This study describes the evaluations and interviews conducted with participants in the Community Workshop Series program at the Durham Public Library during the calendar year 2007. The Community Workshop Series is a set of free computer classes offered by the UNC-Chapel Hill University Libraries to local public libraries in the Chapel Hill/Durham area. The study aims to assess the Workshop Series classes in terms of participant satisfaction, effectiveness, and future planning.

The Community Workshop Series classes prove to be well received and popular among the Durham Public Library patrons. Many participants express eagerness for more computer classes to be offered through the library and for an increase in the frequency at which they are available. Most participants feel they are learning valuable skills through the classes. Libraries may consider the results as they assess their own goals for similar programs.

Headings:

Programmed instruction

Public libraries—Program evaluations

Public libraries—Library instruction

Library instruction—Computers

A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF THE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SERIES
CLASSES AT THE DURHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

by
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INTRODUCTION

The Community Workshop Series (CWS) is a community-outreach collaboration between the University Libraries at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill) and area public libraries, including the Chapel Hill Public Library, the Carrboro Branch Library, the Carrboro Cybrary, and the Durham Public Library (DPL). The program offers computer and information literacy classes that are free to the general public. The program began in Chapel Hill during the spring of 2005 and quickly expanded to the Carrboro libraries and, finally, to the Durham Library in the fall of 2006.

In the summer of 2007, the Durham County Public Library approved a three-year Strategic Plan to help build a more "customer-centered library" by 2010. Seven strategic goals were identified including one to make the library "a leader in providing Durham's citizens with information technology resources necessary for academic, business, social networking and leisure activities." (Durham County Library Strategic Plan: Goal 3) In order to achieve this goal, Durham Public Library has recognized that it will need to improve and expand its computer information training programs. To achieve this end, the current programs will be evaluated to identify the strengths and weaknesses as perceived through the students and library staff in order to better plan for future programs.

In light of the Durham Public Library's three-year Strategic Plan, the purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of, and satisfaction with, the classes offered through CWS at the Durham Public Library. The assessment included an analysis of training evaluation forms completed by CWS participants, combined with an analysis of interviews conducted with library employees who work with the program. While anecdotally, the CWS classes appeared to be popular among library patrons, a closer look at evaluation reports and interviews will reveal what specifically about the program appeals to the students, what are the areas for improvement, and what will future plans for the program need to consider in order for the CWS program to meet the goals of the Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Community Workshop Series was established to harness the resources of the University Libraries and the School of Information and Library Science (SILS) at UNC-CH to provide computer and information literacy instruction for the surrounding communities. Classes are taught at various local public libraries, and students from SILS provide much of the instruction as well as the course development and materials. The first courses were offered in the spring of 2005 at the Chapel Hill Public Library and quickly spread to the local Orange County Library branches (the Carrboro Branch Library and the Carrboro Cybrary).

The Durham Public Library was incorporated by an act of the North Carolina General Assembly on March 5, 1897 and opened its doors to the public on February 10, 1898. It was conceived as part of the progressive movement flourishing through

Durham's white, elite business class, a movement that had previously established a school of higher education (Trinity College) and a school of music (Southern Conservatory of Music). Establishing the library was the next step in bringing culture and education to what was then a rough, working-class manufacturing town. Although Durham has seen many economic, social, and demographic changes over the past century, the library still retains the progressive ideals of its founders and works in many ways to provide resources and services to the general population that "inform, inspire learning, cultivate understanding, and excite the imagination." (Durham Public Library Mission Statement)

One way in which DPL serves the community is through offering a number of educational workshops and programs for groups of all ages and backgrounds. Beginning English classes, tax assistance workshops, and job readiness programs are just a few examples of the programs offered to the public. Computer and information literacy workshops have also been a part of the adult programs offered at DPL. Many SILS students have gained valuable library skills through internships and volunteer work at the Durham Public Library and by the fall of 2006, the already-existing DPL classes offering information literacy instruction had assimilated the CWS structure and format.

The CWS classes are currently taught in the computer lab at DPL, a small room located in the Audio/Visual section of the library. The room can be reserved for classes at any time during the week, which allows some flexibility in recruiting volunteer instructors. However, this arrangement only works if notice of the class date is given two weeks or more in advance, allowing the library sufficient time to post and advertise

the class. Without special notification of a class time, the computer workshops are generally arranged for Saturday mornings from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

There are about ten computers available, with an additional computer connected to the overhead projector for the instructor's use. Ideally, the courses operate with an instructor, who provides the lecture and presentations, and a "floater," who provides individual assistance to the students during the class. Generally, the instructor and floater are interchangeable, and students often see a kind of "tag-team" instructional approach from the UNC librarian and SILS volunteers.

Patrons are generally required to sign up for the classes, either through the library's website or at the reference desk. Sign-up sheets fill up quickly; however, patrons' intentions (as seen through the sign-up sheet) often differ from their actions (as seen through their actual attendance). The library has contemplated several ways to encourage patrons to attend the classes for which they have registered. Currently, a reference librarian calls the registered patrons on the Friday before class to confirm their attendance. This has seen some positive results, allowing a number of previously wait-listed patrons to obtain a seat for the class. Another solution has been to encourage the wait-listed patrons to show up the Saturday morning before class, filling any empty seats on a first-come, first-served basis. Despite the problems regarding truant patrons, attendance is generally increasing, with many of the current classes reaching capacity.

Computer courses offered at DPL through the Community Workshop Series include Computer Basics, Introduction to Email, Introduction to the Internet, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Microsoft Excel. (Course descriptions are located in APPENDIX I) Each class takes an introductory approach to cover the fundamentals of

each topic. Students are encouraged to use the class as a starting point and to continue

exploring the topic on their own. Currently, each topic is covered in one class lasting

two hours in length. Ideally, each class consists of both lecture time and individual

practice time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The courses offered through CWS at the Durham Public Library cover a range

of topics within the profession and library literature, yet the literature discussing

community-outreach programs of public libraries is scarce. This study touches upon

themes that are still developing throughout the professional literature. Focusing on the

computer literacy education of the adult community throughout Durham, the results of

the study will compliment the existing literature in library instruction, information

literacy, and adult education. Additionally, this study contributes to the burgeoning

topic of public libraries and the concept of social capital, specifically how public

libraries build social capital through programs such as the Community Workshop

Series.

Library Instruction

Most of the literature regarding library instruction is focused on the academic

environment. Many of these studies do transition well into the public library

environment. However, to date, there is a serious lack of library instructional research

in public libraries. A comprehensive bibliography released by Johnson (2006) covers

periodical articles, monographs, and exhibition catalogs that cover many facets of

library instruction. The bibliography provides information about each source, discusses

the content within the source and comments on the quality of the scholarly

contributions. Additionally, Johnson breaks down each source according to the type of

library it represents. Of the 320 sources represented in the bibliography, 211 were

focused on the academic library, 4 focused on the public library, 62 focused on the

school library, 9 focused on the special library, and 31 focused on all libraries.

Macaluso (2007) addresses the planning, preparation, and implementation of a

process master. According to Macaluso, successful management of the physical

classroom environment, which during peak user periods could hold continuous user

education classes from 8am to 8pm, can contribute greatly to the success of library

instruction classes. Through a number of exercises and flowchart developments, team

members were able to uncover the challenges of setting up and maintaining an efficient

library classroom. Some "key steps" emerged that vastly improved the physical

environment in which the library instruction courses were taught, thus improving the

level of instruction offered to the students.

Research into the efficacy of on-line instruction has become a popular topic in

library instruction. With the amount of information that needs to be taught and the

limited availability of space and time in which to teach it, much research and

development has been dedicated to on-line instruction. Kraemer (2007) analyzes the

results of a recent survey given at Oakland University. Three types of instruction

classes were surveyed: live in-person instruction, on-line instruction, and a hybrid in-

person and on-line instruction. Overall, the on-line instruction classes faired poorly

compared to the in-person and hybrid classes, suggesting that the convenience of on-

line instruction cannot replace the quality of the librarian's contribution to the classroom.

Another issue regarding library instruction upon which the literature touches is user retention rates. Often, library instruction courses last only for a few classes or a few hours. Librarians are often condensing large volumes of knowledge into small, user-friendly packets. In this environment, it is difficult to ascertain how much of the information was useful to the user and how much of the information was retained by the user. Wong (2006) surveyed students from 25 library workshop classes in a Hong Kong science and technology university four to six weeks after the completion of the classes to investigate the information retention rates of the users. About three quarters of the respondents replied that they had increased confidence in conducting library searches while over half indicated that they had an increased interest in the library as a result of the class. Two thirds had positive responses about their own information-seeking skills retention. Although the results of this survey were based on a self-assessment (surveys were handed out to participants or emailed to them), they do illustrate the measures that librarians need to take in order assess and improve their own instructional techniques.

Information Literacy

The topic information literacy covers a broad spectrum of research and contains varying definitions depending on the professional expertise of the researchers. Computer information literacy is touched upon in a few articles, but most research is within the broad definitions of information literacy as the ability to recognize a need for information, knowing where to find the information, and the ability to evaluate the

information. The ever increasing volume of digital information and the use of computers to obtain this information leave little distinction between the definitions of information literacy and computer information literacy. Lloyd (2006) addresses the issue of defining information literacy by identifying the three landscapes of information literacy (school, tertiary, and workplace) and proposes a broader definition that incorporates people's formal and informal meaning-making activities in all contexts. According to Lloyd, the formal landscapes of information literacy include both secondary and tertiary schools as well as the workplace. Within the school environment, information literacy is facilitated through library-based instruction in which students are taught how to learn. The workplace environment reflects a different landscape in which people's information literacy needs are developed in a more informal setting and consists of a range of tacit and explicit knowledge. The major difference between the school and workplace information literacy landscapes is one of context, and Lloyd expands the definition of information literacy as "coming to know through processes and practices situated within context." (p.578) This broad view of information literacy incorporates both the traditional educational view, that information is a discoverable thing and skills should be developed to enable its discovery, and the new "environmental" view, that information is anything that makes a difference (physical, social, or textual information).

Within the academic environment there are many collaborative initiatives to enhance information literacy. Stevens (2007) discusses the nature and development of collaborative partnerships between academic librarians and faculty within various disciplines to help develop students' information literacy. Stevens notes that for various

reasons, faculty are not always willing to collaborate with librarians on developing information literacy into their classes and suggests that librarians need to institute more faculty outreach programs to promote information literacy within courses and academic departments. One reason for faculty unwillingness to cooperate may be the faculty's lack of knowledge of information literacy. To help breach this gap, Stevens suggests that librarians publish information literacy articles in non-library, disciplinary publications that are valued by faculty members. This would increase faculty knowledge of information literacy efforts, and would provide them with strategies for integrating information literacy into their classrooms.

Van Der Walt (2007) discusses the overall design of an information literacy program for the public library. He focuses on implementing an effective information literacy instruction program for upper elementary children in South Africa, but much of his research and suggestions would be helpful for any public library tackling the issues surrounding information literacy in elementary and middle school children. Van Der Walt emphasizes the role of public libraries in promoting and teaching information skills in communities whose schools lack the necessary resources for effective information skills instruction.

Information literacy has become an established area of research, and the efficacy of information literacy training and development within existing libraries is a major focus of that research. Julien (2008) reports on the most recent findings of an investigative study that explores the role of Canada's public libraries in information literacy training practices. The study focused primarily on patron and library perceptions of the information literacy training practices, and on the overall success of

the information literacy programs. The findings revealed that information literacy

remains a minor priority within Canadian public libraries, that there is a lack of trained

staff and space for instructional activities, and that patrons mostly train themselves,

rarely, if ever, seeking the help of library staff. Although there is almost unanimous

agreement on the need for and development of information literacy skills, this study

reveals that, at least in the Canadian public sector, there is a deficiency in implementing

information literacy goals.

Adult Learning

As a program that focuses on offering computer and information literacy classes

to the public, it is important to address the literature concerning adult education. Adult

and senior learners often bring vastly different skills and experiences to the classroom

than do traditional students. As a result, librarians need to be aware that traditional

instruction models are often not as effective for the adult learner. Gold (2005)

addresses the developmental and social factors that make adult learners unique, and

discusses how librarians can develop effective instruction for adults. Noting that many

adult learners have not used a library in a number of years, Gold illustrates several

suggestions and strategies for instructing adult learners: providing comfortable

environments; creating meaningful, active assignments; emphasizing flexibility in

scheduling classes and extra-help sessions; and inquiring about the student's

expectations. Gust (2006) also covers pedagogical techniques that are directed at adult

and senior learners. Focusing on information literacy instruction for adult learners,

Gust provides tips and suggestions for teaching library and internet-searching skills to

adult learners. Many of Gust's findings overlap with those of Gold, but Gust also offers

suggestions on time management, the amount of course material, and the pace of the curriculum.

McCook (2002) discusses public policy as a factor affecting adult learning and literacy in public libraries. McCook recognizes that funding for many adult learning and literacy programs is provided through government acts that are often driven by economic and political incentives rather than by humanistic concerns for broadening the mind and spirit. The article explores regulations restricting the use of funds for certain types of adult education and discusses the effects of those restrictions on librarianship and adult learning.

Social Capital in Public Libraries

Lastly, one aspect that has been neglected throughout the literature has been how programs such as the CWS affect the social capital of public libraries. Social capital has only begun to be recognized as an institutional asset that is distinct from financial assets but can be leveled in such a way to effect policy and community relations. The idea that public libraries have a social impact is not new, but recently a number of articles have focused on how public libraries develop, maintain, and utilize their social capital. Hillenbrand (2005) points to several studies that document the social impact of libraries within communities and how public libraries are an inclusive part of community-building. All studies cited agree that libraries build social capital by providing shared public space, accommodating diverse needs, and enhancing social interaction and trust. Varheim (2007) focuses his study on how public libraries create social capital. Similar to Hillenbrand, Varheim suggests that libraries can create or enhance their social capital through offering better core services and through making

those services more diverse to attract new groups of library users. However, neither Hillenbrand nor Varheim gives specific examples of "enhancing social interaction and trust," or of "offering better core services." Bourke (2005) offers additional insight into building social capital by recommending that the library build or extend already-existing networks. These networks will consist of partnerships or collaborations with the business community, government agencies, schools, other libraries, and community agencies. Through these networking partnerships, public libraries can increase their core services and attract new, diverse groups of users; in doing so, libraries can build their social capital framework.

