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Team Teaching, Humor, and Informal Polling Techniques in NECDMC - Based Research Data Management Workshops at Brandeis University

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Team Teaching, Humor, and Informal Polling Techniques in NECDMC - Based Research Data Management Workshops at Brandeis University

Melanie Radik, Gina Bastone, Raphael Fennimore, and Brian Haungs

Introduction
Spring semester 2015, Brandeis Library & Technology Services Research and Instruction unit launched research data management workshops based on the NECDMC curriculum. The workshop lesson plan was very structured and closely modeled the NECDMC modules. The one-hour workshop was expected to consist of three sections:

- Co-presented material in unscripted lecture format
- NECDMC module's hands-on exercises

In no workshop did we get to the hands-on exercise. This was due to the attendee's confusion over lecture material and their questions on topics outside the scope of the workshop. We determined our descriptions of the workshop didn't best convey the topics covered, and our emphasis on theory and best practices left listeners confused as to how the information applied to their own research.

Team Teaching
One pedagogical technique we pursued was inviting instructors from another discipline to lead workshops with us. We partnered with colleagues from the Technology Help Desk and Data Support sections from IT: The Desktop Systems Specialist from the Hardware Repair Shop and the Help Desk Interns. Their strengths in the areas of storage, backup, and security solutions were especially relevant.

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Humor
Humor as a pedagogical tool is a tricky business, as it is quite possible to do more harm than good. Between the subjective nature of humor, the fast-forwarding of pop culture references, and the jargon-like qualities of subject-specific humor, using humor to enhance student learning is difficult.

After consulting the literature, we decided to employ a mix of humorous anecdotes about data management disasters (with the user in question thoroughly anonymized), and cartoon-like comics when possible and appropriate within the slides themselves. Comics from the webcomic XKCD were especially popular, after determining that even without prior familiarity, the message conveyed about the data management errors was clear and amusing.

Legal and Ethical Considerations
There May Be a Law About That
Legal and ethical considerations were also sparingly employed, after determining that even without prior familiarity, the message conveyed about the data management errors was clear and amusing.

Sharing and Preserving
The Future of Your Data

Who Owns Data?
Works Consulted

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