

## ARTICLE

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# **Streamlining Support: Improving Outreach by Creating a Sustainable Events Framework**

# ABSTRACT

Outreach programming in academic libraries includes hosting and marketing library events. At the Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library at Yale University, events were previously executed ad-hoc and by only a few librarians. The Arts Library formed a programming team to streamline this work for greater efficiency, promote collaboration, and better serve their patrons. The group developed a framework for library events, including workflows and documentation guidelines. This article outlines the process of forming the group, establishing workflows and procedures, and takeaways from one academic year of implementation. We provide a top-level model for coordinating events systematically, highlighting Fall 2019 Reading Week as a case study for using the framework for live events. We additionally discuss adapting the model to fit remote and outside events during spring 2020. The authors conclude with a list of suggestions and considerations for librarians contemplating a similar approach for their events and programs.

# **KEYWORDS**

academic libraries, outreach, strategic planning, outreach programs, library events

Description of the summer of 2019: a programming team.

Starting the group and establishing programming workflows occurred primarily over the summer, and procedures were adjusted as events occurred in fall 2019. This article traces the entire first academic year of the programming team, but centers around in-person events within that timeline. The bulk of these events were scheduled before the COVID-19 pandemic which hit midway through the spring 2020 semester. The pandemic caused widespread closures, cancellation of all in-person events, and reduced resources (both staff time and budgets). In the spring and fall of 2020, however, the Arts Library hosted programs virtually, adapting as many others did in such extraordinary times. As a result, the procedures for library events have gone through many iterations, challenges, and changes since the team's formation. Because the workflows were established to be flexible and fit a range of scenarios, environments, and events, they were able to successfully evolve with new circumstances, collaborations, and goals. The authors hope that after sharing about the Arts Library programming team's experiences and discoveries, others can adapt these methods to fit any library size, budget, and programming style.

## Literature

In reviewing literature around the topic of a programming team, the authors quickly discovered the common issue of myriad definitions and inconsistent terms applied to outreach in academic libraries. Diaz's (2019) concept analysis broadly defines any initiative by library staff "to advance awareness, positive perceptions, and use of library services, spaces, collections, and issues" as outreach (191). Carter and Seaman (2011) note a divide pertaining to outreach, observing "two distinct, yet interconnected types of outreach activities: (1) services offered by libraries and (2) promotion of these services" (163). This discussion focuses on the first type, however it should be noted when reading

the following sections that the programming team itself uses "outreach" in alignment with the second type (promotion). Moreover, this discussion uses Eshbach's (2020) definition of programming in academic libraries "as a strategic, intentional series of meaningful, educationally purposeful out-of-classroom experiences designed to encourage and promote student academic and social engagement" (4).

Moving beyond definitions, the literature around collaboration in academic libraries largely highlights the positive results that come from fruitful partnerships. Many focus on building relationships with non-library partners (such as student groups, other departments, or external organizations), or offer case studies focusing on how a group executed specific collaborative events. No matter the context, there is often an emphasis on these efforts cultivating opportunities to share or optimize resources, reach common goals, build community, and enhance project outcomes. Atkinson (2018) notes that "collaboration can provide efficiency savings, streamline work processes, and free up staff time for more value added activities" (223), and further indicates the positive by-products for staff members, who "can learn from each other and develop a greater knowledge and understanding of services and responsibilities inside and outside their department" (224). These many benefits highlighted in the literature were noted among the incentives to form a new programming team early in the planning stages.

However these discussions also present the challenges of collaboration in the library context, such as resource scarcity. For instance, Saunders and Corning (2020) point out that "lack of resources, including budget and staff time can often get in the way of collaboration" (455). Collaborators must additionally navigate expectations in this shared work, especially when working outside of one's own department. Langley, Gray, and Vaughn (2006) warn that "it can be a major hurdle for the project's participants when different people and different departments have different styles of approaching work and getting work done" (6). In the context of outreach programming, thorough documentation

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throughout the process is also often emphasized; as Demeter and Holmes (2019) suggest, "whether working alone or as a programming group or committee, having those references for the future can make planning easier over time and can become a guide for future staff" (48). All these factors were weighed and considered as the framework for a collaborative programming team was formed, particularly when the team worked with those outside the group.

While strategies for fostering successful collaborations and overcoming these challenges are discussed throughout the broader literature, outreach programming case studies often note the collective work required but place stronger emphasis on the process and outcomes of event execution. In reviewing the second category, Bastone (2020) observed: "Many case studies of academic library outreach efforts focus on specific events or programs, but fail to explore how they contribute to a larger program" (25). Some case studies address the workflows in their library to aid in top-level, collaborative planning, such as Gillum and Williams's (2019, 239–240) "life cycle of library programming" or Mitola's (2018, 11–12) co-curricular outreach plan's proposal process. However the overall emphasis on the execution of specific events makes it difficult for those seeking nuts-and-bolts style advice when creating larger plans. Sharing more top-level models will help library staff find methods that work for their context, filling "the gap in the literature regarding how to create outreach programs that are efficient and effective" (Bastone 2020, 24). This discussion seeks to strike a balance between case study and toplevel framework, providing a scalable, sustainable model for collaborative programming and event execution.

# Background

The Arts Library is one of 15 distinct libraries within Yale University Library (YUL), housing approximately 125,000 print volumes onsite along with ALSC's rare and unique materials (with over 200,000 additional books and periodicals housed offsite). Digital resources are available to patrons through the Arts Library Digital Collections and subject-specific database subscriptions. The Arts Library supports students, faculty, and staff in the history of art department, and the professional schools of art, architecture, and drama, as well as Yale College undergraduates studying those same disciplines, through collecting and providing research services.

Though the Arts Library benefits from being part of a wider YUL support structure, outreach and programming initiatives are often developed locally to support a specialized user base. Arts Library programs proceed from this vision statement: Arts Library public events are a vehicle for outreach that builds community, reflects the diversity of the patrons we want to reach, and builds awareness of library collections by providing learning opportunities through showcasing library collections. With a total of five permanent librarians and ten additional library staff members, the Arts Library developed an internal programming team composed of both librarians and staff to foster a sustainable and collaborative approach.

*Laying the Foundation.* Two arts librarians were chosen to serve as co-leaders of the programming team in its first semester. Both librarians had experience leading the social media team and running programs for the library, including the annual Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon, Reading Week programming, an Art Book Fair panel event, and Transcribe-a-thons for Ensemble@Yale (a project to unlock Yale's theater history through crowdsourced transcription of theater programs). They used their combined experiences to form the charge, goals, and priorities for the group's first semester.

Additionally, in these early stages the co-leaders had a model of success to build from in the established social media team. The Arts Library social media team was a small working group composed of librarians and library services staff who shared the responsibility of developing content, posting, and monitoring social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). After the team's efforts for the September 2018–March 2019 period, average likes increased on Facebook and Instagram, and followers increased on each platform (+6% on Facebook, +12% on Twitter, and +42% on Instagram). Arts librarians hoped that working from the collaboration and careful planning implemented in the social media team model would yield a smoother, more cohesive approach to events and outreach.

*Creating the Charge*. The Director of the Arts Library asked the co-leaders to create a charge for the programming team composed of librarians and library staff. The final version states that the group is "charged with developing a sustainable approach to event programming based on the Arts Library programming vision statement. This will include coordinating, assisting, and publicizing Arts Library events and exhibits." The co-leaders also outline responsibilities for the group in the charge, which include specific duties focusing on themes to support Arts Library programming through organized and consistent event documentation, dedicated promotion plans (working with the social media team), and coordinated and collaborative event execution.

The programming team consists of a librarian team leader (in a one-year, renewable term), two additional librarians, up to three library staff members, and the Kress Fellow for Art Librarianship (an annual 10-month fellowship for a new professional). A call is issued in June of each year, and standing team members rotate off if there are new volunteers in any category (with July marking the beginning of a term). During the first year, the term began in July 2019 with the approval of the initial charge and the start of the fiscal year.

*Building the Team.* In order to build on existing practice, the librarians serving on the initial team included those who had conducted previous programming (the associate director for Access and Research Services and the associate director for ALSC) as well as the co-leaders. A call was issued through an email to the Arts Library staff listserv for additional members. Two library access services assistants volunteered. Two additional team members were added shortly after they were hired in the Arts Library that summer, including the 2019–20 Kress Fellow in Art Librarianship, and the senior administrative assistant. With the full team assembled, meetings began in early August 2019.

#### **Establishing Workflows**

The team was feeling the pressure of a fast-approaching fall semester, and met three times that August to establish workflows. Throughout this period the co-leaders proposed and refined workflows with the team. While the charge included exhibits, the team determined that ALSC exhibitions did not fit within the emerging workflow. There was already a documented process for exhibit production in place, so the team's role would be to lend support for events such as opening receptions (which would be treated like any other event in the workflow). The results of this collective work were four major components: the programming team calendar, a prescribed document filing system, an event workbook, and an event worksheet.

*Infrastructure of Organization: Calendar and Filing System*. Before the programming team's formation, there was no uniform approach to internally sharing events or recording event information. To keep team members and all library staff informed, the first task was to establish a new programming calendar for the Arts Library. After discussing the best approach using existing

library communication practices, the senior administrative assistant created a shareable Outlook calendar where team members could add programs. This calendar includes any events or exhibitions hosted by Arts Library staff, whether hosted in the library or other locations. As the calendar was being established, the team discussed how best to create internal documentation and workflows.

