



Texas Public Libraries: Serving Communities to Enhance Digital Literacy
Survey Question and Responses

Effective and Ineffective Training and Teaching

Question: From your experience, what works and what does not work in providing digital literacy training and teaching digital literacy skills? If you or your library has no digital literacy experience, please go to the next question.

Responses from Library Directors

<p>Hosting free or low cost computer and technology classes has resulted in low attendance. People prefer a one to one session with a computer lab attendant on just a small section of technology. To just fix what they are having trouble with at that particular moment.</p>
<p>Classes getting too large is a problem. There are also too many options for different class types. We can only afford 2 or 3 courses per year (6 weeks each).</p>
<p>We spent many years trying to hold classes on digital literacy and had very low attendance. We have found that one on one works is more effective as the individual needs vary.</p>
<p>One-on one training seems to be the most effective.</p>
<p>Having in-person, hands-on learning in small groups.</p>
<p>It is difficult to get people to attend in-person classes.</p>
<p>Making sure that the students are on the same technology level when signing up for the class.</p>
<p>What works is small-class or one-on-one training. We have had no success with self-directed.</p>
<p>In our experience, providing formal classes in most basic computer skills is not very effective. Similar to financial literacy classes, this is information people know they need, but when it comes to how they want to spend their evening or weekend, actually physically going to a class is a huge hurdle. Incentives such as being able to keep equipment or getting a meaningful certification can be helpful.</p> <p>The formal classes that we've found more helpful are the ones directed to people with some digital literacy (e.g. can turn on computer, get on the internet, have an email address, etc) but want to learn a specific skill that will help them either connect socially or improve their career prospects.</p>
<p>Really talking with the community to fully understand their ask and need. Assume nothing. Tailor content and have materials and videos in relevant languages to assist in the work.</p>

Focused individual training seems to work best.
Hands on training, in person, person to person.
Regular scheduling of classes with knowledgeable staff
Adequate space, equipment, and staffing to teach classes.
It works to meet people where they gather and build trust in the community. It doesn't work to stick to times that don't serve the community.
Patrons don't always know exactly what skills they need to obtain. They may sign up for a class teaching basic computer skills, but what they need is basic email skills.
Inconsistency and lack of regular attendance are the largest problems.
Sign-up requirements do not work
Virtual training via Zoom has worked well for more advanced skills. We have done in person classes in past but dropped them due to low turn out. Some of our patrons want us to offer advanced classes. Others need someone who will sit with them and provide extensive one-on-one assistance.
One-on-One training or small group classes work best for our residents.
Classes that expand through several weeks of learning; funding to keep up with purchasing software needed
One-on-one works best for our smaller, rural library because people are at too many different levels for a large class to be successful.
Through the EveryoneOn partnership, the instructor was online while the staff worked in-person with patrons taking the class and it was very successful.
We have some experience in digital literacy support but not enough to confidently say what works or doesn't. It's not been an area of intentional focus for us as it has been for other libraries.
In the past it is has proven to be important to have small classes and more in person one on one help
Varying the opportunities for engaging with digital literacy instruction as much as possible - ie not taking a "one size fits all" approach and allowing for the needs & barriers of individual learners
We have hosted classes in the past, with sign ups and reminder calls and emails, and less than 1/4 of those who signed up actually attend. Getting people to actually arrive is the hardest part.
Formal classes work best for MS Office products. On demand training works best for on a daily basis.
Individual one-on-one help is best.
Being able to help when the person comes in to get help. Often if you register or limited hours, people don't come back.