METHODOLOGY

The study consisted of two parts: 1) An analysis of the training evaluation forms that were completed by class participants throughout the 2007 calendar year, and 2) interviews with Durham Public Library employees who participate in providing the Community Workshop Series to the Durham community.

The training evaluation forms (See Appendix II.) were given to participants at the end of each class. The evaluations are part of the Durham Public Library's ongoing assessment of their workshops and programs and are created, maintained, and stored within the reference department of the library. Permission was granted to the researcher to use the existing records for the current study by the Director of the Durham Public Library.

The calendar year 2007 was chosen for the parameters of the study because that year was the first full year in which DPL participated in the CWS program and because,

within that year, all CWS classes were taught multiple times, providing a representative sample of the types of classes offered and of participants' responses to them. Overall, the evaluations covered 26 classes consisting of multiple offerings of Computer Basics, Introduction to the Internet, Introduction to Email, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Microsoft Excel.

The researcher was not present for all the classes that the evaluations covered, but had participated as both an instructor and floater in a number of classes at the Durham Public Library during the chosen time period (in addition to participating as both an instructor and floater at other local libraries that also offer CWS classes). Observations and experience from these classes contributed to the data analysis and interview portions of this study.

The evaluations consisted of the class name, class date, five yes/no response questions, and five open-ended questions. Participants tended to answer the yes/no questions at close to a 100% response rate, while the open-ended questions were answered at a slightly lower response rate. This may be because the yes/no questions were more direct and required less time to answer; it may also be because participants who left the open-ended questions unanswered might genuinely have had a "no opinion" response.

The total participation rate in the evaluations could not be determined. If participants choose not to participate in the evaluation, no record of their lack of participation was made. Participation was voluntary and any evaluation form left blank was not submitted to the reference department. As a result, the evaluations do not represent the opinions of all participants in the CWS programs throughout the year. For

the same reason, attendance information based solely on the evaluation count would be inaccurate.

The evaluations contain no identifying information about the participants; as a result, it is possible that some participants submitted multiple evaluations. It is not uncommon to have the same participant in different classes or to have the same participant repeat a class multiple times. Therefore, it is possible that some responses to open-ended questions may reveal a theme or pattern that, while appearing to emerge from the responses of many participants, was in fact created by one or two who completed multiple evaluations.

Responses to the evaluation were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Each class type was assigned a separate worksheet on which responses were recorded. The first five questions were Yes/No responses, so each question was allocated two columns and a "1" was marked in the first column for a Yes response or a "1" was marked in the second column for No response. Questions that received no answers did not receive a mark and both columns received a default "0".

Open-ended questions were analyzed and broken down into three types of common responses plus a fourth type which was labeled "other". A key was created for each open-ended question to define the parameters of each response and a sub-key was created to log in the various types of answers that were coded as "other." Each open-ended question received four columns in the spreadsheet and a "1" was marked in one of the four columns for responses that correlated to the pre-determined coding scheme. It was possible for some responses to address multiple answer "types" and therefore some questions could receive multiple marks.

Once the data had been entered for all the responses, the sum of each column was calculated and statistical comparisons were made among individual responses, among responses for each class type, and among responses from the evaluations as a whole.

The second part of the study consisted of interviews with Durham County Employees who are directly involved with the Community Workshop Series at DPL. Interviews were informal, consisting of ten pre-determined questions that were designed to give the researcher additional insight into community outreach programs offered at DPL and how the Community Workshop Series fits into these programs. (Appendix III) Particular attention was given to comparing interview responses to the evaluation responses to determine if employee perceptions of the workshops were similar to participant perceptions.

ANALYSIS

Training Evaluation Form

The Training Evaluation Forms were analyzed by each class type and as a whole (all 186 evaluations grouped together). Each analysis revealed a number of trends about the Community Workshop Series classes and the participants' expectations in attending them. Responses to questions from the evaluation form were looked at individually according to the classes they were grouped with and as whole and compared to the individual class trends.

The first thing that stood out when viewing the responses to the evaluations is the overwhelming number of "yes" responses to the Yes/No questions. Of the total

responses to the first five questions of the evaluation, 94% responded with a "yes". Initially, this figure indicated an incredible participant satisfaction rating with the program structure and goals of the workshops. However, there may be other reasons for the high positive response rate to consider. First, the Yes/No responses may be too limiting to properly express the participants' responses for each question. Questions were worded in such a way that participants may have felt that they were supposed to answer "yes." For example, most participants who attend the workshops will learn something new and receive some type of help, thus the responses to Questions 1 and 3 will always be "yes". In fact, Question 1 received 97.3% "yes" responses and Question 3 received 99.49% "yes" responses. A more graded response option might reveal more detailed information regarding participants' opinions of the quality of the lesson and materials and of the quality and amount of help received during the workshop.

