

Lifelong Access

L I B R A R I E S

Redefining public library services to older adults

Leadership
Institutes
Overall Summary

May

2009

The 2006, 2007 and 2008 Lifelong Access Libraries Leadership Institutes were held at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

UNC
Evaluation of
the Lifelong
Access
Libraries
Leadership
Institutes



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LIFELONG ACCESS LIBRARIES LEADERSHIP INSTITUTES SUMMARY

The 2006, 2007 and 2008 LAL Institutes were held at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and offered opportunities to gain a better understanding of the needs of older adults through a training program that introduced attendees to the concept of LAL, included sessions on the social and biological aspects of aging, and the need for a new approach to adult services that will promote ongoing civic engagement of older adults.

Demographics

2006 Institute attendees were predominately female (95.2%) and white (95.2%). This was also true for 2007 attendees (82.4% female; 88.2% white) and 2008 attendees (83.3% female; 87.5% white). On average, 2006 attendees had 17.3 years experience working in libraries and their average age was 49 years old. 2007 attendees ranged in age from 27 to 64 years old with an average age of 50 years old, and on average 18.4 years working in libraries (standard deviation 9.9 years). In 2008, the age range of attendees was 37 to 66 years old with an average age of 52 years old, and on average of 19.2 years working in libraries (standard deviation 11.3 years).

Institute Satisfaction

In general, for the 2006, 2007 and 2008 Institutes, attendees were very satisfied. Results over the course of the three years related to the number of presentations offered reflect a decline in satisfaction with the number of presentations. For example, between the years 2006 to 2007, the number of presentations increased from twenty-three in 2006 to twenty-nine in 2007 and evaluation results indicate a decline in attendee satisfaction. The 2007 attendees felt overwhelmed by the number of sessions and wanted more time to reflect on session information. In 2008, the Institute was condensed into three days with twenty-one sessions (seven sessions per day). From 2007 to 2008, satisfaction with the number of presentations increased, which might be attributed to the shorter length of the Institute and total number of sessions. Although satisfaction increased, respondents of the 2008 Institute indicated that the amount of information covered was too much to assimilate during a relatively short period of time, and a few attendees indicated that they would have liked a longer Institute.

There was a marked decline in satisfaction with the number of networking opportunities available from 2006 to 2007 and 2008. Attendees noted that they would have appreciated more opportunities for networking to take place and that it would be beneficial to have specific time scheduled into the Institute for sharing and processing. Additionally, respondents noted that they wanted more interactivity during sessions and that this could serve as a means of promoting networking.

Opportunities for hands on learning increased from 33% in 2006 to 58% in 2007 and then decreased to 52% in 2008. In general, satisfaction with programming quality, meals and Chapel Hill as a meeting place was high, though there was a slight decrease in 2008 from previous years. However, satisfaction with the meeting facilities and accommodations increased in 2008 from the previous year. Table A, below, indicates “excellent” or “good” ratings from attendees of the 2006, 2007 and 2008 Institutes.

Table A: Overall Institute Ratings

		2006 Institute (n=16)	2007 Institute (n=18)	2008 Institute (n=23)
		Excellent or Good	Excellent or Good	Excellent or Good
1.1	Overall satisfaction	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
1.2	Programming quality	100.0%	100.0%	95.7%
1.3	Number of presentations	80.0%	62.5%	78.3%
1.4	Number of opportunities for hands on learning	33.3%	58.8%	52.2%
1.5	Number of networking opportunities	87.5%	76.5%	73.9%
1.6	Printed information provided	100.0%	93.8%	95.7%
1.7	Meeting facilities	100.0%	88.9%	100.0%
1.8	Accommodations	100.0%	94.4%	100.0%
1.9	Meals	100.0%	100.0%	95.7%
1.10	Chapel Hill as a meeting place	100.0%	100.0%	95.7%
1.11	Application process	66.7%	94.1%	95.5%
1.12	Communication prior to the Institute	50.0%	76.5%	82.6%
1.13	Helpfulness of staff during the Institute	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Presenters

The surveys administered at the 2006, 2007 and 2008 Institutes helped to gain insight into the overall reception and effectiveness of the speakers. While the same speakers and presentations were not used for all three Institutes, examination of both the qualitative and quantitative data from the Institute evaluations indicates that there were several individuals whose presentations stood out amongst the rest. Some of the most notable presenters among the 2006, 2007 and 2008 Institutes were: Mary Altpeter, Bruce Astrein, Iowaka Barber, Mary Catherine Bateson, Patrick Culliane, Judy Goggin, Ron Manheimer, Victor Marshall, Paul Nussbaum, Stephen Ristau and Jeff Scherer. These presenters were well received at the Institutes and the information and insights they offered attendees were appreciated.

Follow-up Evaluations

When compared to baseline surveys, follow-up evaluations from the 2006, 2007 and 2008 LAL Institutes did not indicate that LAL librarians had made a great deal of additional progress in developing services for older adults in their home libraries. Although Institute attendees initially agreed that their organizations were ready, willing and capable of dealing with change (Table B), changes in the stage of implementation of LAL programs and services for older adults from baseline to follow-up (Table C) were lower than would be expected.

Table B: Organizational Readiness for Change

	2006 n=22	2007 n=18	2008 n=23
Your library is able to deal with change	81.8	87.5	95.6
Every member of your library's staff understands and accepts the library's overall goals and vision	45.5	44.4	73.9
Members of the library staff are open to sharing knowledge and ideas, and knowledge and skills are efficiently and expediently transferred	63.6	77.8	91.3
Procedures are in place to retain pertinent knowledge when library staff leaves employment	50.0	38.9	52.1
Staff from different departments within your library share information sometimes and cooperate on new initiatives	90.9	94.4	100.0
Change is not perceived as disruptive by members of your library's staff	36.4	53.0	47.8
Your library has a good track record in handling change	59.1	82.4	87.0
Members of your library staff are able to handle more change at this time	81	70.6	78.2
This library has staff and resources dedicated to receiving and analyzing user surveys	61.9	44.4	60.8
User data are an integral part of decision making	63.6	88.3	91.3
Members of your library's staff feel that willingness to support change benefits them as well	77.3	60.0	87.0
Members of your library's staff feel respected and rewarded for working on change	72.7	66.7	72.7
Your library leadership is open to risk taking and change	81.8	83.3	91.3
Overall, your library is skilled at managing change	50.0	76.5	95.7

*Table C: Changes in the Stage of Implementation**

	2006 n=14	2007 n= 14	2008 n=19
Advisory Council	0.38	0.39	0.09
Arts and cultural programming	0.92	0.06	0.27
Civic engagement	0.75	0.44	-0.14
Coalition building	0.21	-0.22	0.34
Community conversations and forums	0.23	0.58	-0.01
Computer resources and training	-0.08	0.07	0.23
Dedicated space	0.23	0.46	0.58
Dedicated staff	0.00	1.43	0.5
Dedicated website	-0.7	0.44	0.28
Expanded collections	0.38	0.71	-0.15
Fee-based and other revenue-generating activities	0.09	-0.03	0.02
Health and wellness programming for older adults	1.31	0.33	1.52
Intergenerational activities	0.67	0.55	1.66
Job, career and life transition information	1.33	0.75	0.62
Lifelong learning programs and services	1.23	0.87	1.2
Marketing and outreach to boomers	0.62	0.88	0.95
Oral history	0.00	0.04	0.07

*mean change = mean of follow-up – mean of baseline

While the majority of areas of innovation indicate that librarians have made changes in developing LAL programs and services for older adults from baseline to follow-up, it is quite surprising to see areas where the mean change in implementation has seen a decline over time.

LAL Fellows were encouraged to participate in an online forum after the Institute. However, activity on the Lifelong Access Libraries Blog (<http://lifelonglibraries.wordpress.com/>) has been light. The blog began in August 2007 and when assessed in April 2009, almost two years from its inception, had thirty-seven posts and only twenty-four comments. Given that there were 23 Fellows in 2006, 19 Fellows in 2007 and 20 Fellows in 2008, the number of posts and comments is lower than would be expected. The limited progress shown by LAL Institute attendees indicates a need for revised strategies related to post Institute follow-up to ensure that information generated at the Institute is being translated into practice.

Additional follow-up will help ensure that librarians are able to implement the strategies presented at the Institute. This follow-up could include site visits to the participant's libraries by Institute leaders, fostering relationships with professional organizations such as the American Libraries Association (ALA), developing online resources including Webinars and networking sites, and developing additional peer-led training and information share.