Never say Never: Adventures in non-course-related library workshops for graduate students or, An Emotional Journey in Six Parts

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Identifying an Opportunity
Since Fall 2015, SUNY Delhi has offered an online Master of Science degree in Nursing Education (MSN). Course-related library instruction is embedded in one MSN course, and after the first three semesters, a common theme emerged from the student feedback:

“This library session was extremely useful, but I really wish I’d had it earlier in the program!”

Surprise Success
Despite my reservations, I was pleasantly surprised as students began signing up for these sessions, both before and after the official start of classes.

| 5 sessions | 14 students | 10 requests for recordings |

I was willing to concede that this model could work well for this particular student population.

A Sense of Skepticism
This feedback was shared with faculty, but with 7-week intensive sessions, they could see no way to fit library instruction into courses that had already been designed and offered. Although the library’s informal policy is to avoid requests for non-course-related library workshops, I reluctantly agreed to give it a try for these graduate students.

Disappointment
The initial surge of interest disappeared for the subsequent times I tried to offer these workshops. I made adjustments each time, such as:

- offering a greater number of shorter appointment slots
- offering a mix of synchronous sessions and appointments
- using a scheduling tool for maximum flexibility

With each variation, only one student met with me, and the analytics on the workshop recordings show very few views.

Cautious Optimism
My skepticism was tempered by the "flipped classroom" model the faculty suggested for sustainability:

Synchronous sessions on distinct topics with content designed to be recorded

Next time, students watch recordings & sign up for shorter hands-on portion

Looking Ahead

- **Expanded possibilities for 1:1 consultations.** Graduate students may not have shown much interest, but undergraduates love it.
- **Further needs assessment for MSN students.** Evaluations continue to show demand for earlier/supplemental library instruction.
- **Badging and/or incentives.** Nursing faculty have asked me to explore a badging system for these workshops.

The "stages" of my emotional journey with this project are represented by selections from *Scènes de la Vie Privée et Publique des Animaux*, illustrated by J.J. Grandville. All images are in the public domain.