

POP UP CLINICS

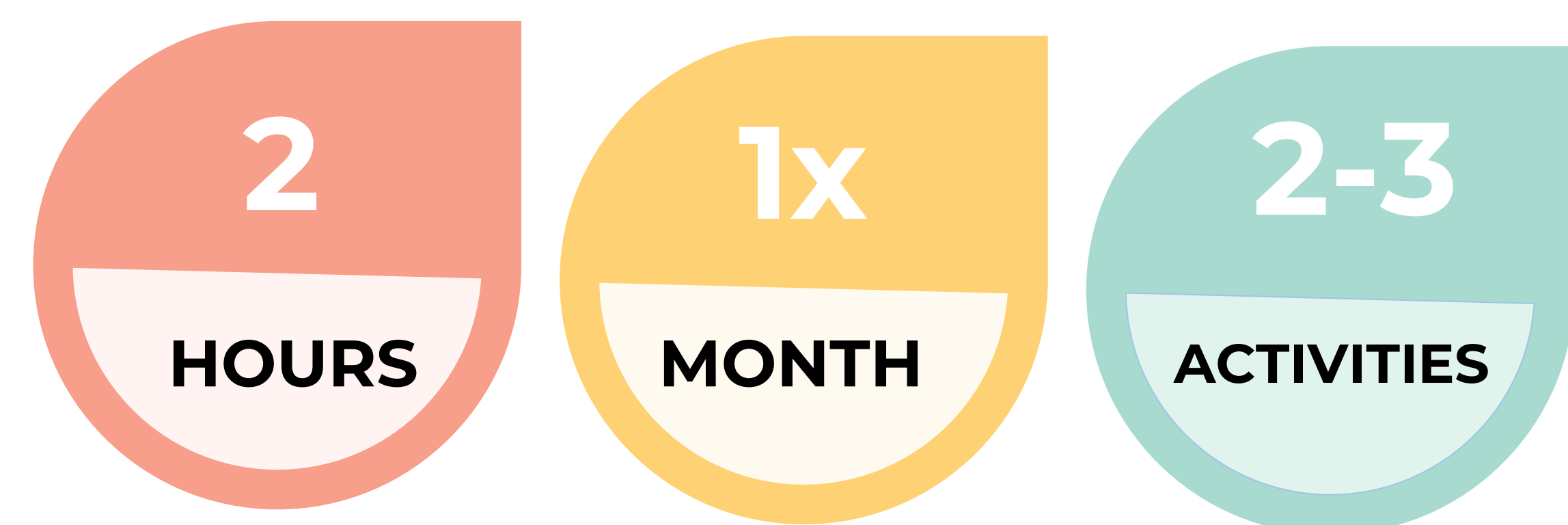
Monthly hands-on science, art, wellness, and tech events at the Cabot Science Library Discovery Bar for making and learning.

By Joanna Huang, Learning Technology Specialist for Sciences, Cabot Science Library

ABOUT

Pop-up clinics began as an effort to cultivate a culture of learning, making, play, discovery and experimentation in the Harvard community. Through tinkering and creative expression, participants are actively engaging with physical materials, ideas, and share with each other. These learning experiences help foster a sense of joy and ownership of their creations. Participants often drop by to take a break and leave with a tangible keepsake and learning takeaways. Partnerships started in Fall 2018 with other Harvard libraries (Botany, Ernst Mayr, Wolbach, Countway, and Loeb Music Library) to connect and highlight library-specific collections and services.

FORMAT



Pop-up Clinics occur *once a month* during the academic year in 2 hours blocks. They are exciting and compelling events that invite passerbys to drop by, discover, and participate in a variety of active and creative microlearning activities. Between 10-50 people show up at each clinic. Pop Up clinics make a passerby take notice and even interrupt their routine to explore an offering or experience. Learners are self-directed and have a choice in how long to stay, and how they interact and engage with activities. All materials and supplies are provided. Other libraries also bring some items from their collections to showcase.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



- **Active** - The goal is for people to make, create, and feel. Activities need to be hands-on and engaging.
- **Timely** - The right time and the right amount of time matters. Pop up clinics usually have themes and are scheduled during relevant and appropriate times of the year such as around holidays or seasons. Activities are also short to accomodate multiple cycles of people and should not take longer than 70 minutes or else participants will disengage.
- **Playful** - Activities are often designed to be immersive and evoke a sense of curiosity, fun, and experimentation through play and tinkering with low tech materials and concepts.
- **Informal** - The vibe of pop up clinics is low stakes and welcoming.
- **Accessible** - Each pop up clinic hosts 2-3 related activities to ensure that there are different options for the audience. There are low barriers to entry because anyone can join and partake in the activities.

PHOTOS



Feb 2018, Valentine's Circuits Pop Up Clinic



March 2018, Spring & Slime Pop Up Clinic



April 2018, Therapy Fluffies Pop Up Clinic



Oct 2018, Halloween Pop Up Clinic

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Location and space is key** - Because pop up clinics are ephemeral, it is very important that it takes place where there is a regular flow of traffic. The discovery bar is the perfect place because it is very visible when people enter the library and it's an area that helps bring people together. The discovery bar is also designed for people to stand around its entire length and be active rather than sit passively.
- **Offer Multiple Means of Engagement** - Providing more than one activity option helps reach a larger audience because people can opt in to join depending on their interest and it optimizes choice and autonomy.
- **Show examples** - Practicing the activities before the pop up clinic is really helpful to understand the DIY process, what scaffolds for learners are needed, as well as allows practice in making sample projects or models to show to others for inspiration.
- **Encourage out of the box thinking** - Many learners want to get things right the first time and often get frustrated when their final product doesn't come out the way they expected it to. Let them know that there are many creative ways to approach a problem and that it's okay to fail, experiment, and try things again. In the end, the learning process is more important than the product.
- **Learning is social** - It's extremely helpful to encourage participants to work together, and to learn from one another especially in troubleshooting a problem or teaching others what they know. Also, partnering with other library staff to host a pop-up is a great way to meet new people and exchange ideas while having another set of eyes, ears, and hands to work with.
- **Use a tinker cart** - Having a designated mobile materials/supplies inventory makes it very easy to transport everything that you need on the day of. We took an old library cart, cleaned it, repainted it a shiny rose gold color, and transformed it to a prototyping cart and called it the "Think and Tinker Cart." We filled it with modular bins holding simple supplies such as:
 - o **Pliable materials:** tissue paper, origami paper, construction paper, foam boards, post-it notes
 - o **Structure items:** Popsicle sticks, Pipe cleaners, copper wire
 - o **Connectors:** school glue, glue sticks, mod podge, tape, glue gun, copper tape, elastic bands, rubber bands, string, paper clips, binder clips
 - o **Utensils:** rulers, scissors, whiteboard markers, markers, colored pencils, paint brushes, sharpies
 - o **Treasure:** stamps, glitter, balloons, feather, beads, gloves, stickers, circuit components (batteries, led lights)

QUOTES

"This is the most exciting thing I've done this semester!"

"I needed a break and I'm so glad this was here"

"I could spend all day doing this"

"OMG Glitter! I love making!"

"I like the pop-up feel. I wish there were more events like these on campus."

"Arts, Crafts, Tech? I'm there!"