A new, standardized approach to storing collaboration files for Arts Library programming was the next step. Using Box, the primary file and document sharing platform used in the Arts Library, the team created a new space for programming files and consolidated existing files. Everything previously stored in the team's top-level folder in Box was moved to the "ARCHIVE Pre-AY2019" folder to create a fresh start. The new filing system facilitates better organization, efficiency, and transparency. Figure 1 depicts the final system for programming team file organization, naming conventions, and required contents. For the file and document naming conventions in the figure, the abbreviations mean:

- AY: Academic Year
- YY.MM.DD: Last two digits of the year, followed by month and day digits
- []: Represent less structured files or folders which are optional



Figure 1. Diagram of the Arts Library programming team's documentation folder structure.

While this granular filing approach can seem overly prescriptive, the collaborative aspect of the programming team model required conventions to help everyone effectively navigate each other's information, both for upcoming and past programs. This approach facilitates faster and easier access to the collective memory inherent to programming initiatives. Concurrently to creating these conventions, the team defined the roles of event runners and event supporters.

*Event Runners*. During the early months of the team's formation, there were many conversations related to defining expectations and roles for members. The co-leaders realized that some members had joined thinking the group was only in charge of generating new ideas, rather than providing support to both new and existing initiatives. The team was not expected to fill the calendar with events, but rather to focus on thoughtful events that serve the library's unique patron base. The team co-leaders shared the proposed events with the Arts Library director for final approval. The "event runner" model helped to create

clearer guidelines for event management. Any member of the programming team could volunteer to be an event runner, and lead an event from idea to post-event cool-down notes. It was the responsibility of each event runner to seek input or support from the programming team at any stage of the process, including event planning and day-of-event support. Event supporters were responsible for assisting event runners with planning and event support, such as distributing flyers and taking photos during the event. Event runners were responsible for filling out required information in the event workbook and worksheet as described in the following sections.

*Event Workbook*. The event workbook is the primary tool for event runners to plan their events, capture important information, and make notes. It provides a uniform approach to planning, while simultaneously aiding in event workflows and creating documentation along the way. These steps make recurring events easier, as team members can get started quickly rather than reinventing successful tactics.

The workbook is an Excel document with seven spreadsheets: Cover Page, Budget, Outreach Timeline, Event Prep Checklist, Event Timeline, Cool Down, and Formulas. Each spreadsheet serves a specific function, but using various Excel formulas optimizes interoperability through auto-generated or connected information between the sheets. This interconnected information makes Excel ideal for these pieces of the event planning process.



Figure 2. Cover Page tab of the Event Workbook spreadsheet.

The **Cover Page** tab (see Figure 2) prompts event runners to plug in top-level information about their event, including the event title, date and time, location, people providing support (from both the programming and social media teams), and a brief description. The cover page also pulls the final budget and attendance number from other sheets in the workbook, making it the fastest glimpse at the event. The **Budget** tab is a standardized table for event runners to plug in needed supplies, expected cost, and final cost once the supply order is complete. This helps with event workflows around budget approval and ordering, but also creates records of what was purchased and for what purpose, in case of repeat or similar events. Both of these tabs are the first requirements for any higher-level review that might need to occur in the early stages of planning. The team does not have a set annual budget, rather event budgets are approved case-by-case by library administration. The workbook helped to initiate a more formal process for budget approval and ordering.

В	С	D	E	F
	2 Months before	11/2	Planning	Draft all event copy using the Event Planning Worksheet before submitting YUCal request
	2 Months before	11/2	Planning	Prepare any event images for web use / flyer designs
	2 Months before	11/2	YUL	Submit YUL Calendar Request
	2 Months before	11/2	Email	Email staff event information with YUCalendar link when ready
	2 Months before	11/2	Social Media	Reach out to Social Media Team leader to add your event to their planning meeting agenda
	1 Month before	12/2	Social Media	Initial social media posts should happen (copy & images should be prepared for team to use)
	1 Month before	12/2	Physical	Work with admin assistant to get flyer on Loria lobby screen
	2 Weeks before	12/18	Physical	Hang any physical flyers
	2 Weeks before	12/18	Email	Save the date email to any target markets
	1 Week before	12/25	Physical	Make whiteboard sign advertising event and roll in front of entrance/exit
	1 Week before	12/25	Social Media	"Next week" social media reminders should go out (copy & images should be prepared for team
	1 Week before	12/25	OPAC / YUL	Ask partner accounts to share social media post (send link right after posted)
	1 Week before	12/25	Social Media	Good time to check in that there is a social media team member signed up for event
	1 Day before	12/31	Email	"Tomorrow" reminder emails to target market groups
	1 Day before	12/31	Email	"Tomorrow" reminder email to staff list
	1 Day before	12/31	OPAC / YUL	Ask partner accounts to share social media post (send link right after posted)
	1 Day before	12/31	Social Media	"Tomorrow" social media reminders should go out
	Day of	1/1	Social Media	Live event social media posts by coordinated social media team member

Figure 3. Outreach Timeline tab from the Event Workbook spreadsheet.

