

January 2010

Training Paraprofessionals via a Wiki Format to Deliver Reference Services

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Recommended Citation

Emily Chan and Marina Torres. "Training Paraprofessionals via a Wiki Format to Deliver Reference Services" *American Library Association Annual Conference* (2010).

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Training Paraprofessionals via a Wiki Format to Deliver Reference Services

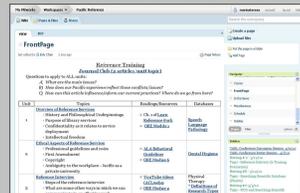
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Introduction

To maximize staff presence and reference capabilities at HSB, reference training was implemented for the branch's two paraprofessional employees. A wiki platform was selected to collocate different resources and formats in a single location. The collaborative functions of the wiki complemented the branch's team-oriented environment. Each staff member selected materials of interest and augmented the wiki conversation with their previous experiences.

Objectives

- Promote uniform level of reference provision
- Develop staff competencies and skills
- Provide flexibility at the HSB Library
- Build knowledge base of paraprofessional staff
- Ensure high level of customer service for students, staff, faculty



Materials

Training materials for the Reference Services Training Program included scholarly articles, librarian-created documents, supplemental videos, online training modules, embedded images and more. Staff members were surveyed at various points on 28 criteria, including their comfort with database searching, content knowledge, and behaviors associated with reference services.

The collage displays various wiki pages and resources used in the training program. Key elements include:

- Meeting 6 Notes 2-26-10:** A page detailing a meeting for February 26, 2010, focusing on Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) and the Reference Interview. It lists attendees and topics.
- Reference Interview:** A page featuring a video of a reference interview and a list of questions to ask the user.
- Unit 3: Ethical Aspects of Reference Service:** A page discussing ethical considerations in reference services, including confidentiality and the role of the librarian.
- Unit 5: Reference for Diverse Populations:** A page exploring how to provide reference services to diverse groups, including marginalized populations.
- Pyramid Diagram:** A diagram illustrating the levels of evidence-based medicine, from background information to randomized controlled trials.
- Confidence Scale Percentages:** A 3D pie chart showing that 84% of staff reported an increase in confidence, while 16% reported no change.

Methods

Constructivism served as the fundamental learning method in the Reference Services Training Program. The key tenets of constructivism include development is learning, learning is socially and culturally mediated, reflection is a necessary part of learning, and collaboration contributes to a rich learning environment. Wiki technology promotes constructivist learning through shared workspaces.

Results

During the course of the Reference Services Training Program, both paraprofessional staff repeatedly took the Confidence Scale Survey on the 28 criteria. At the end of the training process, the staff members took a final Confidence Scale Survey to investigate the overall utility and necessity of the Reference Training Program. Based on the initial and final surveys, the staff's confidence increased 84% amongst the 28 criteria with 16% remaining unchanged.



Conclusions

The Reference Services Training Program proved useful and relevant. The staff have higher rates of confidence in searching databases, identifying relevant resources, and exhibiting behaviors based on best professional practice. The Sciences Librarian and paraprofessional staff look forward to augmenting the training, updating the wiki for future HSB staff, and possibly applying this training format for other purposes.

<http://pacificreference.pbworks.com>