

MPLA CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY, 2001 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Survey:

The *Mountain Plains Library Association Continuing Education/Training Survey*, comprised of 25 questions, was posted on the University of Virginia free survey site in November 2001. The survey was answered by 283 individuals.

Characteristics of the respondents:

- 42% were public librarians, 24% academic, 15% school, and 7% special.
- All but 12 respondents were from the MPLA region with the states of Kansas, Colorado, North Dakota, and South Dakota accounting for 55%.
- 45% were MPLA members.
- 80% were experienced librarians (more than 5 yrs. experience) with 44% falling in the experience range of 5-20 years.
- 78% have a masters degree in library science.

Continuing education experience during the previous 12 months:

- 95% attended at least one continuing education activity with 62% attending from one to five.
- The subject matter of the continuing education activities was varied with the majority of responses falling into one of three general categories:
Specific subject areas (archives, cat., ref, etc.) – 23%;
Mgt./Admn. – 16%;
Technology issues – 19%.
- About 20% of the respondents attended continuing education activities as part of a conference or consortium activity.
- Most activities were delivered in traditional formats—58% lecture and 30% hands-on. Online, teleconference, and videoconferences accounted for only 12%.
- 88% of the activities were either whole or partly funded by employers or grants.

Internet and teleconference Access:

- 99.6% have access to the Internet either at home or work.
- 39 % have access to satellite connections for delivery of teleconferences at work and 55 % have access within their community.

Why attend continuing education activities:

- Respondents pursue continuing education opportunities chiefly for personal growth or job satisfaction and to keep up with changes in the profession.

Factors important in attendance at continued education programs:

- topic, location and cost were the most important factors.
- Hands-on training was the preferred method of delivery; however, 192 individuals said that the method of delivery was dependant upon the topic.

- 47% said the ideal length of a workshop is dependant upon the topic.

How well are training and skills development needs being met by various entitles:

- A majority of respondents judged that their training and skills needs were being met very well by their employers, state libraries, state library associations, regional systems, and MPLA.

What role should MPLA have in fulfilling continuing education needs:

- The most important role for MPLA is to serve as a clearinghouse for Continuing Education opportunities in the MPLA region.

What topics are of most interest to the respondents:

- On a weighted basis, the single most popular broad subject of interest (out of 25 choices) for CE offerings is “collection development/management.”

Other:

- 37 comments/suggestions were offered to the committee.
- 58 individuals volunteered to provide continuing education opportunities.

OBSERVATIONS :

- Some of the survey questions did not translate well to the online environment and that made analysis of the results for those questions a challenge.
- Continuing Education activities are not utilizing the internet as much as they could. This is shown by only 5.47% of Continuing Education activities being delivered online while 99.65% of librarians have regular access to the internet either at work or at home.
- Teleconferences presently do not account for a large number of continuing education offerings; however, there is potential for an increase in this method of delivery as 39% of the respondents have access to satellite connections at their place of work and 55% have access in their community.
- MPLA clearly has a role to play in Continuing Education. According to respondents, MPLA should primarily act as a clearinghouse for Continuing Education opportunities in the MPLA region and secondarily share information (such as from this survey) and offer conference and pre-conference sessions.
- Surprisingly, the single most popular broad subject of interest (out of 25 choices) for Continuing Education offerings is “collection development/management.” There were more specific topics suggested in this area than in any other broad category.