The **Outreach Timeline** tab (see Figure 3) provides a comprehensive list of every outreach task for an event runner to coordinate. It includes typical tasks, such as sharing the event to the shared calendar, getting the event on the institutional calendar, working with the social media team, and creating physical advertisements. The team worked together to come up with all typical tasks, and put them into categories based on ideal deadlines (3 months before, 2 months before, 1 month before, 2 weeks before, 1 week before, 1 day before, and day-of). The power of the outreach timeline tab comes from its autogenerated deadlines. Using the date plugged in to the cover page, formulas for each category create the ideal due date immediately. Event runners can then plug those tasks into their personal calendars to stay on track. The **Formulas** tab of the spreadsheet includes a list of these categorical formulas so that anyone can customize the list with additional tasks without needing Excel formula knowledge.

	A	В	С	D	E
1	This table	e is for tasks	that must be dor	ne in advance o	f the event
2	Done	▼ Who ▼	When 🔽	Due Date 💌	Task 💌
3	х	AOK	2 Weeks Before	12/18	EXAMPLE TASK (remember formulas on Cover Page)
4					Recommended: Make Noise Warning Sign & Send link to Sandy
5					Recommended: Make event sign-in sheet
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
	•	Cover Page	Budget Out	reach Timeline	Event Prep Checklist Event Timeline Cool Down

Figure 4. Event Prep Checklist tab from Event Workbook spreadsheet.

The Event Prep Checklist tab (see Figure 4) provides a simple table for a to-do list before the event day. This includes what each task is, who will perform it, when it is due, and when it is completed. This is most useful for collaborative events where more than one person is performing support tasks, as the event runner can quickly glance at the progress of event prep using this tab in the workbook. While this seems unnecessary if a solo event runner performs all the tasks, creating an event prep checklist provides clear steps to repeat the same event in the future. Similarly, the Event Timeline tab is a task list for the event day. This allows event runners to get more granular and focused, providing a column for estimated time it would take to complete each task to help them plan their day.

	А	В	C	1	D	E	F	G	н	1.1
1	This table	e is for tra	cking any cool down tasks (some recommended tasks are included)					-		
2	Done 💌	Who 💌	Task	Ŧ						
3			Thank you emails to staff who pitched in							
4			Record Assessment #s (attendees, etc) below							
5			Share event report with programming team (to be shared at all staff)							
6			Get all event images and file in Box							
7			Work with Social Media Team to make FB album (if applicable)							
8			Scan and file any physical items (sign-in sheets, etc)							
9			Add event to LibInsight							
10										
11										
12										
13										
14										
15										
16										
17										
18				_						
19	Highlight	indicates	required tasks							
20	ATTENDE	ES:								
21	0	Total At	endees (not including Co-Runners / Support)							
22	Types:	[Exampl	es - Faculty, Staff, Student, Public, Alumni]							
23										
24	COOL DO	WN NOT	S:							
25	Add your	notes he	re (just put them in the A cells)							
26										
27										
28										
29										
30										
31										
33	< <b>&gt;</b>	0	over Page   Budget   Outreach Timeline   Event	Pr€	ep Chec	klist	Event 1	Timeline	Coo	l Down

Figure 5. Cool Down tab in the Event Workbook spreadsheet.

The **Cool Down** tab (see Figure 5) captures final notes about the event, and provides a standard task list. This list includes sending thank you emails to anyone who helped with the event, sharing a brief event report with all Arts Library staff, filing images in Box, scanning and filing any physical items, and adding the event data to LibInsight (a tool to capture various library data and statistics). The sheet also requires entering the total number of attendees as well as demographic notes (students, faculty, staff, alumnus, and members of the public) when known. The final area of the sheet is designated for freeform cool down notes. Event runners are encouraged to record any lessons learned, successful strategies, or things they would try differently at future versions of the event.

*Event Worksheet*. While the event workbook is a powerful event planning tool, it does not serve all necessary functions for an event. Specifically, generating event text and promotional information is not ideal in Excel. Therefore, the second tool for any event runner is the event worksheet (see Figure 6). Event runners are required to fill out the "Who" and "Event Description" fields for the Yale University Calendar & Events page. The rest is optional, but areas are provided for social media and email copy, and freeform event planning notes that do not quite fit in the workbook.

# Event Title Weekday, Month Day, Year | 00:00-00:00 PM | Location Who Runner(s): Day-of Event Support: Social Media: **Event Description Event Planning Notes** [Free space for event planning notes / brainstorming / etc] Event Promo – Social Media Initial Post (Recommended 1 Month in advance) "Next Week" Social Media Reminders "Tomorrow" Social Media Reminders **Event Promo - Emails** Save the Date Emails [List title] [List title] "Tomorrow" Emails [List title] [List title]

Figure 6. Event Worksheet template.