<p>What works is to offer mostly basic literacy training and some advanced training; having training available for staff to learn new emerging technologies so they can pass on their knowledge</p>
<p>Several years ago when we first started offering structured classes, we found that interest waned quickly in favor of one-on-one instruction because of the varying levels of skill the students possessed. More advanced students would grow bored as the instructor paused to help the less experienced learners, and we did not have the staffing to tier the classes by ability levels. Now we would probably look at breaking the classes up into more advanced/less advanced.</p>
<p>Classes need to be small in size so detailed help can be given.</p> <p>There needs to be a great deal of repetition even if one is not dealing with a senior. There needs to be flexible schedules to help people who are working.</p> <p>Even the online course from TSLAC needs a person to be around to answer questions and deal with technical issues.</p> <p>When dealing with e-government issues, one needs to schedule the time and know what is the issue. There are forms that take hours to do and the patron needs to come with a stack of papers in order to fill out the forms.</p> <p>People who are dealing with litigation, need a scanner and training on how to use the scanner as well as make sure the sight you are sending to is https.</p> <p>There are always surprises of issues that we did not plan for. And we ask for patience as we learn what needs to be done so we can help one on one.</p>
<p>We offer classes for the exact topics that patrons are asking about, but if seems like no one comes. We offer Book-A-Librarian sessions and those are moderately successful in fulfilling longer training questions.</p>
<p>We do not have good participation when we plan a structured class</p>
<p>Labeling classes as beginner, intermediate, etc., works because the librarians can target information taught. Having an instructor teach while another librarian assists with questions helps keep the class moving. Sharing class lesson plans between branches is a best practice because there is consistency in what is being taught at each level, across the system.</p>
<p>Getting people to come. As mentioned, transportation is a huge issue here. We go to them as we can. We offer monthly sessions for all ages from toddlers to adults on digital training/computers.</p>
<p>We have stuck with one on one instruction because the individual needs of our patrons seem to vary quite a bit.</p>
<p>If we offer it, they will come. Make it free with no residential restrictions and provide all needed supplies. Classes provide a much needed social aspect for many individuals.</p>
<p>Our one on one at point of need has served our patrons well. We would like to see greater participation in the tutorials that have been offered in group sessions.</p>
<p>If we were to have instruction (classes), It's best if we have varying degrees of computer skills. From none at all, moderate, to expert (working with in a program)</p>

<p>What works is having one device per student. What does not work is sharing devices. What works is having structured exercises. What does not work is saying "just play around with it."</p>
<p>We find one on one training works. We have not had much success in class settings with adults.</p>
<p>We provided classes in the library in the past, but they were poorly attended. Potential marketing issue or scheduling.</p> <p>When we collaborated with the local ELL (English Language Learning) program, our literacy training was effective. The problem is that the ELL program provided dinner and babysitting services and that is something we are unable to provide ourselves.</p> <p>When we tried to bring the same people back to the library itself to continue their training, we also had poor attendance.</p>
<p>We only provide basic computer access literacy knowledge to patrons as needed.</p>
<p>Few to no people show for class.</p>
<p>We do not offer this training so I have no experience</p>
<p>Scheduled in-person classes do not get high attendance. Roadblocks - lack of child care and transportation.</p> <p>People seek out our help for immediate needs (I have to get this form filed out), not to build a base of skills.</p>
<p>One-on-one works. Classes do not work.</p>
<p>Focus first on basic skills so that there are not too many students with mixed levels in the same classes. Hands on is more effective than just lecture or online videos only.</p>
<p>1:1 coaching and guiding in accomplishing a task or fulfilling a need that the customer wants, not a curriculum lesson. We use the task that the customer needs to achieve as the content and opportunity to teach the digital skills. The customer is rewarded by achieving his or her goal and has, in a very natural way, learned skills. Customer are motivated when there is a desired goal and purpose to efforts expended.</p>
<p>Keyboards with larger text and high contrast is a big help in classes. Adjusting the mouse to move slower and double clicks slower helps too with Seniors.</p>
<p>We used to "tutor" patrons at the previous library I worked at and one thing that really helped them was the one-on-one instruction and allowing them to go at their own pace.</p>
<p>Stay away from jargon! Break jargon down into simple/common examples to make it relatable. Admit your own weak knowledge areas: it makes you easier to relate to and shows that people can learn.</p>
<p>Providing handouts to all students who attend works very well.</p>
<p>One-on-one assistance or self-paced learning works best because of the vast differences we've experienced with learners in our community.</p>
<p>One on one works best with our patrons</p>

One-on-one help works best. Classes are frustrating for the students and instructor.
We don't have the space for training, nor the education to train.
I feel like one on one is what has helped in the past. Our Patrons know they can come to us whenever they need us.
I find that even with a curriculum, the students will direct the class into areas they are interested in.
The program should be open-ended and allow for different learning styles. It is also helpful to not have to measure the success of the program against specifically numbered targets.
From working in a school, I know that the hardest part is just getting people interested and in the door.
Small classes, so the trainer has time to assist participants. Having the materials on a projector; having activities for participants to complete during the class.
One-on-one help to individuals works
the very best is the one on one, as needed. When we did offer classes the turn out was not good - even though lots of people wanted classes.
We have offered "Advice on your Device" but occasionally the devices are old or outdated--it is frustrating to all
Our patrons have a difficult time showing up for scheduled classes that we have offered in the past. Help on an "as needed" basis works best.
I had no one show up for basic computer classes. Most patrons are afraid of looking dumb in front of other people so they prefer one on one.
Group instruction is not as effective as one on one or two or one.
Usually it is one-on-one and hands on to assist library patrons in digital literacy
One-on-one training works best. Years ago our computer class series was full. Now, we struggle to get even a few people. People who schedule a series on a one-on- one basis are more likely to complete a series and usually need get the exact skill they need. The exception is job-specific classes like Excel or Google Sheets or Docs. Those attract a few more people.
One on one!
Having regular classes. We offer a 6 week course and the participants seem to enjoy having it broken up into 6 parts.
Since our library is lacking in some technology to better share this information being able to assist one on one has been beneficial
If we try to hold classes, people do not show up and/or we can't figure out a convenient time for everyone that works across the board.

