[Art Lab: Japanese Bookbinding](#)

[Allen County Public Library](#)

Young Adult

Art Lab: Japanese Bookbinding

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[$1-50](#)

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Byline

Jessica Tartaglia, Teen Specialist, Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Art Lab is a recurring program focusing on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math), with a focus on art. It is held at 7 p.m. every Monday. The first and third Mondays of the month are planned lessons, and the second and fourth Mondays are open draw sessions for students to relax and meet other artists.

The information below focuses on our first Art Lab lesson: Japanese Bookbinding, in which the students made their own sketchbooks to take home.

Advanced Planning

This lesson required a knowledge of bookbinding and hand sewing. I began planning two months in advance so it could be added to the ACPL calendar of events. (I also needed enough time to order a purchase request from our finance department.)

May was the first month in which Art Lab was held. I chose Japanese bookbinding to kickstart the program in the hope that students would make their books and then bring them back for the next week of Art Lab, which was an open draw. The goal was to get students involved in the group, become acquainted with other students, and build an interest in the program that kept them coming back each week.

Bookbinding was an advanced art lesson and gave me an idea of what artistic skill level our students were at. The only real challenges we faced were time management and keeping all students at the same step in the binding process. Otherwise, it was a success.

Marketing

ACPL has an event calendar available to the public as well as a printed magazine called "What's Happening" that lists upcoming events featured at all of the library's locations. Internally, we are asked to have our program information submitted to the event calendar two months in advance to make it into the publication. From there, our fantastic graphic designer creates what is requested.

In my case, I asked for four large posters and about 200 small fliers. I believe it was successful marketing because parents and students called to register for the class in advance. As soon as fliers were available, we had people inquiring about Art Lab.

Budgeting

Money was spent on essential bookbinding materials. I purchased multimedia paper, card stock for the covers, binding needles, binder's thread, an awl and large origami paper with traditional Japanese prints. We also offer snacks to students, so that is a portion of the budget as well.

Day-of-event Activity

Set-up for the program did require a bit of time, but not so much that it wasn't worth the effort. It entailed making a sample sketchbook and troubleshooting the lesson; cutting paper to the correct measurements to save time; handling the purchasing and marketing detailed above; and printing out a [lesson guide](#) for students to follow. With a background in art education, I like to type up a short lesson plan to help me manage my time and stay on course.

Program Execution

The program went well. We had five students attend, which was a small group, but it was also the beginning of a new program being held on a Monday night. Students left feeling satisfied, and all left with a completed sketchbook. None, however, returned with their sketchbook for the next week of open draw, although they did attend other Art Lab programming.

Other than that, the goals I had set for the group were achieved. Many patrons who had missed the first session later inquired about Art Lab and about the bookbinding program. It was a great way to start Art Lab.

Later Art Lab lessons have incorporated the STEM topics of science, technology, engineering and math. For example, in our [Electric Painting lesson](#), students painted images with conductive paint to correlate with MP3 tracks downloaded to a Bare Conductive Touch Board. The final product was an installation that other patrons could interact with. We've also done projects like solar silhouette jars and scanner art.

The goal of Art Lab is to facilitate an environment in which students create art that includes STEM or other core disciplines, such as literacy, in the process or final product. My background is in art education, and I believe in the importance of core disciplinary subjects and the arts being integrated as a means of inclusive learning.

Advice

I would advise instructors to set measurements and have the paper cut ahead of time. I was only allotted an hour so having materials prepared was a huge help in moving the program along. Having separate guides printed for the students would help as well.

Supporting Materials

[Download this Program as a PDF](#)

- Feedback (Coming Soon!)
- [Programming Librarian Facebook Group](#)

Slideshow Images

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Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational