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## Delivering Computer Training Programs for the Spanish Language Community

### Needs Assessment for your Spanish Language Computer Training Program

In general it's best for you to start the library's Spanish language computer training program modestly, offering a course on basic skills. As you expand the curriculum, however, you'll need to assess more precisely the technology needs of students. The following tools can help:

- **Surveys:** can help in your library's curriculum planning by assessing the preferences and ability levels of prospective students. You can ask community partners to help distribute the surveys.
- **Pretests:** can help an instructor gauge the computer knowledge of new students, and based on student performance, suggest the library courses most appropriate for their skill level. However, pretests may intimidate students and turn them off even before instruction begins. While potentially useful, they should be administered with caution as they can undermine an instructor's efforts to instill a sense of confidence in students.
- **Evaluations:** can help assess how well a course meets its objectives, determine how a course should be taught in the future, and inform curriculum planning. Remember though that students may be uncomfortable saying that they don't know how to do something. Evaluation questions should try to measure their ability to complete specific tasks (i.e. cut and paste, create a new folder).

### Finding Curriculum Resources

There is an annotated list of curriculum resources in your packet. The list includes links to instructional guides and lesson plans as well as online tutorials. Many of the resources were developed as part of the 2003 grant program for Spanish language outreach offered by the Colorado State Library and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Also included, are links to several lessons from the [ASPIRA Web site](#) which provides materials on Microsoft Office. ASPIRA is a national nonprofit organization devoted solely to the education and leadership development of Puerto Rican and other Latino youth.

A link is also provided to a [tutorial on HTML](#) from the REFORMA web site. REFORMA is a national association promoting library and information services to Latinos and other Spanish speakers.

The annotated list of curriculum resources is also available on WebJunction. It is continually updated. As you create your own curriculum resources, please add them to WebJunction for others to share.

### **Finding Qualified Instructors**

Finding qualified instructors for your classes is one of the most important and most challenging aspects of developing a program. First consider someone on staff, if that doesn't work, try talking to ESL teachers or program coordinators and local schools & leaders in the Spanish-speaking community. Look for:

- **Language Ability** – Ideally, the instructor should be a native Spanish speaker
- **Technology Skills** – The majority of classes focus on basic skills so trainers need to be comfortable with the basics and enthusiastic about sharing this knowledge.
- **An awareness of cultural difference** - For example, Hispanic/Latinos are more likely to behave in a formal way in a class setting and show the instructor a great deal of respect. They may be uneasy questioning the instructor or saying they don't understand
- **Knowledgeable of the local Spanish-speaking** – For example, If the majority of Spanish-speakers are from a certain country or area of Mexico, the instructor can use this information in citing examples.

### **Overcoming the Language Barrier**

While a native or fluent speaker is ideal, non-native or even non-fluent library staff members often end up teaching a Spanish language. The following are some ideas for bridging the language gap.

- Find a volunteer from the Spanish-speaking community to serve as a translator
- •Keep the class size small
- Make handouts that are very easy to follow. Des Plaines Library in Illinois uses step by step screen shots that are accompanied by directions in Spanish for class handouts.

### **Class Logistics**

**Scheduling:** Many libraries have found that consistent, regular, predictable course offerings often result in the highest attendance levels. Many have found evenings to be a popular time. Other have had success by using a rotating schedule of evenings, mornings, and Saturdays, as members of the Spanish-speaking community have widely varying work schedules.

**Course Information:** Consider making course information available in Spanish via your web site or phone line, in addition to print fliers.

**Enrollment:** Many libraries have found it helpful to forego formal registration and have adopted a first come, first served policy. As most students lead very busy and complicated lives, many can't attend class sessions regularly. The first come first served policy eliminates the admin time required to oversee enrollments and maintain a waiting list. Most libraries encourage students to come when they can and retake classes if needed.

**Transportation:** If your library is accessible by public transportation, include this info in marketing materials. If your library is not easily reached by public transportation, it may

be difficult for some students to attend class. Some libraries have partnered with community agencies to provide transportation.

**Babysitting:** Some libraries have found it very helpful to offer babysitting or children's programming at the same time as computer classes. Others provide children's activities in the classroom or design classes for children and adults.

### **Preparing for Class**

**Before class:** Set up computers by opening needed files and browser windows. Add needed Web sites to Favorites list.

**As class begins:** Anticipate some students may be late, spend time with introductions, and present info about the library and services first.

- Address factors of fear and embarrassment openly, create a positive and trusting environment, keep the mood light.
- In the first class, or in every class if turnover is great, demonstrate computer basics (holding a mouse, clicking, double clicking, minimizing and maximizing, using close buttons, etc.)

### **Throughout class:**

- Explain all computer terminology
- Provide handouts with clear directions in Spanish
- Empower students by giving them tasks they can complete. Try to use relevant examples and tasks.