Questions 2 and 5 also followed the same response trend. 100% of the respondents said they would recommend the workshops to others, while 98.45% responded that they would be able to apply skills learned in the workshop. In order to obtain more insightful responses from the participants, the questions should provide more detailed response options. Question 2, regarding the recommendation of the workshop, may provide more useful information if respondents were asked how strongly they would recommend the workshop on a scale of 1 to 10, or if the question inquired whether participants have recommended the workshop classes in the past. Either question re-write would offer a better perspective on the participants' feelings or actions regarding the workshop classes. Additionally, Question 5 would also need to be reconsidered in order to provide more insightful information regarding participants'

learned skills. Because almost all participants feel they will be able to apply skills, it may be more beneficial to the workshop classes to know where the participants will be applying the new skills. Plans for the content and structure of future courses may be aided by knowing that participants are using learned skills for job-searching, for work, for home use, or for other reasons.

Question 4 was the only Yes/No item receiving slightly varied responses. About 75% of respondents felt that the hands-on session of class was long enough, while 25% felt the length was insufficient. To better understand these results, it may be necessary to differentiate between hands-on sessions and total class time. All classes offered during the time period of this study were two hours in length. The hands-on sessions varied from class to class and from instructor to instructor. No set time period is devoted in the CWS courses to hands-on sessions during which participants practice skills that were covered in class. As a result, it is difficult to determine what the existing time periods were and by how much they should be increased. However, when we examine Question 4 as responded to by class type, we begin to see a pattern emerge regarding the responses. The two most introductory level classes, Computer Basics and Introduction to the Internet, both report high satisfaction rates regarding the hands-on session, 94% and 81% respectively. The next two introductory classes, Introduction to Email and Microsoft Word, both see their satisfaction rates regarding the hands-on session fall to the lower 70s—70% and 73% respectively. Finally, the last two introductory classes, Microsoft Excel and Microsoft PowerPoint, see the satisfaction rate fall to the low 60s—60% and 65% respectively. This gradual decline as grouped by class type suggests that, in workshops focusing on more advanced programs,

participants need a lengthier hands-on session to get better acquainted with the software. It may also be beneficial for future course-planning to note that, as the topics change to more advanced programs, the time allotted for instruction may also need to increase in order to cover all the fundamental points of the program and, as a result, available time for hands-on sessions may decrease.

Question 6 sought to discover what the participants' objectives were in taking the Community Workshop Series course. For many participants, whether they own their own computer or not, the CWS is a resource which allows exposure to the basics of computing that they otherwise would not receive in either their professional or personal life. Overwhelmingly, the most popular response to this question indicated that students participate to receive first-time exposure to the topic being taught. About 65% of the responses to the Computer Basics, Internet, and Email classes indicated that their objective was to be exposed to these topics for the first time. The response rate for this answer increases with the Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint classes, revealing that about 75% of the participants were being introduced to those topics for the first time. The Microsoft Word class had slightly lower returns for this particular response: only about 57% were being exposed to Word for the first time. The second highest response for this question was that participants wanted to improve their skills, indicating that they had already been exposed to the topics, but wished to build upon what they had already learned. Close to 20% of the responses from the Computer Basics, Internet, Email, and Word classes indicated that respondents wanted to improve their skills. This response dropped significantly with the more advanced courses of Excel and PowerPoint, with only 10% indicating that they wanted to improve their skills. A few participants

indicated that their objective was to refresh their skills, indicating that they used the programs only slightly in their professional and personal life and just wanted to pick up a few extra tips to help them be more efficient. Lastly, of the 14 respondents whose objectives varied from those already discussed, eight (57%) indicated that their objectives for the course were job-related.

Question 7 was a follow-up to Question 6, inquiring if the participants' objectives were met. Although this question is open-ended, responses were largely limited to "yes" or "no." Overwhelmingly, participants indicated that their objectives had been met, with 83% responding affirmatively. With the exception of the PowerPoint class, the results were similar for responses grouped by class type. Only 75% of the participants felt that their objectives had been met by the PowerPoint instruction. This lower positive response rate may be due to the more advanced nature of the PowerPoint program.

Overall, only 6% of the total respondents did not feel that their objectives were met in any way. This rate is consistent with the responses as grouped by class type. Additionally, about 10% of the total responses indicated that some of the participants' objectives had been met. This rate is consistent with the responses as grouped by each class type.

Question 8 asked the participants what they thought the biggest benefit was to participating in the course. Three common responses emerged from the question. About 30% of all participants indicated that the biggest benefit was spending time on the computers. This rate is reflected in the Computer Basics and Internet classes and slightly drops in the Email, Microsoft Word, and Excel programs, with only about

20%–25% indicating that their biggest benefit was to spend time on the computers. However, over 35% of the respondents in the PowerPoint class indicated that spending time on the computers was the biggest benefit to taking the class. This response perhaps correlates to the response on Question 7 for the PowerPoint class: participants who did not feel that their objectives were being met in the PowerPoint class still found time on the computer beneficial.

