Natural Selection and the Workshop

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In Fall of 2017, the Sprague Library began offering workshops for citation management software in response to the increasing number of 1-on-1 appointment requests. While workshops covering various topics had been offered in the past, attendance had been low. Casting this precedent into the wind, we offered additional workshops (using anecdotal evidence from library instruction classes, research appointments, and conversations with faculty to guide the topics), and targeted graduate students and faculty as our audience. Instead of using attendance as a way to measure success, we focused on participant feedback, follow up appointments, and word-of-mouth to advertise the guide topics and scheduling for future events.

Low attendance is common, marketing is the biggest challenge.

Scheduling is a challenge, interest may be high but timing may not work for all.

Targeted topics and populations work best.

Graduate students are an underserved population.

Tailedd series may work better than standalone (Peacemaker and Roseberry, 2017)

Interest about equal across all subject disciplines (Fong, Wang, White and Tipton, 2016)

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NATURAL SELECTION AND THE WORKSHOP
Siobhan McCarthy, Reference Librarian, Montclair State University

ABSTRACT

In Fall of 2017, the Sprague Library began offering workshops for citation management software in response to the increasing number of 1-on-1 appointment requests. While workshops covering various topics had been offered in the past, attendance had been low. Casting this precedent into the wind, we offered additional workshops (using anecdotal evidence from library instruction classes, research appointments, and conversations with faculty to guide the topics), and targeted graduate students and faculty as our audience. Instead of using attendance as a way to measure success, we focus on participant feedback, follow up appointments, and word-of-mouth to advertise the guide topics and scheduling for future events.

LITERATURE SUMMARY

• Low attendance is common, marketing is the biggest challenge.
• Scheduling is a challenge, interest may be high but timing may not work for all.
• Targeted topics and populations work best.
• Graduate students are an underserved population.
• Tailored series may work better than standalone (Peacemaker and Roseberry, 2017)
• Interest about equal across all subject disciplines (Fong, Wang, White and Tipton, 2016)

SATISFIED READING


HISTORY OF WORKSHOPS AT THE SPRAGUE LIBRARY

Pre-2016
• Workshops held on an irregular basis, based on interest and availability of librarians.
• Advertised through “Campus” listerv with limited success (1 to 2 attendees per session).

2017-2018
• One-on-one research appointment requests increased 400% from 2014-2015 to 2017-2018 (result of expanding availability from graduate-only to undergraduate/graduate, outreach to departments, etc).
• 7 requests for Mendeleev appointments in one week (following a demo during a graduate class), only one librarian familiar with the software and each appointment 1hr+ each.
• Scheduled open workshops using SignUpGenius and advertised through “Campus” listerv (staff and faculty only), initial response positive.

2018-2019
• Upgraded to Springshare’s LibCal and LibWizard.
• Enabled registration, user cancelations, waiting lists, and automated reminders/follow-up e-mails with feedback surveys.
• Dedicated workshops for Graduate Assistants.
• Added “Library 101,” “Library 101: Graduate Edition,” Open Access, and Journal Rankings/Citation Tracking workshops in addition to citation management.
• Advertised via library website and Campus listerv; faculty shared opportunities with students.
• Referred requests for APA, MLA, etc. to workshops hosted by the Center for Writing Excellence (to avoid duplicating efforts).
• More consistent scheduling during blocks when Graduate Assistants met, or before Graduate level evening classes would begin.

ATTENDANCE & FEEDBACK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Appointments</th>
<th>Workshop Attendance</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>130</td>
<td>24*</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Spring semester only, does not account for attendees who did not preregister.

Importance of Topic Covered:

Demographics:

Registration Breakdown:

CONTACT

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