

## Information Literacy Lesson Observation

The city library of Boca Raton in Southeast Florida offers a long list of training opportunities in different topics. Every week, the library provides technical training on the use of computers, software, and social media. For this assessment, I attended a Facebook class on May 13. This was the first in a series of two classes that included *Facebook 101* and *Facebook: Leveling Up!* The goal of *Facebook 101* class was to show the basic activities that can be done by focusing strongly on the navigation, the home page, and the profile area on a Facebook personal page.

As indicated by the City Data website, Boca Raton is an affluent city whose resident median age is 50.5, close to 20% above the Florida median age with an estimated median household income of \$68,804, more than 30% above the median in Florida (according to 2016 data). Interestingly, the population is distributed as 48.4% males vs. 51.6% females, a more than 3% difference, which is aligned with the fact that it is a city with a large senior population.

The Boca Raton city library has two branches. The class attended was offered in its downtown branch. This is a beautiful, recently constructed building (2013) with ample spaces, plenty of light, and comfortable areas.

The class required registration that could be done in person or via the Library's website. It took place in a small meeting room, not intended for more than 8 people, well-lit, comfortable and with easy access to electricity and WiFi. The size of the classroom helped the audience feel at ease and made it appropriate for more of a coaching session than a lecture. The room didn't have computers, though, only a screen where the training was projected. Which

meant that it required students to bring their own devices if they wanted to have hands-on practice.

The class was set up for 1:30pm until 3:00pm, which clearly shows it wasn't targeting working individuals. As a result, the people attending were 2 seniors -both women- and one young male adult. As a matter of fact, these classes, like the facebook one, are offered mostly before 3:00pm at this particular library. It is also evident that these classes are intended for seniors since they employ a consultant, hands-on type of training that serves well the elderly (Huber, 2014)

The teacher arrived on time, although there were some difficulties to connect her computer with WiFi -neither of the students had this issue-. For this reason the class had to start almost 10 minutes late. However, the instructor was very calm and polite. She apologized for the delay and definitely did her best to solve the situation -with the help of the inhouse technician- as quickly as possible.

She started with a powerpoint presentation giving a broad view of the online social world, the origin of facebook, and its initial concept. Later, she dwelled on the concept of marketing and how, as Facebook is a free service, it is using customers' information to obtain revenue as well as becoming a revenue generator for other individuals and businesses. I noticed that this concept was hard to grasp for the two senior ladies in the class. Especially for one of them in particular. It is important to clarify that the seniors present at this class were very different in their levels of knowledge and comfort with technology. What I'd refer to as senior #1 appeared more savvy and could handle technology concepts with relative ease. She didn't seem frightened or anxious. Conversely, the other one -senior #2- was anxious and confused. They

both have used Facebook but, while one of them was trying to learn better ways to use it, the other simply wanted to talk to friends and make sure they'd see her posts, which, according to her, she hadn't been able to do. The young individual in the class, didn't bring any device and was quiet the whole class, which made the teacher mainly focus on the need of the two ladies.

As I said above, the class started with a broad view of social media and then the instructor jumped directly into Facebook. Here the tech issues appeared again. For some reason she couldn't connect with her Facebook page so she had to use a different laptop that someone brought. It has to be said, that the instructor had a great control over the class, even in this moment of difficulty. She managed to keep talking and engage with the students all the same while solving the problem. Once that was resolved, everything flowed smoothly afterwards.

At the beginning of the class the instructor shared handouts that were detailed and well-illustrated indicating the things that were going to be taught during the class. She even included screenshots of Facebook pages in iPhones and Android. Although the class was performed mainly on a computer, she made sure the patrons would understand the differences if they were happened to use a small mobile device.

Despite the technical issues, I'd give this trainer good points in preparation. Her handouts were thorough and clear. Nonetheless, if I had to comment on them -considering the target population is mostly seniors- I'd suggest to add some more instructions in bulleted steps not only colors and numbers (see attached scannings). She included them in the material for the next class but not for the 101, for which I'd say it was more relevant. The supporting materials were well written for an audience that already knows the terminology and most of the procedures. In my opinion, instead of preparing a handout on the agenda of the class, I'd suggest

to provide clear bulleted instructions for the procedures that were going to be taught. I'm convinced that senior #1 could handle the current handout easily, but for senior #2 instructions as step by step guidance might be what she needed.

It was a struggle trying to keep the class useful for such a difference in the understanding levels of both seniors. Senior #2 was - sometimes - disruptive during the class. She talked a lot and was so focused in trying to understand strictly what she wanted that interrupted frequently the class when it was about something slightly different. For that matter, I also give high points to the instructor for two main things. One, is for her patience. She was very calm and understanding with senior 2. The other one was her focus. Despite the interruptions, she kept her friendly approach but she didn't let the interruptions divert her lesson too much, either. She was kind and firm at the same time. In short, she had a good handle of the entire classroom. Without sacrificing her plan, she managed to be flexible to a certain extent to accommodate to the needs of her audience.

As for the teaching style, the instructor had it modulated along the whole class period. At the beginning, while she was talking about social media, it was more a lecture type approach. This was employed for about 15-20 minutes. It was long enough to provide information but not too long to bore the audience. The instructor was efficient in keeping the audience engaged during this lecture type setting. After that, she switched to specific details on Facebook and hands-on examples in a more participatory approach. First she showed her page and did some posts, as well as replied others, upload pictures, and performed searches. All these by asking questions on how to do it, what else can be done, and what would they want to do.

There was one aspect that got my attention. The teacher wanted them to know the importance of coming back to their facebook home page to perform certain tasks. She associated going home with Dorothy (from the Wizard of Oz) While teaching, if she wanted to go back to her Facebook home she kept repeating What would Dorothy want to do? And clicked her heels. It was a simple mnemonic trick, but it made it easy for the audience to remember to click home to be able to do certain activities. I particularly think that it was a good trick for seniors. It was something that they could relate easily.

After that, she guided the class to figure out on their devices how to do the same tasks. Because of the technical difficulties at the beginning and the disruptions during the class, the last part of the training ran a little shorter than expected. Nonetheless, I perceived that the 2 seniors left the session happy and satisfied. Their confidence increased. Unfortunately, I couldn't get any input from the young man since he left quickly after the class was dismissed. Additionally, the trainer offered more help if anyone wanted to contact her directly. Her friendly demeanor was obvious for everybody and made them feel comfortable. The instructor also showed, in a simple manner, that Facebook is much more than simply posting. According to Huber, "older adults may be unaware of features that actually could be useful. Indeed, older users may feel that they have mastered a certain device when, in fact, they are barely a naïve user" (Huber, 23) I think she tried to demonstrate the complexity of Facebook in a uncomplicated manner.

Summarizing, the class attended offered the audience, mainly seniors, guidance not only during the presentation but with the handouts provided. It was also helpful to show, through the supporting materials, how the same Facebook page may look different on a desktop, or a mobile device. The trainer made a good effort in conveying the idea that browsers and devices offer

different views. She also emphasized that, sometimes, companies like Facebook change part of their layout and functionality. For that matter, she insisted in making the audience understand the basic functionality structure to be prepared for future modifications.

At the beginning of the class, the teacher asked why the attendees were in the class and what they were looking for. For the answers received I'd suggest that the first part of the session could be suppressed. Ahmad (2013) indicates that it is better to keep focus on few activities at the time when teaching the elderly. If the audience is basically seniors that are looking only to connect with friends using facebook, discussing the universe of social media and marketing may not bring any particular benefit to the audience. On the contrary, may be confusing and overwhelming. I'd cut that part out and make sure the time for hands-on experience is longer.

In conclusion, the class observed was well prepared and designed to target seniors, although could improve in simplifying the scope and in providing more step by step details in the handouts for specific procedures.

Supporting materials



### Boca Raton Public Library

Facebook resources in the library:

1. [Lynda.com](http://www.lynda.com) – search for Facebook  
[www.bocalibrary.org](http://www.bocalibrary.org) → Digital Libraries → Research Online → scroll down to Lynda.com → enter your library card number → create a new account, search: Facebook (on the left select beginner or intermediate)
2. Universal class – Facebook class  
[www.bocalibrary.org](http://www.bocalibrary.org) → Digital Libraries → Research Online → scroll down to universal class → enter your library card number → course catalog – search: Social Media 101; then open an account (there is one social media class which includes Facebook)

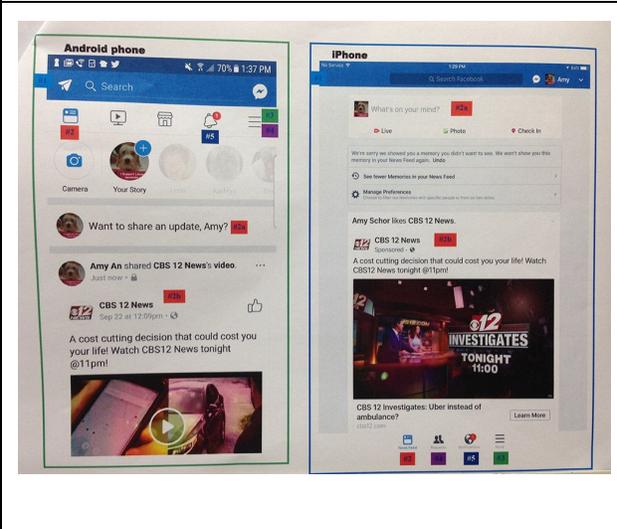
Facebook resources online:

- <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/facebook101/> - GCF Learn Free – an excellent resource!
- <https://www.facebook.com/help/> - Facebook help, many topics and answers
- <https://blog.mozilla.org/internetcitizen/2017/01/25/facebook-privacy-tips/>

### Facebook 101

1. Navigation bar
  - a. Blue bar
  - b. columns below the blue bar (single column in phones)
2. Home (aka Newsfeed)
  - a. Publisher/status update to write a post
    - i. Audience selector
    - ii. Post
  - b. Read posts
    - i. What are we looking at?! Like a TV news scroll, it does not delete.
    - ii. Reactions! to a post, comment, or share a post
    - iii. Like or Reply to a comment
3. Your name (aka Profile)
  - a. Manage your profile – change and add information about yourself
  - b. Change your profile and cover photos
  - c. See the things YOU posted
4. Friends (the words: Find Friends OR the icon of 2 people)
  - a. Finding friends
  - b. Requesting friends/responding to friend requests
  - c. tagging
5. Notifications – start here!
6. Log out

Q:\Instructional Services\Staff Folders\AnAmy\classes\02 facebook\facebook resources handout.docx



## References

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<http://www.city-data.com/city/Boca-Raton-Florida.html>

Huber, L., & Watson, C. (2014). Technology: Education and Training Needs of Older Adults.

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[p,cookie,url,uid&db=eric&AN=EJ1025349&site=eds-live&scope=site](http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.fau.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,url,uid&db=eric&AN=EJ1025349&site=eds-live&scope=site)

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