Second, almost half of all respondents indicated that their biggest benefit was to learn specific skills associated with the class. Over 52% of the Microsoft Word classes responded that learning specific skills was the biggest benefit to taking the class. The percentage of participants with that response then gradually declines for the more basic computer classes, falling to 37% of the Computer Basics responses. This pattern suggests that participants attend the advanced classes to obtain specific skill sets rather than to gain general computing knowledge that they may have obtained in the more basic classes.

The third most common response was that participants felt they benefited the most from the time spent with the instructor and from the instructor's willingness to answer questions. Overall, about 20% of all participants thought this was the biggest benefit from the course. The highest percentage of this response can be seen in the data from Computer Basics and Internet classes (about 25% and 24%, respectively); those percentages gradually decline as more advanced topics are taught, suggesting that participants attend the more basic classes (Computer Basics and Internet) in part because of the interaction with the instructor.

Question 9 asked the participants what other training classes they would be interested in that are not currently offered through the library. This question received the most varied responses of the evaluation, but two common responses were recorded as well as a number of repeated suggestions. The most common response was that the library should increase the number of current classes taught. Overall, 35% of the total responses indicated that the classes currently offered should be scheduled more frequently. This rate is consistent with the responses as grouped by each class type. Taken as a whole, it suggests that the classes are valued by the participants yet the classes need to be taken repeatedly and at closer intervals than what is currently offered. The second most common response was that the library should offer more advanced classes in the subjects currently offered. Overall, 20% of the respondents indicated that they would be interested in more advanced classes. However, the level of this response varies significantly when the responses are grouped by each class type. Computer Basics and Introduction to Internet classes only received one response requesting advanced instruction, which suggests that these basic introductory classes are appropriately tailored to the level of instruction required of the participants. Progressing through more intermediate topics, more participants begin to request more advanced classes, with 20% of Email and Word classes requesting advanced topics. Of the Excel participants, 36% requested advanced topics, followed by a significant drop to 12% of the PowerPoint participants requesting advanced topics. This increase in requests can probably be explained by the diversity of participants' prior computer knowledge. Many participants may already be acquainted with the basic structure of the programs being covered in class, while others may not be. Since only one class on

each program is offered, the instructor would need to pace the class to accommodate those with the least experience. Some participants who have taken previous classes on the same topic may be trying to gain more advanced skills, while others are taking the class for the first time and with little or no background knowledge about the topic. The decline in requests for advanced topics in the PowerPoint class may be due to the participants' unfamiliarity with PowerPoint and/or to their recognition of PowerPoint as a program that is not as essential or useful for them as Email, Word, or Excel.

Suggestions for classes that are not currently offered made up 35% of the total responses. The most popular responses were for a typing/keyboarding class (11%), QuickBooks class (4%) and a Microsoft Access class (4%). Other notable suggestions that received more than one request were for a computers-and-digital-photography class, a creative writing class, a web design class, and a computers-and-genealogy class. Some of the classes suggested likely will not be feasible given the time, equipment, and instruction required. It may be important to note, however, that the most highly recommended class—keyboarding—would probably be the easiest to incorporate into the current workshops.

The final question, Question 10, asked participants how they learned of the classes being offered at Durham Public Library. Because this question pertains to the methods used to inform the public about the courses offered, dividing the responses into groups according to each class type will not offer any significant insight. Therefore, these responses were analyzed only as a total group. Four significant responses were noted. Of the respondents, 24% indicated that they learned of the classes through Durham Public Library employees, the majority of those employees being from the

Reference Desk. A larger group (38%) indicated that they learned of the classes

through library postings and advertisements. These include bulletin boards, printed

library handouts (including the News and Events publication), and electronic postings

through the DPL website. Over 10% of the participants learned of the classes by word-

of-mouth, either through friends or family. Finally, over 25% learned of the classes

through publications or postings outside the Durham Public Library organization. The

most notable outside agency was the Employment Security Commission of North

Carolina. The distribution of participant responses to the final question is fairly

uniform, suggesting that all outlets for informing the public are utilized efficiently and

that any future endeavors to expand awareness should also keep in mind the number and

capacity of classes being offered.

Employee Interviews

Interviews were conducted with various Durham Public Library employees to

gain an understanding of how the programs are run and supported within the library

organization. Results from the interviews generally supported the results of training

evaluations, indicating that the staff has a good awareness of the public's needs

regarding the computer workshop classes.

Overall, the Community Workshop Series represents a portion of the total

classes, workshops, and programs offered at DPL. The Reference Department directs

many community outreach/education programs, but the library offers classes and

programs outside of the reference department as well. Some popular courses that have

been offered through the reference department include resume/job workshops,

education funding (which is often split into two separate classes, one for graduate

funding and another for undergraduate funding), and college preparation classes which focus on tips for searching for and applying to schools. These classes tend to meet in different classrooms throughout the library, and the CWS classes tend to be the only ones to meet in the AV computer lab.