The social media section is quite robust, prompting the event runner to preplan event advertisements for all platforms one month before the event, the week before the event, and the day before the event. The intent is to minimize social media team members' work, as well as ensure they present the event accurately. On the day of the event, a member of the social media team helps to share live updates using Instagram stories, without requiring event runner oversight.

Email planning is designed for any event runner who wants to reach out to specific faculty members, departments, or mailing lists to spread the word about the event. It provides space to draft the text, which is especially helpful when an event runner wants review by a colleague before sending, or when another team member is distributing the message. This section is not required, but many use this strategy for promotion.

*Documentation*. With so many workflows to keep track of, the team recognized that steps could easily be missed as everyone settled in to the new process. To help members stay on track, the programming team **Best Practices and Workflow document** was created. This documentation has sections for the programming team's vision statement and charge, event resources, workflow definitions, a top-level checklist for event runners, and best practices the group discovered along the way. The bulk of the documentation is under the "Workflows" section, which provides detailed notes on each step of the process should an event runner need a refresher. The "Event Runner Responsibilities" section provides a top-level checklist for event runners with an overview of the full process. The final workflow for the programming team defined in that section is:

- Create event folder in the proper AY folder in the "Arts Library Exhibits and Events Planning" folder in Box
- Create and work through the Event Workbook
- Create and work through the Event Worksheet
- Add the event to the programming team calendar on Outlook
- If ordering items, email the programming team leader and the senior administrative assistant once the budget tab of the workbook is completely done
- Continue working through the workbook/worksheet tasks as needed until the event
- Run the event
- Complete required tasks in the Cool Down tab of the workbook

While the workflow was tweaked and defined as the first few months of fall semester progressed, by the end of the semester, the team was ready to adapt these methods to run a multi-day, collaborative event series with multiple event runners under one umbrella.

# Case Study: Designing and Executing Fall 2019 Reading Week

Before Reading Week, event runners on the programming team ran other events that neatly fit into the workflow documented. These included a new Photobook Club series, Ensemble@Yale volunteer events, and an Art Book Fair panel. These events allowed the team to keep adjusting the workflow and templates along the way, developing a well-designed practice specific to the needs of event runners. However, the team had ambitions for a larger event series that did not fit the existing workflows quite as easily: fall 2019 Reading Week. The adaptability of the workflow, which was designed to be flexible to any event, was put to the test as the programming team set out to manage eight different events and execute passive programming over a one-week period.

*Background*. At Yale University, Reading Week is the period of study just before final exams. Classes do not meet, and students use the time to study and complete papers. The Arts Library had offered Reading Week events before fall 2019, but they were often planned by one person. In spring 2018, Reading Week programming expanded to become more work than an individual could take on. With the new team model, the original event runner and the team began discussing ideas earlier in the semester.

Early in the planning stage, the team co-leaders discussed an emphasis on creative activities as self-care, recognizing an Arts Library-specific opportunity to provide wellness activities through making. Lotts' (2015) pop-up making spaces were particularly helpful examples of short events that "give [patrons] the opportunity to take a break and let their hands do the thinking, while they learn about the possibilities of the library" (75). Other reading, exam, or finals period examples mentioned implementing creative play, many noting passive programs using play dough, coloring books, or other crafts (Hiebert and Theriault 2012; Flynn 2017; Kelly 2016). In reading Meyers-Martin and Borchard's (2015) study, the co-leaders felt reinforced in the observation that these creative activities could "have a positive impact on student health, wellness . . . and academic achievement" (521). Rather than emphasizing educational goals, these events sought to give back to the students and create a positive library environment.

As planning began, the team decided that some of the favorite programs would be repeated (a therapy dog visit, "Long Night Against Procrastination," the asynchronous craft/coloring station, and puzzles around the space), but the team wanted to experiment with other options. Over the course of fall

programming team meetings, members were encouraged to pitch ideas for new events. Enlisting multiple event leaders for the series gave agency to individuals running the events, divided the labor effectively, and unified the team and its vision. Ultimately, the team added offerings to the passive programming (new puzzles and architecture Lego sets), repeated two existing events, incorporated one outside event, and developed five new events run by a mix of six different librarians and staff members, including colleagues from outside of the programming team and the Arts Library.

*The Plan.* In total, the team promoted eight events for Reading Week, as well as the asynchronous activities around the library. Along with the aforementioned repeated Reading Week events, the Arts Library already hosted an outside group for weekly meditation sessions and decided to include it under the self-care theme (even though it was not put on by the programming team). The five new events included a zine workshop, making hand-pressed buttons, a paper-box workshop, an ask-an-archivist session (which included creating paper chairs using designs in the archives), and a finale event to create a finals self-care kit. The physical library space was also changed during this period with the addition of balloons, signs, and activities placed throughout the library.

