

IMPACT in Public Libraries

(Initiative to Measure Personnel Assimilation of Computer-based Training)

AWARD NUMBER

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Institution of Museum and Library Services

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Project IMPACT in Public Libraries

AWARDEE INSTITUTION

University of North Texas

PERIOD COVERED BY THE REPORT:

From October 2007 to March 2008

Principal Investigator: Philip Turner

Senior Researcher: Teri Dalston

University of North Texas
Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
P.O. Box 310889 PEB 205
Denton, Texas
Telephone: (940) 565-2502

Email: pturner@unt.edu
Project Website: TBA at www.leadonline.info

April 7, 2008

Table of Contents

Project Overview and Research Goals	3
Project Design	3
1. Accomplishments.....	4
1.1. Developing Self-Efficacy Tool, Knowledge Assessment Test, and Survey Questionnaire	4
1.2. Facilitating and Administering the Online Training	4
1.3. Qualitative Data of Online Training Experience.....	4
1.4. Survey Tools and Wrap Up Procedures	5
1.5. Collecting and Analyzing the Data	5
2. Future Plans	5
Appendix A: Project Flyer.....	7
Appendix B: Delayed Posttest E-mail and Thank You/Closing Messages	9

Project Overview and Research Goals

A recent study of primarily public libraries indicated that 70 percent of the library organizations surveyed plan to use E-training within the next three years. The need for increased work-related training and the use of distance learning to meet these demands has been evidenced in the increase in staff development programs for public libraries. Even with the array of E-training initiatives, quality benchmarks have yet to be established for development and implementation of e-training courses for public library personnel.

Project IMPACT (Initiative to Measure Personnel Assimilation of Computer-mediated Training) in Public Libraries proposes to investigate the impact and return on investment of various levels of implementing Web-based training in public libraries. The short and long-term impact on knowledge, skills and abilities will be determined, and performance measures will be proposed.

The grant provided funding for 400 scholarships for course participants in the *Managing Difficult Patrons with Confidence* LE@D continuing education course. Over 200 libraries from twenty-seven different states are represented. Project IMPACT is studying the impact of implementing Web-based training in public libraries. The study's goals are to:

- Model practical, yet theoretically based, implementation practices and assessment measures of online training
- Inform library administrators of both implementation practices and measures of staff and organizational impacts of investment in staff e-training courses
- Contribute to the library literature on establishing best practices in delivery of computer-mediated courses for continuing education and training in public libraries; and
- Provide practical tools to calculate return on investment and outcomes for administrative support of E-training initiatives.

The results of IMPACT in Public Libraries will inform public library administrators and training personnel of online training implementation strategies that optimize implementation costs in terms of specific outcomes.

Project Design

Table 1 enumerates the phases and major tasks of Project IMPACT in Public Libraries.

Table 1. Revised Timeline of Project Phases

Time Period	Phases & Major Tasks
September-October 2007	Pilot Study, Development of Test instruments, and Solicitation of Participants
October-December 2007	Process /Train 400 Participants and Pre- & Posttest Data Collection
January 2008	Preliminary Data Analysis, Development of Website, Flyer, and Delayed Posttest/Questionnaire
February-April 2008	Administer Delayed Posttest/Questionnaire Collection and Data

	Management Mail incentives and follow up messages Administer Focus Group and Process Qualitative Data
May-June 2008	Statistical Software/Programming and Final Data Analysis Phase
July-August 2008	Dissemination of Results and Findings

Project IMPACT in Public Libraries is on target for our one year Schedule of Completion. The first four months of the project (September 2007 to December 2007) were devoted to development of the online training evaluation tools, supplemental kit, and facilitation materials; implementation of pilot study to test course materials and evaluation tools; arrangement of the online course sections and authentication passwords; and solicitation, processing, and training of the 400 participants. Subtasks required to accomplish these tasks were: (1) compiling literature on online training evaluation, self-efficacy, and customer service/difficult patrons; (2) drafting, pilot-testing, and refining the web-based pre, post, and delayed posttest survey, knowledge assessment, and self-efficacy tools; (3) compiling and contacting e-mail list of public library administrators and state library continuing education coordinators within the United States; (4) setting up the scholarship application form (available online at <http://www.leadonline.info/ScholarshipForm.cfm>) and participant processing, informed consent, and authentication procedures; (5) developing supplemental online training toolkit, (6) administering and facilitating online course sections in two week intervals, and (7) collecting the pre- and posttest data and survey within Blackboard Vista (the learning management system used for delivery of the lessons) courseware.

1. Accomplishments

1.1. Developing the Self-Efficacy Tool, Knowledge Assessment Test, and Survey Questionnaire

With input from staff from the UNT Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment and after a review of the literature on online training evaluation and self efficacy measures, a pilot test instrument was developed and tested on participants from LE@D's public library administrator's certification program. Project impact staff incorporated feedback in the design of the final test instrument and survey. These test instruments and development resources will be available on the final Project IMPACT Website.

