

Delivering Specialized STEM Programming via Makerspace Activities and Local Partnerships



Ron Solórzano, MLIS | City Librarian, Ventura County Library System | Ron.Solorzano@ventura.org

Science Carnival

In October of 2014, the library was approached about volunteering at the CSU Channel Islands Science Carnival. Two of our staff attended, helping kids construct dancing art robots—an activity we later replicated at the library. This was our first major collaboration of this kind with CSUCI and resulted in a lasting partnership.



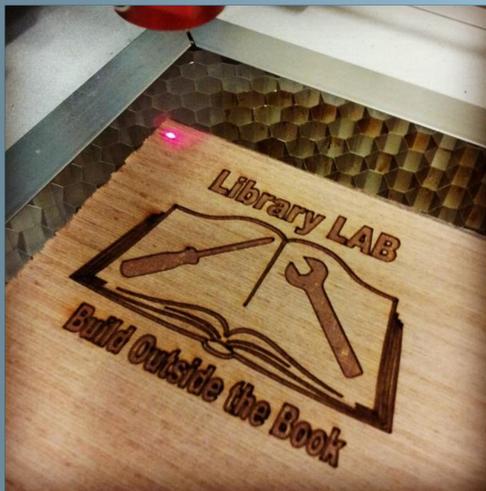
Classroom Outreach

As part of a grant-funded initiative, our staff designed a classroom activity about circuits that featured a 3D printing demonstration. We used the opportunity to promote the then-new library makerspace: the Library LAB. The printer we used was provided by our contact from CSU Channel Islands, who also consulted on course content.



Open Workshops

With the help of a volunteer who works with a local for-profit makerspace—MAKE Ventura—E.P. Foster Library was able to launch a weekly open workshop session. Customers were able to come by to learn about or use our new equipment. Workshops were typically staffed by one library employee, and sometimes two.



Makeshop Classes

Using the remainder of our small grant, we purchased supplies for three hands-on STEM activities featuring chemistry, electronics, and art. Costs per participant were between \$0.50 and \$7.00, and the classes were run by one library employee and one student worker. The total cost for supplies was just over \$600.00.



MAKESHOP ATTENDANCE



OPEN WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE



Attendance Trends

While our early Makeshop classes did not reach capacity, they were popular from the start and rose in popularity as time progressed. Average attendance was about 29 customers—enough to justify a second series of classes. Open workshop attendance has been fairly steady, with an average of about six customers per week.

Community Outreach

As word of mouth spread, the library began offering on- and off-site workshops that targeted not just customers, but teachers interested in building similar STEM- and makerspace-themed initiatives. We've partnered with the Ventura County Office of Education to deliver additional workshops on this topic.

