

**Library Skills for Recent Immigrants**



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## Table of Contents

<b>1.0 Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.0 Lesson Plan: Literature Searching Workshop.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.1 Objective/ Outcome .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.2 Skills .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.3 Target Audience .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.4 Material needed.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.5. Program .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.0 Evaluation/Conclusion.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4.0 Further Training.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5.0 Bibliography .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>1Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## **1.0 Introduction**

New immigrants and refugees to America constitute a vulnerable group who have specific information needs that evolve over the course of their integration into American life. A review of literature looking at the information behavior of the newly immigrated indicates a critical need for information in the following six areas: health care, education, legal/financial assistance, social services, transportation, and employment assistance. The literature also indicates that libraries are uniquely positioned to help develop information literacy skills that can be applied in all of these areas, as well as provide an invaluable community resource. Development of these information literacy skills is crucial to empowering immigrants to meet their information needs in a geographically and culturally unfamiliar and potentially hostile environment. The library as a public institution is uniquely poised to provide programs that facilitate such development, such as those outlined in Karen Fisher's study of the Queens, NY Public Library . This lesson plan is designed as a workshop to help recent immigrants become comfortable in a library setting and learn basic library skills.

## **2.0 Lesson Plan: Library Skills for Recent Immigrants**

### **2.1 Objective/ Outcome**

- To become comfortable and familiar with local library resources
- To develop library skills, including location, access, and use

### **2.2 Skill**

- Location of library resources
  - Library services and programs (adult lecture and music programs, children's storytimes, book groups, cultural passes, meeting room, summer and winter reading programs, etc.)
  - The reference desk
  - Computers with internet and software
  - The online catalog (WILI)
- Access of library resources
  - Collection layout and library map
  - Call numbers
- Use of library resources
  - In-library usage (reference items, copy machines)
  - Obtaining a library card
  - Circulation of materials
  - Holds and interlibrary loans
  - Policies

## **2.3 Target Audience**

The target audience for this workshop will be recent immigrants to the Washington County, Oregon area. Washington County is the most ethnically diverse county in the state of Oregon. Census statistics from 2000 indicate that around 14% of its population was born in a foreign country, and about 18% of its household speak a primary language other than English. (QuickFacts).

This workshop is optimally designed for 10 to 15 students. While this class assumes basic English language skills, it would be possible to use a translator if necessary or desired. This class also assumes very basic abilities in using a computer.

## **2.4 Materials needed**

Library that is closed to the public

Computer lab with at least one computer per student and guest access to each computer

Handout materials and folders (see Appendix A)

Scratch paper and golf pencils at each computer

Easel and dry-erase board

The titles of five selected library materials: one adult fiction, one adult non-fiction, one juvenile fiction, one juvenile non-fiction, and one audiovisual item; instructor should check that items are checked in and in their correct location on the shelves. Instructor may want to pick materials that are tailored to the target audience

Library cards and staff client software to register new patrons

Ask prospective students to bring their library card if they already have one; if not, have them bring photo ID and proof of address if possible so that they may obtain one during the class

## **2.5. Program**

### **2.5.1 Introduction**

Icebreaker:

Have students pair off (if there's an odd number, one person can pair with the instructor), and exchange first names, country of origin, and one thing they like or dislike so far about living here. After a few minutes, go around the class and have each person introduce the class to these three things about their partner.

This activity allows students and instructor to get to know each other a bit, connect more directly with one other person, gain a idea of the diversity of the class, and become relaxed and unified as a class.

Attention-getting activity:

Ask students to brainstorm what kinds of things they imagine or hope they can do in a library. Write responses on the dry-erase board. After several ideas are listed, go through each item on the list and explain if and how the library might meet that expectation (for instance, while the library cannot prepare your taxes for you, it can help you locate forms, publications, and organizations that provide free tax assistance). Talk about how the library can be of help in some way with almost any area of need, and how this class is going to cover the many different resources and services provided by the library, how to locate, access, and use those resources and services. Hand out a brochure that gives a basic introduction to the library, as well as a folder that students can use to gather handouts given throughout the class.

This activity attracts the attention of the students by first having them express their ideas of what purposes a library can serve, and indirectly their expectations of the class (addressing the Attention concept of Keller's ARCS model), and then gives the instructor a chance to respond by relating how the class will be relevant to the students' expressed expectations (addressing the Relevance concept in Keller's ARCS model). The activity may also give the students a better idea in concrete terms of the wide range of resources and services provided by the library. Finally, it gets the class prepared for the ensuing workshop.

## **2.5.2 Body of the Lesson**

### **Methods:**

This class intersperses lecture with activities designed to satisfy the needs of the four types of learners and stages of learning identified by McCarthy – Type 1, Why; Type 2, What; Type 3, How; and Type 4, What If. For Type 1 students, there are brainstorming sessions and chances to reflect on how the material will be useful to them. For Type 2 learners, there are text handouts and oral presentations to provide the information to reflect and think about. For Type 3 learners, there are several concrete hands-on activities where the student can practice the processes being taught. Finally, for Type 4 learners, activities are provided that allows the student to take the skills learned and apply them creatively in a way that is of personal interest for him or her.

### **Skill 1: Location of library resources**

#### **Steps**

##### **Orientation**

- Lead class in a brief tour of the library, ending with the computer area where each student has access to the online catalog at their computer.

##### **Other library services and programs**

- During tour, show students areas in the library that are used for adult programs, children's storytime, etc., and hand out events calendar showing what programs are available throughout the month. Show students the bulletin board where they can find out about these activities as well as community activities and programs.
- Explain what the meeting room can be used for and how to reserve it.

Reference desk:

- Show class where the reference desk is.
- Explain what a reference librarian is and that this is the first place they can go for resources/information and assistance.

#### Computers with internet and software

- Have students sit at a computer and briefly explain the resources available to them; i.e., the internet and word processing software. Hand out sheet to each student listing the library's computer usage policies. Have students take the next five minutes exploring applications they are interested in. Instructor will be available to assist anyone with questions about an application they are using.

#### Online catalog (WILI)

- Explain what the online catalog is and how to conduct searches using the keyword or "quick library search" field on the website's main page.
- Lead the class in a basic search exercise; write specific book title on dry erase board and have students type title into the "quick library search" field.
- Once students have located and opened the record, encourage them to explore the record by asking the class questions about the item (what is the call number, what library does it belong to, who's the author, is it available, etc.) Write the various bibliographic information on the dry erase board.
- Have students do a keyword search on any title, subject, or author that interests them. Have them write down the title, call number, owning library, and availability status of the item. Tell them they will use this information later.
- Break

### **Skill 2: Access of library materials**

#### Collection layout

- Hand out library map that shows collection layout; give a brief description of the various collections (adult & juvenile fiction & non-fiction, audiovisual materials, and special collections of interest to this particular audience, such as foreign language, ESL, and Northwest)
- Let students browse the library using their maps and ask them to bring back one item they find that interests them; explain that later they will learn how to check this item out

#### Call Numbers

- Explain how call numbers help organize the collection and make it possible to find materials in the library; show how numbers are located on the spine.
- Ask each student to read out loud the call number of each item they found on the shelf; write on dry-erase board. Use this list to explain the components of each call number, and how it relates to where it was found, giving a brief description of Dewey Decimal numbers and the differences between how fiction and non-fiction items are organized.
- Write five titles of items on the dry erase board; one adult fiction, one adult non-fiction, one juvenile fiction, one juvenile non-fiction, and one audiovisual item. Have students look up call numbers for each item and write the number down on the library map where they think it should be located based on the previous discussion.

- Divide class into five groups and give each group the task of finding one of the items from the list using the library map and call number. Make groups aware that the instructor will be available to assist them if they have any trouble finding the item.
- After all the groups have returned with their item, have one member from each group describe how they went about finding their item.
- Break

### **Skill 3: Use of library materials**

#### **In-house usage and reference materials**

- Explain how all materials can be used within the library, but that some are not available to check out of the library, such as reference collection items or current issues of magazines.
- Explain that copy machines are available to make copies if necessary

#### **Obtaining a library card**

- Explain that to take materials out of the library, it is necessary to obtain a library card. Hand out library card applications and have class fill them out. Encourage those who already have cards to assist those who do not.
- Issue cards by checking ID and briefly processing applications (detailed information can be entered at a later time)
- Encourage waiting students to explore computer software and online catalog at their leisure

#### **Circulation Policies**

- After having students with new cards sign their cards, explain the kinds of information on the library card and hand out circulation policies. Go over the policies with the class. Encourage class to ask questions about the policies.
- Have class bring their book they found on the shelf in the second section and have class line up in the checkout line; have them use their new card to check out their book to them.
- Have class divide back into their five groups, retrieve their book from the prior group exercise, and show group where the return bookdrops are located and how they are separated by material type; have each group decide to which drop to return their book.

#### **Holds and interlibrary loans**

- Gather students back at the computers. Have students search again for the title they found of interest to them from the first section. Explain that if their item is checked out or belongs to another library, they can place a hold on that item and have it sent to any library in the county, where it will be held for them at the checkout counter. (If their item is owned by this library and checked in, ask them to pretend they want to pick it up at another library).
- Using their new cards, instruct the class in placing a request on their item. Explain that when the item arrives, they will be notified by telephone, email, or mail and it will be held for them at the front desk for seven days where they will check it out just like any other library item.

#### **Interlibrary Loans**

- Explain to the class that if an item they are looking for is not in the countywide system, a librarian can help them fill out an ILL request form at the desk to ask for the item from a library outside the system.

#### Accessing library accounts online and renewals

- Instruct the class on how to look up their account online with their new cards and passwords. Show them where to click to see the the item they have just checked out, its due date, and where to click to renew the item if desired. Also show where to click to see the hold they have just placed and what status it is in.
- Explain other options for renewing an item (telephone, in person).



### **3.0 Evaluation/Conclusion**

Cover the main points of the workshop: how to use the reference desk and the online catalog, how to find materials in the library, and how to check items out. Hold a concluding question and answer session.

Assessment of student learning is gained by monitoring the students' successful completion of activities as they are presented, providing assistance in task completion if needed, and presenting frequent opportunities for students to ask questions.

Ask students to fill out an optional class evaluation survey (see Appendix B).

## **4.0 Further Training**

Encourage students to make use of the telephone reference line and the reference desk whenever assistance is needed in using the library.

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## **Appendix A: Workshop handouts**

**Introduction to Washington County Cooperative Library Services brochure**

**Computer Usage Policies**

**Monthly Events Calendar**

**Library Map of Collection Layout**

**English library card application**

**[http://www.wilinet.wccls.lib.or.us/faq/WCCLS\\_application\\_200504\\_english.P](http://www.wilinet.wccls.lib.or.us/faq/WCCLS_application_200504_english.PDF)**

**[DF](#)**

**Spanish library card application**

**[http://www.wilinet.wccls.lib.or.us/faq/WCCLS\\_application\\_200504\\_spanish.P](http://www.wilinet.wccls.lib.or.us/faq/WCCLS_application_200504_spanish.PDF)**

**[DF](#)**

**Circulation Policies**

## **Appendix B**

### **Workshop Evaluation**

What did you learn from this workshop that will be the most useful?

What aspects of this workshop were the least useful?

Do you wish more time or explanation was provided for any topics covered in this workshop? If so, what topics?

Are there topics that you wish were covered in this workshop? If so, what are they?

What would you change about this workshop to make it more useful for future participants?