

Utica Public Library Narrative Report for OBE, June, 2011 to December, 2011

Audience

The Library's plan included offering classes in Digital Literacy, Workforce Development, ESL and GED. The Digital Literacy included Office Skills and Basic Computer Skills. The target audience for this category is 2,762. 430 students attended these classes and this is 15.5% of the target audience. The target audience for Workforce Development is 1,873 and 71 students attended these classes. This is 3.7% of the target audience. The target for ESL classes was 992 and no ESL classes were taught. The target for Citizenship classes is 449 and no Citizenship classes were held. The target for GED classes is 697. One class was offered in the PCC and 5 students attended.

Access

One issue that has challenged the Library for many years is the reduced hours. This has impacted the access to public computing. With the additional hours access has greatly improved. Thus even though the classes are lacking attendance, the public computing sessions have increased by close to 100%. Now approximately 5,000 public computing sessions are held each month. Last year that number was less than 2,500 each month.

Classes

The students that have taken the classes have responded very positively to them. Nearly 100% rank them as very good to excellent and would recommend the classes to someone else. The length of class sessions have been modified based on student input and well as the teaching method. More hands-on and interactive activities have been included. Instructors found that the skills presented were learned by the students.

Comments:

“For having no knowledge of computers, I really enjoy the course.”

“The instructor Heidi was very well organized and informative. She answered my questions.”

“I found this class to be much more than I expected. I have already recommended this class to friends and family.”

“I've been given a world of knowledge.”

“For me is special class and very good time because no poor moments.”

“Learned more from this class than in any other classes I took from various places, ex. MVCC, other libraries.”

“Did not want to come glad I did.”

“The course is a real help to a beginner. I feel now I will greatly get use out of my computer. No longer in fear of destroying my computer.”

“Opening these classes is a great community service.”

“This course contributed greatly to my understanding of the computer, Internet and email. The instructor was very kind, patient and understanding.”

Lessons Learned

The audience levels in all categories are far below the amounts that the Library had anticipated. In order to rectify this situation the Library is increasing its partnerships with community organizations in order to reach students in need of these courses. More marketing efforts will be mounted so that we can reach potential students who are not involved with the organizations that serve the unemployed or under employed. More classes will be held in the evening and weekend to insure that the classes are convenient for everyone who would like to attend. More open PCC hours will be added so that individuals needing one-on-one instruction will have that available to them. The need for public computing in the city of Utica is great and the Library is finally fulfilling that role thanks to this grant. The class schedules, content and methods have all been revised based on student and instructor input. This will continue in order to insure that the classes offered fulfill the expectations of students.