To pull this off successfully, the workbook and worksheet had to be adapted to support multiple events under one umbrella. Rather than creating separate event workbooks for each individual session, the level of collaboration and joint task tracking for Fall 2019 Reading Week made a single workspace necessary. The team added a 'sub events' table to the cover page tab in the events workbook (see Figure 7), where each event runner added their event's title, day, time, location, and collaborators. The following sections outline the team's execution of the workflows, as well as outlines additional adjustments made for the event workbook and worksheet to be optimal for this multipronged event series.

Cover Page

т	itle READING WF	EK - MAI	N DATES			
Mo	nth 12	*For Month:	Use numbers only!		1	
1	Day 09					
Y	ear 2019	*For Year: Ty	pe the full year			
End D	ate 12/13/2019				1 1	
Locat	ion Multiple Locations	in Haas			1 1	
Runne	r(s) Tess - primary / Mr	aria & Allison /	Alex		1 1	
Supp	ort Programming team	1 - all hands or	n deck		1	
Social Me	dia Multiple people				1	
Brief Descript	ion See Worksheet - to	o many descri	iptions (not one-off e	event)	1	
Attenddee Co	unt 53					
Budget U	sed 514.31					
					1	
Sub Events					Attendees exclu	uding event runners
Day	Time	Runner(s)	Where	Title	Attendees	Other Notes
12/9/20	019 10:00 - 11:00 AM	Tess	By New Books	Gideon the Therapy Dog	n/a	Time is set
12/9/20	019 1:00-2:30 PM	Jessica	Great Hall	Ask an Archivist/Saaranin Chair Building	6	
12/10/2	019 7:00 - 10:45 PM	Allison	Classroom -119	Long Night Against Procrastination	7	Don't need coffee at the event. Students only watched first five minutes of animal videos. They were very focused!
12/10/2	019 12:00 - 2:00 PM	Alex	Great Hall	Make a Zine	4	Small attendance, but we got enough pages to make the mini-zines. Finished, pre-folded zines seem to go quickly from the desk! (A lot of students expressed excitement over them at the finale, where they were an item to take for self-care kits.)
12/11/20	019 12:00 - 1:00 PM	Non-Arts	Classroom -119	Meditation		Reoccuring - but add to posters
12/11/20	019 2:00 - 3:30 PM	Tess	Classroom -119	Button and Cookies	6	Students were less interested in cookies, then buttons. Low turnout, but those who participated stayed for awhile.
12/12/20	019 2:00 - 3:30 PM	Allison / Maria	Great Hall	Folded Paper Organizers	4	Wrapping paper works for making organizers. Purchased paper was too soft (difficult to fold). Book used: The Art of the Fold (in Haas Arts Lib collection).
12/13/2	01911:00-1:00 PM	Tess / Alex	Great Hall	Make A Self Care Kit	26	Super successful! Lots of interested students who decorated bags and expressed gratitude for the event taking place. Lots of people who are not in the arts but appreciated the creative self-care option. Ran our of notebooks, but had plenty of everything else. Stress balls were a big hit!
All W	eek All the time		By New Books / On library tables	Passive programs		Puzzles, coloring books, origami

Figure 7. Reading Week Event Workbook Cover Page tab.

*Budget & Ordering.* For the programming team's first semester, a variety of materials were ordered for both general programming use and fall 2019 Reading Week. Event runners submitted budget requests through the event worksheet.

The team leaders reviewed all requests and submitted a final budget to the senior administrative assistant. Reading week purchases included items for decorating the space (balloons, streamers, colorful paper for signs), new items for passive programming (puzzles and Lego kits), and craft supplies needed for each event (see Figures 8 and 9). Many of these purchases had surplus to what was needed for fall semester, and were ordered to be reused in spring (and beyond, for some items). Based on the needed supplies for all the events, the Reading Week budget was roughly \$500, with the expectation that the supplies would cover a full calendar year of Reading Week programming (with some supplies reusable the next calendar year as well).



Figure 8. Fall 2019 Reading Week decorations on display next to the craft/coloring station at the Arts Library.



Figure 9. Fall 2019 Reading Week advertisement with decorations at the Arts Library.

*Promotion.* Promotion for fall 2019 Reading Week events included social media posts, print flyers distributed in the building, an ad on the digital lobby screen, and emails to library colleagues, targeted student groups, and the Yale University communications team. However, the advertisement of Reading Week events was too complex for the existing outreach timeline tab in the Event Workbook or the Event Worksheet's sections. Instead, promotional tasks were added to the Event Prep Checklist tab, where it was faster for team members to filter for their initials and see all their assigned tasks at once. The tasks and auto-generated recommended deadlines from the original Outreach tab were consulted to make sure steps were not missed when moving them to the Event Prep Checklist tab.

Each event had its own, brief description for social media advertisements, but Fall 2019 Reading Week was advertised holistically everywhere else. New subsections were added to the Event Worksheet for event runners to write their social media text, while the co-chairs drafted overarching Reading Week text in the typical sections. Event flyers (see figure 10), physical advertisements, and initial social media advertisements highlighted the entire week with an accompanying description that provided an overview of events to come. The full schedule of events was shared with other units hosting Reading Week events in their spaces and were also incorporated into a YUL Reading Week poster. This promoted Arts Library programs broadly across the library system. The co-leaders of the programming team split promotion responsibilities for the event and had support executing them from the programming and social media teams as needed.



