



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

Unique, Innovative, and Successful Approaches

Question: Does your library branch have any digital literacy service or approach that is successful and may be unique or innovative, and which may be of interest to others? As an example, have you discovered a technique that has proven very effective in attracting or retaining patrons in training classes? Is there is something you are particularly proud of and which you could provide information about? If so, please describe briefly. Otherwise, please go to the next question.

Responses from Library Directors

Charging a small fee for computer classes has kept attendance up. If the class is free, you see attendance drop after the first couple of classes.
We have a local instructor do the classes, and most of my patrons are familiar with him and feel comfortable with his classes. However, some students walked out and said the course was over their heads. Maybe next time. So, there is a challenge. New people are coming for the class and seasoned students mashed together don't always make an excellent environment for learning.
We partner with the local Chamber of Commerce to ask for assistance with patrons that we identify.
Not unique, but our instructors focus on very positive reinforcement. There is a lot of embarrassment and shame around technology and we work to remove it
Partnering with non-profit in the community and providing outreach on a fairly regular basis using same staff to build trust and relationships. When possible working with parents of students identified by the ISD as needing help.
We've made instruction through outreach a priority in ways that I think not all libraries are able to do and I think it works for serving a large, diverse, spread out community.
Having shorter sessions, simplifying it to one time sessions. Asking users what they are interested in.
Food. Offer food and they will come.
Through the partnership, people taking that completed the course would receive a tablet/laptop
Our Learn at SAPL Adult education is quite innovative - I am not aware of other systems that offer this model of digital literacy support; Learn at SAPL is available currently at 5 and soon to be 7 library locations. These centers have a dedicated staff member who has specific expertise in adult education and digital literacy. Though all library staff members at all locations provide assistance with digital
literacy needs, Learn at SAPL is a resource for individuals with in depth / intensive digital literacy needs.

<p>We operate in a virtual environment and after each use, the computer automatically restarts with a fresh clone. The customer always sees the same exact screen each time they log on. Once they log off, everything that they used the computer for is deleted. We provide a very safe computer system.</p>
<p>We have several librarians who are passionate about certain technologies, and giving them the opportunity to be trainers in an area they love and have others assist so they too can be trainers in the future</p>
<p>Our on line live classes. They are not recorded. Weekly we have 20 + attending.</p> <p>Our one on one service meets immediate needs and does not frustrate the patron with information that they do not need at the moment.</p>
<p>We offer ecards which have been extremely popular. People who are homebound take advantage of this. And having the ability to do informal/one-on-one training for anyone who comes in and asks is a great benefit. Staffing is an issue for many libraries - I'm just glad we can (for the most part) accommodate people who need the immediate assistance.</p>
<p>Sometimes we have a scheduled day in which we have a volunteer college student available to help with any tech issues someone may have. They can bring their own device too.</p>
<p>When we collaborated with the ELL program, there were great learning opportunities with parents.</p>
<p>We have no structured digital literacy programs.</p>
<p>We have partnered with a local faith-based social service organization to provide training opportunities to those seeking help. We use their LMS to guide people through the online training available. We have had mixed success with this approach. People are looking for immediate concrete benefits that will help them get a job, rather than generally increasing their skills and knowledge.</p>
<p>Providing worksheets as "homework" helped to retain students in classes.</p> <p>Pre-loaded take home laptops with digital literacy videos uploaded on the devices</p>
<p>Services are provided as needed.</p>
<p>Our Digital Navigators hired under a Digital Navigator Grant are supporting three community-based Learn & Earn Programs. They help residents register, provide a Library loaned device, and coach them through the required workshops necessary for them to Earn their own laptop. Our Digital Navigators also serve in a Rotation as 1:1 Coaches for system navigation of teleservices: employment, education/training, social services, computer, and all sorts of online navigation needs in different languages.</p>
<p>One year we provided usb/flash drives for all attendants. Another year, the computer teacher provided a cd with Microsoft word and excel examples and how-tos.</p>
<p>The most effective technique so far is individual assistance.</p>
<p>We have worked with two local banks to provide laptops for on-line banking training and have gone to a local senior citizen resident to teach basic skills</p>
<p>Usually it is one-on-one and hands on to assist library patrons in digital literacy</p>

Drop in tech help sessions

Responses from Branch Managers

Integration of learning English attracts our ESL students to attend since they learn both English and computer skills simultaneously.