Responses from Branch Managers

Offering classes during the day tends to miss people who want to take classes to further their careers, but it is hard to rearrange a schedule to accommodate night-time programming.
Integration of learning English attracts our ESL students to attend since they learn both English and computer skills simultaneously.
What works: hosting classes consistently and at a set scheduled time each week. What doesn't work: being inconsistent in hosting classes. Classes should be scheduled and hosted each time, regardless of attendance.
Holding classes in the afternoon is most effective versus holding them earlier in the day
Having set class times doesn't seem to work for our Seniors. They want help when they need it.
In the past, one-on-one by appointment was preferred by customers, because the classes were never at the right day or time, even when we tried different times.
One-on-one training seems most effective.
Getting attendees for services offered
Repetition works, sometimes patrons need to be presented the same lesson a few times for them to learn a skill.
Scheduling classes that customers will attend
Classes are hit and miss they want classes but won't always attend. Even if they are in the building at the time of the class
One-on-one training is most beneficial as it relates to digital literacy training.
Being able to offer one on one assistance in the moment is important. When the library offered regularly scheduled digital literacy classes they were poorly attended. Customers were more likely to come in and ask directly for assistance than wait to come to a class.
Both one-on-one and class settings work only when you have the space for privacy and people
To not be afraid and ask for assistance, as well as being provided adequate equipment to instruct and have people see what you're doing .
Having classes on software that can help in career development or towards certifications are in demand.
Listening to the patrons on what classes they want
Open workshops have greater attendance than classes on a particular topic.
People seem to want on-demand, individualized help.

<p>We usually provide a 4 week curriculum of absolute basics. Several senior students take it multiple times so as to get more confident.</p>
<p>This spring we offered job skills classes which had now sign ups. I believe if we named it computer classes: job skills, we may have had attendees. There is a desire for classes, but it may take some time post-pandemic to find what time, day, and name will work best to draw them in. It is always best to have one of the most patient staff members to teach the class. Timing classes on using e-readers and Overdrive after Christmas also tends to work well as many people receive them as gifts. Be flexible in your class, as you may not get to everything you wanted to in order to explain a certain aspect where everyone will understand.</p>
<p>Providing formal classes One on one instruction</p>
<p>Weekend classes not always well attended.</p>
<p>Patrons would rather it be on-demand instead of a scheduled class. They need help when they need it.</p>
<p>It works when a patron brings in their own device for us to look at. What doesn't work is patrons not wanting to learn about technology or digital literacy.</p>
<p>Open lab and one-on-one works best vs classroom sessions.</p>
<p>Staff need the knowledge in order to teach digital literacy. It's difficult when only 1 or 2 people on the staff know how to use or operate a device/software/application and you're open 7 days a week. There will be times no one is available if a customer needs assistance.</p>
<p>Offering classes at convenient times.</p>
<p>Our branch just reopened after 2 years, and our Learn Center is only in its second full week. It is too soon to answer this question for this branch.</p>
<p>The varied skill levels of some attendees can be an impediment to the learning process for all attendees; Individuals that ask for assistance tend to need assistance at that precise moment and don't have time or the interest to sign up for instruction at a later date/time ; Instructional classes aren't always offered at times that are convenient for users</p>
<p>Consistency</p>
<p>Hands on and one on one instruction is what really works at our branch. We are hoping to get back to in person basic computer skills classes in the near future.</p>
<p>Instruction on an as-needed basis. Customers do not attend scheduled computer classes when they are advertised.</p>
<p>As mentioned before, scheduling a specific time for classes are typically a miss. Where there may be some (typically small in attendance), many people come at a time that works for them and usually would require one on one interaction and help, on demand at point of contact.</p>
<p>We are most successful with one-on-one training, but have had requests for classes.</p>

The instructors, are what keeps the program and customers going. Having a more descriptive job title for instructors may be beneficial. Staff that love to have programs are the most successful.

What does not work: scheduled classes or designated "help times" - customers need help at the time they come in, whether that matches our "tech one on one" time or not