1.2. Scholarship Application and Administering the Online Training

Having more than 400 participants from over 200 public libraries in our sample required us to work out a detailed plan for assigning four different levels of online training implementation based on the size of the library and the number of participants from any given branch library. (Library size assignment is based on IMLS Stats from the online resource:

<http://harvester.census.gov/imls/data/pls/index.asp>. Further granularity of population statistics for

states with data only collected at the county level is being collected from participants in the delayed posttest.) After pilot-testing, IMPACT staff worked out a system for online scholarship application and notification for assigning section numbers, dispensing authentication codes, incorporating informed consent forms, and confirming receipt of scholarship notification.

1.3. Qualitative Data of Online Training Experience

The consultation with the Focus Group coincides with Public Library Association and Texas Library Association convention dates in an effort to further publicize Project IMPACT and to secure additional qualitative data. (Please see Appendix to view Project IMPACT informational flyer.) IMPACT staff distributed over 100 brochures at the PLA conventions and expect to distribute at least 75 updated brochures at the TLA convention. Much interest was generated in the project and anticipation of the findings. Several participants mentioned that the IMLS scholarship afforded them the opportunity to take their first online course and now are taking additional online courses for their professional development. Project staff will use Atlasti® software to organize and analyze the qualitative data from the surveys and other project related communications.

1.4. Survey Tools and Wrap Up Procedures

We are providing an incentive (using non-grant funds) to encourage completion of the delayed post-test and survey. Currently, the response rate has been above 80% for completion of the delayed posttest. (Please visit <http://www.shortenurl.com/IMPACTDelayedPost> to view example of the delayed posttest in SurveyMonkey® and see Appendix C to view sample parcel posted thank you/closing messages.)

1.5. Collecting and Analyzing the Quantitative Data

We will analyze the longitudinal quantitative data (self-efficacy and knowledge assessment for pre-, post-, and delayed posttest) at the end of April 2008, once the final delayed posttest has been closed. Data collected from pre- and posttest have been formatted, and the delayed posttest and qualitative data are being processed. The statistical analysis will be completed using open source software (R), and the programming is slated for review by university statistics department in May.

2. Future Plans

Project IMPACT in Public Libraries is in the final stages of data collection, which will end in April. Appropriate statistical analysis tools are being identified, with preference for open source solutions that will best fit the needs of public libraries desiring to assess impact of online training and input from the UNT Research and Statistics Services department. The immediate task for staff is to code the final delayed posttest data and compute the statistical significance of the quantitative data. Additional qualitative data will be coded from the focus group communications and survey questionnaire and process using commercial software, if a free online solution cannot be located.

Project IMPACT staff is developing a Flash CS3 Website to communicate findings, dispense online training evaluation templates and tools, and encourage shared learning for those considering and using online training. The Website will be available May, 2008. The Website will have a Flash introduction and be divided into five sections: About (Project Overview); Results (Brief description of findings); Documents (Presentations, Brochures, Reports; Toolkits); and Resources (Bibliography, Web Resources, Open Source Software). Examples of tools and resources that will be available from the Project IMPACT Website include:

- Detailed Project Findings
- Online Training Toolkit and Timeline for “Managing Difficult Patrons with Confidence Course”
- Self-efficacy and Knowledge Assessment Tools
- Online Training Evaluation Statistical Analysis and Return-on-Investment Tools
- Recommended Facilitation and Discussion Resources for “Managing Difficult Patrons with Confidence Course”
- Bibliography of Online Training Implementation and Evaluation Resources

Project Overview



The University of North Texas was awarded a research grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to study the impact of implementing Web-based training in public libraries. The grant provided funding for 400 scholarships for course participants in the *Managing Difficult Patrons with Confidence* LE@D continuing education course. Over 200 libraries from twenty-seven different states were represented.

Research Goals

The University of North Texas is studying the impact of implementing Web-based training in public libraries. The study will

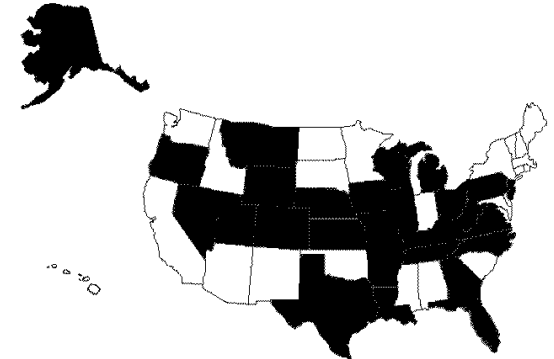
- Model practical, yet theoretically based, implementation practices and assessment measures of online training
- Inform library administrators of both implementation practices and measures of staff and organizational impacts of investment in staff e-training courses
- Contribute to the library literature on establishing best practices in delivery of computer-mediated courses for continuing education and training in public libraries; and
- Provide practical tools to calculate return on investment and outcomes for administrative support of e-training initiatives.

For additional information on continuing education and professional development courses available at the University of North Texas, please visit our LE@D website at:

www.leadonline.info

IMPACT
in Public Libraries

**A Joint IMLS & UNT LE@D
Research Project**



LE@D Contact Information

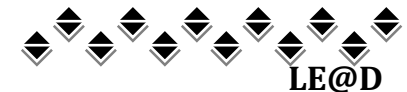
E-mail:
lead@unt.edu

Phone:
(940) 565-2502

Fax:
(940) 565-4990

Regular mail:
Lifelong Education @ Desktop
University of North Texas
Center for Teaching, Learning, and
Assessment
P.O. Box 310889
Denton, TX 76203-0889

IMPACT (Initiative to Measure Personnel
Assimilation of Computer-based Training)

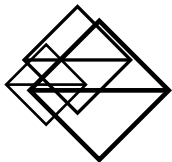


WHY RESEARCH E-TRAINING?

A recent study of primarily public libraries indicated that 70 percent of the library organizations surveyed plan to use e-training within the next three years. The need for increased work-related training and the use of distance learning to meet these demands has been evidenced in the increase in staff development programs for public libraries.

Even with the array of e-training initiatives, quality benchmarks have yet to be established for development and implementation of e-training courses for public library personnel.

Project IMPACT (Initiative to Measure Personnel Assimilation of Computer-mediated Training) *in Public Libraries* proposes to investigate the impact and return on investment of various levels of implementing Web-based training in public libraries. The short and long-term impact on knowledge, skills and abilities will be determined and performance measures will be proposed.



STUDY TIMELINE

Project IMPACT in Public Libraries is a one-year investigative evaluation and research project. The research study is being implemented in three phases.

- October-December 2007
Course Implementation & Initial Data Collection Phase
- January-March 2008
Delayed Posttest and Survey Phase
- March-May 2008
Final Data Analysis Phase
- June-August 2008
Dissemination of Results & Findings

The results of IMPACT in Public Libraries will inform public library administrators and training personnel of online training implementation strategies that optimize implementation costs in terms of specific outcomes.

Project IMPACT in Public Libraries

Phone (214) 717-4342



*This research study was been made possible by a generous grant from the **Institute of Museum and Library Services** and the **University of North Texas**.*

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

If you are interested in participating in future research studies, receiving LE@D newsletter updates, or receiving the results of *Project IMPACT in Public Libraries*, please complete the following form and drop it by the LE@D booth at PLA Midwinter.

- I am interested in participating in future research studies offered by LE@D.
- I am interested in receiving the LE@D e-mail newsletters and updates.
- I am interested in receiving the final report for *Project IMPACT in Public Libraries*.

Name: _____

E-mail Address: _____


Library Name: _____

City/State: _____

Zip code: _____

You may also send your request to IMPACT@unt.edu with "Participate" in subject line.

Appendix B

 Project IMPACT in Public Libraries
University of North Texas
Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
P.O. Box 310889
Denton, TX 76203-0889
March 31, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR PROJECT IMPACT PARTICIPANTS

SUBJECT: Final Survey and Delayed Posttest

I would like to thank you for participating in the Project IMPACT in Public Libraries web-based survey sent out this month. Response rate has been above 80%, which is exceptional. You provided complete data and informative comments about your online learning experience. Your assistance has provided very helpful information regarding online training of public library personnel. Project IMPACT staff will use your input to inform the online training community of ways to improve public library staff online training experiences.

You may read the results linked from the LE@D Web site once this final research phase is complete:
<http://www.leadonline.info/>

[INSERT APPROPRIATE INCENTIVE BASED UPON DELAYED POSTTEST SELECTION]

You generously selected to contribute your five dollar gift to a donation to *Reading Excellence and Discovery*,* a non-profit foundation committed to helping build reading skills of struggling, low-income students. Thank you for your investment in our youth. We also appreciate your willingness to engage in online learning and your commitment to professional development.

You selected to receive a \$5 cash gift. Please find the enclosed five-dollar bill, a small token of our appreciation for your willingness to engage in online learning and for your commitment to professional development.

You selected to participate in the drawing for the \$100 gift card. Your name has been entered in the random drawing that has one winner per twenty entries, and you will be contacted by e-mail by April 15th, 2008 if you are a winner. List of winners' initials will be posted online with the final project report. We appreciate your willingness to engage in online learning and your commitment to professional development. Wishing you the best of luck in the drawing.

You selected to receive a \$5 gift card. Please find the enclosed five dollar Starbuck's/Amazon card, a small token of our appreciation for your willingness to engage in online learning and for your commitment to professional development. Thank you for your time and valuable input!

Thank you for your time and valuable input!

Best regards,

Teresa Dalston, Project IMPACT Senior Researcher
P.O. Box 171
Little Elm, TX 75068
Ph: (214) 717-4342
teri@unt.edu or
teresa_dalston@yahoo.com