The support given to DPL through the CWS program to provide and maintain the computer workshop classes was highly recognized by library staff. While the staff arranges for the space, time, and attendance for the classes, instructors and floaters are often volunteers from the University Libraries and the School of Information and Library Science at UNC-CH and course materials are also provided through the CWS program. Although the classes are produced through the joint effort of both the library and CWS, the community response to these classes has been so strong that staff members recognize the need to continue such classes even if CWS ever becomes unable to provide materials and instructors in the future. All staff members recognized that such a scenario would be taxing on available resources and that the current arrangement with CWS has been beneficial to both the library and the community.

The various marketing and advertising campaigns for the library workshops were discussed in the interviews, and the staff responses were supported by the results of the evaluations. Most patrons are informed about the classes through inquiries at the Reference desk; through postings within the library such as flyers, bulletin boards, and calendars; and through outside notifications, most notably the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina.

When asked about future improvements for classes, staff members addressed a few recommendations that they feel would help expand the program and make it more

accessible to the community. Currently, the CWS classes are only being held at the

main branch of DPL, located in downtown Durham. Some staff members

recommended that expanding to the branch libraries would increase attendance and

community awareness. Classes offered at branch libraries in the past have been well

received, and it was noted that lack of resources, particularly instructional resources,

was the biggest obstacle to bringing classes to the branch libraries again.

The second recommendation was to provide the CWS classes in Spanish. The

need for Spanish instruction and materials has been recognized throughout all the

libraries in which CWS participates and, as of the writing of this study, progress in

being made towards the goal of Spanish-language instruction. Additional

recommendations include creating a hands-on workshop session, giving participants an

extra class in which they work on skills learned in previous classes. An instructor

would be present only to answer questions and would not present any new material.

Finally, it was also suggested that, although Saturday mornings have had good

attendance records, many patrons have suggested to the staff that they are unable to

attend on Saturday mornings, and that a weekday evening class would be more

accessible to them. This presents a dilemma for the staff because, currently, there are

not enough resources to hold two classes per week; to move the single class to a

weekday would then prevent others who are available on weekends but not on

weeknights from attending. As of the spring of 2008, class attendance on Saturday

mornings had increased to room capacity and thus it was not considered feasible to

change the class schedule.

Overall, the staff considers computer instruction and computer information literacy a top priority for patrons and the community. The main branch of the library currently has 18 computers which can be reserved for one-hour sessions (two are Spanish only and two are for job searches only), four computers which have a 15-minute session limit (designed mainly for email use), and ten computers available for one-hour sessions in the AV department. Monthly records of computer use show that all computers with the one-hour session limit are used for an average of 48 minutes per user, that the two computers reserved for job searches are used for an average of 53 minutes per user, and that the 15-minute session computers are used for an average for 13 minutes per user. These numbers support the claim that DPL patrons are heavy users of the provided computers, and that the library staff recognizes the need to provide the requisite information literacy in order for patrons to be successful computer users.

CONCLUSIONS

The overwhelmingly positive responses to the Yes/No questions on the evaluation indicate that participants take away something new from each class and feel that the courses were beneficial to some degree. Almost all participants were satisfied with their classes as well as with their own progress within each topic. The interviews and evaluations did reveal a few suggestions that the library might wish to consider for future development of CWS classes.

For many participants the classes offer first-time exposure to the topics, and much class time is spent orienting the participants to the program(s) being covered. This generally leaves little time for participants to practice what was covered in class.

Once class has ended, participants may have little to no chance to develop their learned skills in a focused manner. One solution to this problem, as suggested through the interviews and evaluations, would be to create a hands-on practice session to either follow each class or to be offered a few days after each class. With such an arrangement, the instructor could create a task-oriented assignment that would allow participants to practice what they learned in class at their own pace and on their own time, thereby giving them an opportunity to experiment with their new skills. The instructor could then follow the assignment with a practice session that would allow participants to finish their assignments and ask any questions that they may not have been able to solve on their own.

Another theme revealed through the interviews and evaluations was that many participants use the CWS classes to develop or enhance job skills. In order to focus the course design to help meet the participants' needs, it might be suggested that the library offer job-oriented computer training classes. Such classes would consist of the basic structure of the Email, Word, and Excel classes, but the presentation of the material would be focused more on how these skills enhance employment desirability. Email classes could focus on the proper protocol of office email, Word classes could focus solely on creating office-type memos and letters (or even resumes), and Excel classes could focus on the ways Excel is utilized in an office environment.

One of the biggest discrepancies between the interviews and evaluations were the opinions about, and preferences for, future course offerings. Participants had an array of ideas, usually focused on a particular computer subject that they had heard of and wished to know more about. However, the interview responses focused mainly on

the practical aspects of providing such courses and generally concluded with concerns about resources. Practically, most suggestions for future course offerings were well-meaning but participants would be better served to repeat the basic classes already offered. Both interviews and evaluations suggested that the current courses should be offered more frequently to allow students to repeat and build their skills, but staff members repeated their concerns regarding the lack of resources to provide classes more frequently. It is worth noting that a keyboarding/typing class was requested by multiple participants, and that it would also fit seamlessly with current workshops designed for building and enhancing job skills.

Overall, data from the study suggest that the Community Workshop Series classes at the Durham Public Library are well received and very popular among patrons. Despite the limitations regarding resources and affecting class time and frequency, the classes appeal to many members of the community and offer a much-needed service to the public. The most common suggestion in the evaluations is also the most flattering to the Community Workshop Series: the participants want more of it.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Description of Community Workshop Series classes evaluated

The following class descriptions are from the Community Workshop Series website:
http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/community_workshops/classes.html (accessed on July
16, 2008).

Microsoft Windows: Computer Basics (Multi-Session or 2 Hour Workshop)
Always wanted to learn how to use a computer? Never had the time or the opportunity?
Well here's your chance. This mulit-session workshop provides step-by-step, hands-on
instructions in the use of the computer. In this multi-session (or two hour) workshop,
participants will learn about the parts of the computer and the basics of using one
including using the mouse, the basics of the Windows Operating System, making and
managing folders, and other important computers functions.

Web Basics (Multi-Session or 2 Hour Workshop)
WWW, the Internet, browsing — What exactly are these things, and how do they work?
If you are brand new to the Internet, this workshop is the perfect introduction. In this
multi-session workshop, you will gain a basic understanding of what the Internet is and
how it works. You will gain hands on experience "surfing the web" on the library's
computers. You'll learn about search engines, how they work and and how to search
more effectively. You will also learn about privacy and safety issues, such as viruses,
worms, spyware and spam and how to recognize and avoid them. You will learn some
of the basic tricks to surfing the Internet with more awareness of potential security
concerns.
***Prerequisite: Basic computer skills required.

Introduction to Email (Multi-Session or 2 Hour Workshop)
This multi-session (or two hour) workshop is an introduction to email. Participants will
learn to send and receive email messages using the free Yahoo email service.

Microsoft Word: Basics (Multi-Session or 2 Hour Workshop)
Haven't typed a letter since your typewriter died? Microsoft Word is a computer
program used to create and print text documents that would otherwise be prepared on a
typewriter. The key advantage of a word processor is its ability to make changes easily,
such as correcting spelling, adding, deleting, and relocating text. Once created, the
document can be printed quickly and accurately and saved for later modifications. In
this multi-session (or two hour) workshop, you will learn the basics of using Microsoft
Word.

Microsoft Excel: Basics (Multi-Session or 2 Hour Workshop)
In this multi-session (or two hour) workshop, learn how to create, edit, format and save a basic spreadsheet using Microsoft's Excel software. Explore basic formulas, functions and charts.
***Prerequisite: Completion of Computer Basics Workshop or have basic computer and internet skills.

Microsoft PowerPoint: Basics (Multi-Session or 2 Hour Workshop)
In this multi-session (or two hour) workshop, learn how to create professional looking presentations using Microsoft's PowerPoint presentation software. We'll show you how to enter text and images, customize templates, and use slide transitions and other techniques to persuade or just dazzle any audience.
***Prerequisite: completion of Computer Basics Workshop or have basic computer and internet skills.

Appendix II: In-Class Participant Survey

Durham County Library Training Evaluation Form

Class Name:

Class Date:

1. Did the tutorials and handouts help you learn the materials?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

2. Would you recommend this workshop?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

3. Was there help available when you needed it during the workshop?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

4. Was the hands-on session long enough?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

5. Will you be able to apply skills from the workshop?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

6. What were your objectives in taking this course?

7. Where those objectives met? Please explain.

8. In your opinion, what was the biggest benefit to taking this course?

9. What other training would you be interested in taking that we do not offer at present?

10. Ho did you learn about the computer classes offered at Durham County Library?

Appendix III: Interview Questions for Durham Public Library Employees

1. Outside of the Community Workshop Series classes, what other community classes are offered to the public through Durham County Library?

2. What, if anything, do you hear about the CWS classes that meet at Durham County Library on Saturdays?

3. Before CWS classes, were there any classes offered at Durham County Library addressing information literacy? If CWS was unable to continue offering classes, would you feel it necessary to continue them using Durham County Library staff and hours? Would it be possible for Durham County Library to execute this plan?

4. Describe any marketing or advertising campaigns that Durham County Library initiates on behalf of the CWS classes?

5. How informed is the Durham County Library staff about the CWS courses? Do employees refer patrons to the courses?

6. What do you think are the main reasons patrons attend the CWS classes?

7. Currently, classes are held on Saturday mornings from 10am to 12pm. Do you think there may be a more accessible time for patrons to attend? Why or why not?

8. How many computers does your library offer for public use? What is the overall usage of these computers at the library?

9. Do you feel the current course structure and hours for the courses are sufficient for the communities' needs?

10. If given a list of priorities, 1-10, that you feel the library needs to address for future planning, what rank would you assign to information literacy education?

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