Figure 10. Flyer for the Fall 2019 Reading Week series.

*Event Prep.* As with the other sections of the workbook, the Event Timeline tab typically used for planning day-of tasks was transformed for fall 2019 Reading Week. Since this series of events had many event runners (some of whom were not programming team members), a printable checklist was requested. The new workbook tab broke down typical, top-level tasks required for each Reading Week event. Tasks were broken into the week before the event, the day before the event, the morning of the event, 30–60 minutes before the event, during the event, 30–60 minutes after the event, and before the conclusion of Reading Week. The nature of this time-specific list highlights the complexity of making sure each event was run consistently. Using the printable format made it easier for any event runner to follow steps and fit neatly into the programming team framework for event planning, note taking, and assessment. Event prep tasks for each event runner (or teams of event runners) included:

- Making custom noise warning signs using a premade template
- Confirming their event post was distributed on social media on time
- Updating the large, rolling whiteboard at the entrance with their event ad day-of
- Prepping the physical space (moving tables, gathering supplies, etc.)
- Recording attendees and taking photos during the event
- Cleaning up and returning all unused materials to storage properly after the event

• Performing typical assessment tasks (LibInsight logging and image filing) Ultimately, the co-leaders checked that all assessment and post-event tasks were performed in the week after the series concluded.

*Collaboration.* The programming team was built with a collaborative approach in mind, to maximize resources and staffing while working toward the shared vision for programming at the Arts Library. The event runner structure was helpful in delegating tasks and giving team members ownership of individual events during fall 2019 Reading Week, but coordinating so many event runners on one series required new levels of coordination between members. Asynchronous communication using the event workbook was crucial to successful execution between face-to-face programming team meetings.

Beyond collaboration within the team itself, Reading Week allowed for colleagues outside of the Arts Library to easily join the initiative by using the workflow established through the printable event checklist. A colleague from Yale's Manuscripts & Archives co-led the "Ask-an-Archivist" Reading Week event with an ALSC archivist (who was not a member of the programming team). Though the turnout of six patrons was not as high as they had hoped for this pilot event, the archivists commented on how it provided an opportunity to connect students with the collection materials in a new, fun way. For the co-leaders, it also served as an example of how the programming team workflows provided flexibility and could be useful to others outside of the Arts Library team.

*Event Assessment & Notes.* The final checklist includes making cool-down notes, recording the number of attendees, and gathering all event photos and documents in one location. Event runners were encouraged to document assessment notes immediately after the events to capture insights and reflections while they were fresh. As with other areas of the workbook, the Cool Down tab was transformed into a group checklist to make sure each task was performed for each event. Rather than trying to capture notes in that space, new sections were created in the Event Worksheet. The Finals Self-Care Kit event had a cool-down note that captured all angles of what someone in the future may need, providing qualitative assessment, event feedback, and notes for future supplies: "Super successful! Lots of interested students who decorated bags and expressed gratitude for the event taking place. Lots of people who are not in the arts but appreciated the creative self-care option. Ran out of notebooks, but had plenty of everything else. Stress balls were a big hit!"

Takeaways from Reading Week 2019. The programming team was excited and pleased with the impact of the newly formed events workflow during fall 2019 Reading Week. In total, there were 53 participants across seven events (excluding the outside meditation session). The Finals Self-Care Kit was the most well-attended, topping at 26 students. Students responded positively to the Reading Week decorations and events. One student asked a staff member, "Is this for us? We really appreciate it." The impact went beyond the Arts Library, as colleagues from across YUL took notice, commenting on the fun theme and variety of events.

After the first successful series run by the programming team, only a few minor changes were considered for future events. The group received feedback that signs placed around the library warning students about potential noise disruptions during the event times were discouraging rather than encouraging of participation. The team agreed to adjust the language of the signs and reduce the number placed around the library. Additionally, the budget workflow had to be tweaked and modified as the team hit challenges with vendor ordering and communication. Some event runners reported low turnout, but the main goal of fall 2019 Reading Week was for individuals to perform self-care activities. Since all attendees seemed positively engaged in and impacted by the events, the team did not see the low numbers as negative, but rather as opportunities for growth in the future.

### Adapting the Workflow

The Arts Library programming team workflow and documentation was developed for in-person library events and programs. In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to library closures and budget reductions. Library staff

were tasked to quickly adapt nearly all services to the online environment. This was a significant change to how services were provided, including outreach. During this period, the programming workflow was put to the test, then adapted and modified to fit many different scenarios—including online events and committee programs.