Social media tools are effective. Digital coupons and how to download and use. During this economic down time people need resources to eat and buy items this helps.

Developing relationships with the customers

One-on-One training has been beneficial in digital literacy trainings, especially as it relates to our senior customers. We created a senior training class because many of them expressed that they needed a slower pace and would prefer a technology class created for seniors.

Our one-on-one format has worked well, but we can do better. The uniqueness is more on being able to be present and answer the digital needs in real time but we also could use the benefit of planning ahead for instruction

Small classes to ease of asking lots of questions. Last week of the month is guided by the students, so as to help them with their unique needs.

We had been checking out a laptop/hotspot bundle to parents so they could use a computer on our floor and stay with their children. Computers in the Youth Discovery Center are for children to use only. We had a small success with this; not many parents were checking them out. The computer bundles were recalled and are now being used on other floors.

Typing classes have been very popular at our branch for "teens" The pre-teens come to the class and their parents are very keen to have them attend. We have also offered the class to adults, and while it was not quite as successful, we still had a decent turn out throughout the series. Coding classes are always popular with the teens. There is some good software for purchase, but using free software is always good as well. The post-pandemic (main pandemic) world is still something we are figuring out program wise. Hopefully in the future we will bring back some of these programs.

Definitely word of mouth helps bring in people. Had a group of women who were part of local church group attend computer classes together at the library, they would carpool.

Our staff teaches patrons computer skills while also assisting them with submitting government assistance forms.

Tech time was successful at one branch where I worked. People could have their questions answered one on one and were not embarrassed not knowing something in front of others.

The Learn Centers have been effective. However, keeping users engaged and consistent in visiting may be an issue if they are going to be completely savvy digitally.

High hopes for the Learn Center model, but too soon to describe specifics in this branch.

<p>We recently implemented a program for personalized technology training sessions, one hour at a time. We ask our patrons to come prepared with questions/topics they are struggling with or perhaps would like to learn about. We practice real-life examples, we take notes, and offer resources to take home. Patrons love it so much that they usually sign-up for more instruction.</p>
<p>Having smaller classes, breaking the topic of digital literacy into 4-week courses. Such as intro to computers; start patrons with Paint so patrons can gain control of the mouse, have them play solitaire. Create flyers and letters in MS Word, and then go to the Internet to help patrons search safely and lastly, create an email and how to operate their email.</p>
<p>Our summer program has been pretty successful attracting and retaining children and teens. Even with the pandemic we offered virtual and still maintain them engaged and learning digital literacy, coding, podcasting, creating PowerPoints, etc.</p>
<p>Staff are encouraged not to touch the device of the library user. Staff are also encouraged to bring the library user to sit a table where they are comfortable and can focus on learning.</p>
<p>Being personable and taking the time to understand why the skills are essential and helpful to the individual</p>
<p>Allowing time at the end for patrons to ask specific questions about issues with which they are struggling is appreciated. This can be helpful for the entire group, as long as it is appropriate for the subject being taught. Sticking strictly to a pre-planned presentation may not be as helpful.</p>
<p>Publicity in both English and Spanish and making sure that information on classes is distributed throughout the community served has been effective in getting students and keeping students.</p>
<p>Finding a time during regular library hours when patrons can attend is also a deterrent for some. Evenings and weekends might work best.</p>
<p>One-on-one sessions that allow the instructor to tailor the training to the customer's needs (ex. If someone wants to learn to use Excel and I can show them how to use it for something they need to do, they're going to learn/retain more because the information is relevant.)</p>