Reference Round Table

Around the Table:

- Reference librarians encounter the same issues everywhere
- Many of the points that were brought up during training were helpful, but difficult to mandate or turn into procedures
- Librarians should approach reference with a certain attitude
- Others have experimented with changing the physical location of the reference desk
- When one goes to the reference desk, leave your baggage behind
- If you look more administrative, people might be more likely to ask you questions at the desk
- During the librarian-patron exercise, the librarian would naturally take the patron through the steps of searching databases. We are as much about teaching as we are about helping
- We have looked into ordering the book recommendations from the presentation
- Provide Service at the point of need with humanity
- It benefits all parties to bring institutional values into your reference service
- making assumptions about patrons leads to negative feelings
- Taking a deep breath during busy times can help. Learn calming tactics
- Other libraries have experimented with shift length
- Student workers need telephone etiquette training. Librarians could make use of some kind of documentation as well
- Part of reference training could include common scenarios involving patron types and patron requests
- Value added service is important, but needs boundaries
- To maximize your reference service, you must take time to build relationships with your patrons
- Finding out how long patrons are giving themselves to do research might be helpful (tally sheet)
- We could do a focus group on the library web page
- There are patrons we have to go out of our way to help (ESL) – no getting around that. We just have to work harder with those patrons
- We could make use of video clips for training purposes
- During busier times we could consider training students to help at the desk

A number of these points were turned into discussion topics for the Reference Assessment Committee to address at another time.
Discussion Topics:

- Location of the reference desk
- Importance of first impressions
- Putting institutional values into reference service – map back to the library’s assessment report
- Shift lengths
- Value added service boundaries – where are they and why are they
- Order of service calls/requests – who is there first vs. who has the easiest questions
- Web page – what is the best way to get feedback
- How and where do we do reference – do we need a new model

In addition, future whiteboard questions were suggested:

- Define our jargon – reference, database, librarian
- What do you want to see on the library web page
- Where/how do you want us to reach you with our reference service

Action Items:

Angie:

- Design a tally sheet to find out how long patrons are giving themselves to do research
- Call a meeting of the Reference Assessment Committee
Reference Round Table

Discussion Topics:

1. Location of the reference desk
   a. Pros – visible, the librarian can see the floor, there is separation
   b. Cons – Can be easily avoided, end panels are high

There was a consensus that the location of the desk is good and no changes are recommended.

2. Shift lengths (split shifts vs. longer shifts).
   a. The group voted and agreed to go back to split shifts when the new librarian is added.

3. Whiteboard
   a. We will start questions February 1 and change them every two weeks.
      i. What do you want to see on the library web page?
      ii. What is reference?
      iii. What is a database?
      iv. What is a librarian?
      v. How do you want us to reach you?

4. First Impressions – What should/can we do to make good first impressions to patrons?
   a. Keep the desk neat.
   b. Get up and walk around.
   c. People should know that they are your first priority.
   d. We are not identifiable enough. We might consider nametags or lanyards.

Discussion Topics for the next meeting:

1. Value-added service boundaries – How far do you go to help a patron?
2. Identification – what ways can we better identify ourselves?

Next Meeting:

Thursday, January 27 at 11 in the Instruction Room.

Action Items:

Come with ideas to better identify ourselves as librarians at reference.
Reference Round Table

Discussion Topics:

1. Identification – Two suggestions were made:
   a. Nameplate at the reference desk
   b. Each librarian should wear a lanyard with identification when they are at the reference desk.

Both of these suggestions will be presented at the next librarians’ meeting.

2. Value-added service boundaries.
   a. First define what value-added service boundaries means:

   How far will we go to help a patron in unusual circumstances above and beyond what we normally do? We will decide on wording at the next meeting.

   b. We need to decide what our limitations might be – What are things that we should never do.
      i. We should never violate copyright or any other laws.

   c. Other scenarios were discussed:
      i. Time limits were discussed – We should not create a “time limit” for helping community patrons.
      ii. If someone does not have money for the copier, should we let them use the key?
         1. Use your common sense. If the patron has made an honest attempt, it is appropriate to help them, but let them know that we cannot do that for them every time.
      iii. If someone asks to print multiple copies to the reference printer, what do we tell them?
         1. We cannot patrol what our patrons do that closely, but if they ask us, we say that it is not allowed.
      iv. Doing personal business on library computers
         1. Same thing – If they bring it up, we tell them that it is against our computer use policy.
**Next Meeting:**

Thursday, February 10 at 11 in the Instruction Room.

**Action Items:**

1. Come with more scenarios for value-added service boundaries (we will continue discussion).
2. Present suggestions for better identifying ourselves at the reference desk at the next librarians’ meeting.
Reference Round Table
February 17, 2011

Discussion Topics:

1. Identification – We are focusing on posters
   a. Angie found
      i. Poster stands that hold multiple posters (in a two-sided vertical format)
      ii. Digital poster frame – 36” TV monitor style.

We had difficulty deciding where we would put either of these. Of the two, everyone preferred the digital poster frame, since we could do more with it (e.g., advertise events, post hours or other library information). 36” was determined to be too big so Angie will look into smaller digital frames.

2. Value-added service boundaries.

   We decided that we should continue our discussion by trying to think of more scenarios:
   i. Letting someone check out a video that is library use only.
      1. If someone needs to check out a video that is library use only, we can check with their professor to see if it can be checked out under their name.

Next Meeting:

   Thursday, March 3 at 11 in the Instruction Room.

Action Items:

All
1. Come with at least two theme ideas for posters. Also, think about information to put on them (name, email, phone, etc.)

2. Think about value-added service boundaries (Rolling Action Item).

Angie
1. Bring options for smaller digital poster frames.
Reference Round Table
March 3, 2011
Present: Chelsea Baker, Patrick Baumann, Dana Belcher, Angie Brunk, Theda Schwing

Discussion Topics:

1. Identification –
   a. Angie talked to Adrianna about digital frames, and some questions came up...
      i. Do we want to have one at the circulation desk? – Yes that would be ok (as funding provides).
      ii. Do we need more than librarian pictures?
         1. Relevant staff such as Jackie probably should have pictures on it, but it would be voluntary for staff.
   b. Themes – ideas were
      i. Your favorite – movie character, book character, or superhero
         1. We chose to go with favorite movie character.
            a. Patrick will ask if an AV student is willing to help with design.
   c. Should there be individual pages for librarians?
      i. This is a good idea, and we will explore options with the next web refresher, since we need to consider how the front page needs to be changed.
      ii. We will also explore rotating photos at the front page.
   d. Should student workers wear some kind of identification?
      i. Yes. We could have generic library student worker cards made up.
         1. They wouldn’t be necessary for students when they are not in the public (e.g., cataloging), but all students should wear them when they are working and in areas where patrons could ask them questions.
   e. Should there be a picture list of student workers?
      i. Yes. We will keep a photo list of student workers.
         1. Dana will update it when student workers are hired and when their employment ends.
         2. Support staff will be required to send photos to Dana (they can use the library’s digital camera.)
2. Value-added service boundaries.

Wording from previous meeting was accepted:

*How far will we go to help a patron in unusual circumstances above and beyond what we normally do?*

i. Making copies for faculty.

1. We should not make them fill out the research form, just make the copies and report the number of articles and pages to Dana for statistical purposes.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, March 17 at 11 in the Instruction Room.

Action Items:

All

1. Think about value-added service boundaries (Rolling Action Item).

   Patrick

1. Check with Robert Hayes about the possibility of having generic student worker ids made up.

2. Talk to Sam about helping with design of librarian posters.
Reference Round Table
April 21, 2011
Present: Chelsea Baker, Patrick Baumann, Dana Belcher, Angie Brunk, Theda Schwing

Discussion Topics:

1. Student ID cards.
   a. Angie will talk to Robert about producing 25 student nametags/id cards.
   b. There should be some white space on the card for writing a student’s name.

2. The photo directory is completed and on the K: drive.
   a. It will be printed in color and distributed to staff.

3. It would be helpful to have a list of the value-added service boundary items that we have come up with so far.

4. We can have one more whiteboard question this semester.

Next Meeting:
End of May.

Action Items:

Angie:
   Talk to Robert about producing 25 student nametags/id cards.

Patrick:
   Put value-added service items together in one list.

Theda:
   Write our next question on the whiteboard.
Reference Round Table
April 7, 2011
Present: Chelsea Baker, Patrick Baumann, Dana Belcher, Angie Brunk, Theda Schwing

Discussion Topics:

1. Student ID cards.
   a. Robert Hayes is able to make student ID cards:
      1. He has some templates set up already. We can see if we can create our own.
   b. The cards should say Linscheid Library Student Worker (they should be general).
   c. They should have some sort of greeting, like How May I Help You?

   Action Item: Ask student workers and assistants for suggestions on the greeting.

2. AV has a couple of student workers that would be willing to help with the design of the librarian posters/graphics.

3. We have to wait for approval on the digital picture frames (probably summer).

4. Value-added service boundaries:
   a. Some students have more detailed questions involving more time. It is ok to get their information and keep looking.
   b. We should only go as far as what we know how to do in MS Word. It is ok to refer the patron to the help option or to the Computer Lab.
   c. Stay late only if you feel comfortable doing so. If you do stay after closing to help a patron, let them know that it is an exception, and that we would not always be able to do it.

5. Jackie has all of the student photos and is compiling the table.
   a. It will be set up by department, with librarian first, then assistant, then student workers.

Next Meeting:
Thursday, April 21 at 11 in the Instruction Room.

Action Items:

All
1. Think about value-added service boundaries. (Rolling Action Item)
2. Ask students and assistants for suggestion on a greeting for the student ID cards. (April 21)
Reference Round Table  
June 23, 2011  
Present: Chelsea Baker, Patrick Baumann, Dana Belcher, Angie Brunk

Discussion Topics:

1. **Student ID cards**  
   a. Angie will finalize design and send it to Robert.  
      1. How may I help you?  
      Watermark (where students can write their name if they wish).  
      ECU Library Employee  
   b. They will need holes cut in the top center.  
   c. Dana will buy 25 lanyards when procards are cleared (early July).

2. **Photo frame**  
   a. Angie presented sample photos of librarians.  
      1. Email Angie if you want a new picture.  
      2. Photos need to be larger.  
      3. Angie will bring in equipment for a couple of days.  
   b. Angie will try to add a banner to the librarian pages, similar to our libguides.  
   c. There will be a “front” page that will say **Meet Your Librarians!**  
   d. Angie will try to make the “**Your**” similar to the one on the liaison handout.  
   e. We discussed future themes to go on the frame:  
      1. Librarians’ pets (first theme)  
         1. Send up to 5 photos of your pet/pets to Angie by July 15th.  
         2. Let her know if you want individual photos or a collage.  
         3. Any additional info (such as pet bio) is up to the individual.  
      2. Literary characters  
      3. