

Edible Book: Engaging Students for National Library Week

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Abstract:

Using National Library Week as a vehicle for outreach to students has been a continual goal for the Information Resources Department. The purpose of the promotion of this week is to engage students to connect and celebrate their library, in this case, Estrella's library. Previous endeavors included free food and promotional giveaways, however, these activities did not really engage in a connection between the Library, research assistance, and services. Seeking to engage students actively in interactive, inter-disciplinary literacy related activity, I approached Reading faculty and the College, in general, to participate in an Edible Book contest in honor of National Library Week. This was the first time holding such an activity at this college. It involved students making edible art/creations that incorporated literary works, themes, and puns. Faculty members volunteered their time as judges and students participated in an engaging activity with the faculty librarians. There were a total of 13 entries but over 20 participants in attendance. Requests to expand this activity for 2017 is currently underway.

To assist in the evaluation of this activity, I have answered the questions directly under the "Completing the Cycle (Closing the Loop) Checklist".

- Start with an idea for improvement?

How to improve student engagement and connection with Information Resources faculty, library services, and participate in National Library Week.

- Gather baseline data?

There was no previous data on past events. However, past activities held in honor of National Library Week on campus did not have an instructional component that connected students with the Library's book collection.

- Plan an intervention/strategy to facilitate the improvement?

Based on previous extracurricular literacy activities at other campuses, I decided to replicate the Edible Book activity. This activity involves students creating edible art/creations that incorporated literary works, themes, and puns. It also required students to learn to search the Library Catalog for books and use the Library's collection.

Having collaborated successfully in the past with faculty in carrying out this activity, I had all materials, methods, and resources prepared. Past success in holding an Edible Book activity was dependent on collaboration with instructional faculty member(s) and their students. Also, it was important that the activity directly aligns with the course curriculum.

- Implement the intervention/strategy?

Developmental Reading and English classes have always been a target audience when planning literacy-related activities. First, because the subject matter of the courses deal heavily with literature and reading. Second, there has been a discussion of the difficulty in engaging Dev. Ed.

students in extra-curricular activities that involve showcasing their work. For these reasons, I approached a colleague in the Modern Languages Division, Steven Peist, Reading faculty and we collaborated on how to solicit other potential instructors to participate.

The following steps were taken to implement this activity:

- Coordinated a date & time for the event
 - Solicited participation via email blasts
 - Visited classes to explain the details of the contest and how to use the Library Catalog to search for books
 - Solicited faculty participation as judges – Nikol Price was instrumental in recruitment.
 - Andrew Burch, Math faculty, also served as a judge
 - Solicited donations for prizes and assemble prizes
 - Organized facilities, judging rubric, photo release forms, and data collection
- Gather data derived from the newly implemented intervention/strategy?

The results of this activity were very positive. Two Reading faculty participated and between the two classes, there were 13 entries with over 20 people in attendance. Students enjoyed the activity and faculty have asked to expand the activity for 2017.

- Compare the recent data with the original baseline data to determine if your intervention/strategy was successful?

This activity was very successful in that it encouraged socializing with the librarians outside of a class assignment. This type of engagement is important as it addresses *library anxiety* (negative association with using a library or seeking assistance from a librarian). This activity was also successful because it required students to think creatively about books, literature, and use the Library's collection.

- Make a decision based on the data? (Either continue on with the new intervention/strategy or try something different.)

Future activities will expand on this current activity. A number of instructional faculty members have expressed interest in participating in this activity for 2017. Early solicitation of participants starting in December before the beginning of the spring semester may be required in order to schedule the activity to align with course schedules. Also, early scheduling for event space will also need to occur. In addition, expansion of prize options/awards may need to occur to encourage students in their creativity.

Below are some images of edible book entries:

