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by Lauren Wittek



The second floor of the James E. Brooks Library was renovated in 2018 and now offers more seating and new collaborative technology, which was included in one of our recent employee technology literacy training sessions.

As the User Experience and Assessment Librarian at Central Washington University's James E. Brooks Library, my overarching goal is to create a functional, welcoming environment—not only for our students, but also our library employees. Over the past few years, the Brooks Library has experienced personnel changes, both among staff and administration, a complete renovation of the second floor, and restructuring of a handful of departments. As the library continues to evolve and add new technology, having well-trained information desk employees is vital. Like many libraries, technology troubleshooting is one of our most common questions from campus and community members; however, my colleagues expressed concern over how to properly address these questions at one of our regular faculty/staff meetings a few months ago.

To meet this important need, I, along with our IT specialist, developed weekly technology training sessions to allow our full-time and part-time faculty, staff, and student employees time to learn about important features and how to troubleshoot common issues. We selected four pieces of equipment based on their proximity to our various service desks: SmartBoards, KIC scanners, the color and B&W printers, and Promethean boards. Per a faculty member's

request, a fifth session was added to go over our group study rooms containing Mac minis and TV monitors.

Each of these meetings lasted about thirty minutes: twenty minutes of demonstration time by our IT specialist and about ten minutes of audience Q&A. Before each session, I created a list of three to five possible questions about the equipment to help guide the Q&A portion and to encourage additional questions from attendees. I invited the entire library staff and scheduled a time that had the most overlap between morning and evening shifts. No advanced RSVP was required; we wanted these overviews to be informal and relaxed. The scheduling of short sessions was intentional for two reasons: to allow busy employees to get back to their work, and to hold everyone's attention by keeping it simple and straightforward.

We had anywhere from five to twelve attendees per week. For those who expressed interest but were unable to attend, I compiled the key takeaways and shared them via email. I also invited these individuals to schedule a face-to-face meeting with me to take a look at the equipment if they felt they needed additional clarification.

These sessions were not only helpful for those unfamiliar with the technology, but they also allowed our IT specialist to better

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continued on next page

understand the pain points experienced by staff members—what may be obvious to someone who works with hardware day-in and day-out may be less so to someone who only encounters it once or twice a quarter.

Overall, attendees conveyed their satisfaction with these training sessions. One attendee shared she felt the “training for the KIC scanners was helpful as I have more requests to use this [equipment] at the reference desk.” Another attendee mentioned she hopes “we have more trainings in the future as we have...new technologies in the library.” Students appreciated being invited to these trainings because it “gave them more confidence to answer [patron] questions”—this is particularly important because many students are working the service desks during evenings and weekends when there is a limited number of library staff and faculty around.

Moving forward, we are considering some changes to our scheduling approach. Rather than offering training sessions open to all employees, we want to target a specific information desk each week and select the equipment closest to their area. This provides each desk with more personalized training and encourages more folks to attend, as the training will be close to their service area. If a student employee or faculty/staff member is unable to attend, we want to vary the training times each week to provide individuals with more opportunities to fit a session into their schedule.

In the future, it may also be worthwhile to ask attendees to complete a simple checklist; that way, we can quickly gauge the effectiveness of each session and have attendees walk away with demonstrable skills. As new employees are hired, particularly those working at service desks, these tech trainings could be added to their onboarding to ensure everyone is up to speed. Finally, based on feedback from attendees, we would like to allow more hands-on time with the equipment after the Q&A portion. 📖

books and create a display; better yet, have a teen group create the display. At story time, picture books containing similar themes can be tied to shows or character traits that the children in your library love with less than half an hour of work from the children’s librarian. Does your library already circulate board games? Include a table once a month for Apples to Apples, Once Upon a Time, and card-based battle games (Magic, Star Realms, Harry Potter) as reading time because they require reading, often have a plot and hero, and create an opportunity for communication. Include cookbooks, graphic novels, and paper airplane instructions in summer reading hours. Since writing and reading go hand-in-hand, creating written directions for doing a child’s favorite activity is a fun summer reading option. Provide opportunities for service by letting children be library helpers. For example, creating low-cost, three-item science kits takes following instructions and allows a quick science lesson for helpers while they feel good for lending a hand. Make the science kit helper experience relevant by finding a couple of nonfiction and fiction options that relate to the underlying principal.

Summer reading is important for children of all ages. Value children’s choices, create opportunities for immediate feedback, and bring play as a reading option to increase children’s intrinsic investment in their reading outcomes. Summer literacy is as broad a topic as our imaginations make it. Involving children in their reading choices and outcomes will engage them and keep them coming back to the library. 📖

NOTES

1 Sprigen, Karen, “How to create a knockout summer literacy program,” *School Library Journal*, 2014, Accessed June, 2019, <https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=how-to-create-a-knockout-summer-literacy-program>.

2 Biancarosa, Gina and Catherine Snow, *Reading next—A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2nd ed.), Washington, D.C.: Alliance for Excellence in Education, 2006, p16, Accessed June, 2019. https://www.carnegie.org/media/filer_public/b7/5f/b75fba81-16cb-422d-ab59-373a6a07eb74/ccny_report_2004_reading.pdf.

Hernandez, Donald J., *Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation*, New York, NY: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011, p12.

3 Skeeters, Keri. et al., “The top five reasons we love giving students choice in reading,” *National Center for Teaching English, English Leadership Quarterly*, Accessed June, 2019, <http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/ELQ/0383-feb2016/ELQ0383Top.pdf>