social media experts, and willing collaborators. We need to inform and reach out to our networks to ask for help to succeed.

Scheduling workshops ahead of the semester allows more opportunities for in class or in consultation promotion.

Tune into needs and gaps on campus when planning workshops

Titles are an important part of advertising.

Snacks don't really matter!

CITATIONS

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