*Remote Events.* Placing in-person events on hold during spring 2020 provided a unique opportunity to rethink how the Arts Library and YUL events were planned and developed. Initially, arts librarians canceled previously scheduled in-person events and started brainstorming: how can we provide meaningful event programming in the remote environment? Looking again at the programming team documentation and workflow, it was clear that the framework could be adapted and used, regardless of the event location.

*Pivoting: Spring 2020 Reading Week.* Before the pandemic, Reading Week planning was primarily done at the local library level. While cross-promotion and some event overlap did occur with other YUL libraries, the majority of the planning and programming was executed by the individual units. As the Arts Library looked to execute spring 2020 Reading Week during the pandemic, a new opportunity arose: could libraries across YUL collaborate on an online Reading Week program without the typical limitations of physical spaces?

With that goal in mind, a small group was formed to plan a remote event series. Using the workflow, workbook, and worksheet developed by the Arts

*II* While pivoting programming from entirely in-person to virtual proved challenging in many respects, the foundation and structure built by the initial iteration of the programming team made the process smoother. *II*  Library programming team, a group of five librarians representing four YUL libraries developed a remote Reading Week program that included a LibGuide with study tips and asynchronous programming, as well as a series of synchronous virtual events that included virtual therapy dog events, virtual crafts, and virtual game nights. The group agreed on some adjustments to workflow by removing items from the Outreach tab and Event Prep Checklist tab specific to in-person events. The Budget

tab and tasks specific to physical promotion (creating flyers, hanging flyers across campus, etc.) were removed from the workflow. Using the workbook and worksheet, planning and delegating tasks worked seamlessly. This was the first time a collaborative approach to Reading Week occurred across the library units., and having the workflow already in place made the process easier and more efficient. With each event runner recording cool-down and assessment notes, the group generated useful data to assist with future Reading Week planning and collaboration.

Beyond the Arts Library. Following a successful attempt to reimagine and modify the existing programming team workflow during the remote Reading Week, additional opportunities to take advantage of this framework arose when planning for other remote events, including YUL committee events. The Reference, Instruction, and Outreach Committee (RIO) facilitates training and events for YUL librarians to share their work and learn from each other. When planning for virtual programming, one of the arts librarians who serves on the committee proposed an "Events Working Group" building on the success from the programming team structure. Using the basic Event Workbook and Event Worksheet once again, the framework was adapted to fit the needs of the committee and facilitate event planning, documentation, and reporting. Adapting this model to the RIO committee proved that the framework could exist without the programming team structure. While pivoting programming from entirely in-person to virtual proved challenging in many respects, the foundation and structure built by the initial iteration of the programming team made the process smoother. The framework has proven to be flexible, adaptable, and useful regardless of event limitations, context, or locations.

# **Takeaways & Conclusion**

The development of the programming team and workflow proved to be the successful and sustainable approach to programming that Arts Library staff hoped for. While the programming team did not have precedent for how to execute their vision beyond the social media team's model, a path was forged through feedback, a team mentality, and open dialogue. Getting consensus from the team in each stage of development created the optimal workflow for the Arts Library that proved adaptable beyond that context. Moreover, opening monthly meetings with check-ins helped refine group strategies and goals as the teams' first academic year progressed.

The tools created by the team maximized efforts and resources whether running solo or collaborative events. The outreach timeline saved event runners from scrambling to remember who to contact or where to share event details (which was previously challenging). Consistent filing for all event documentation proved to be the most helpful component of the programming team, specifically for recurring events and future planning.

When adapting a similar framework to another library, the authors suggest a few broad considerations:

- **Resources:** Evaluate all resources you have for programming. This includes time, people, and financial considerations.
- Audience: Who are you trying to reach with your programming? Knowing your audience is critical to developing programs that are successful, sustainable, and beneficial.
- **Goals of your library:** What are you trying to achieve with your programming? Does your planned programming align with your specific goals?

Once those foundations are laid, creating a workflow that directs resources to efficiently meet those goals and help that audience should have some common guiding questions:

- How can you create support? If you have more than one person who is able to form a team, how can you create a mutually supportive environment? If you are often a solo event runner, is there support you are lacking that you can find ways to resource?
- What information is important to record for the future? If you were to run this event again, what information would you need and how can you record it along the way? If you wanted to share highlights of the event, would you be able to do so using this workflow?
- Where can you create standard checklists? Are there components of running events that rarely change? What should every event runner do after an event? Is outreach something you can create a common timeline for?
- How can you maximize collective memory? What style of documentation is going to be the most clear and useful for you and others? Who should contribute to capture important information and data?

The success of the programming team at the Arts Library is largely owing to having a group of supportive colleagues who are able to openly communicate as they work toward a common goal. The impetus for the team model was a need for consistency and event support, both of which were achieved through

the development of team practices throughout the first academic year. No one could foresee the necessary changes that would come with the global pandemic in spring 2020, but the important groundwork laid by the team weathered those challenges and proved the versatility of a carefully constructed, team-oriented workflow.

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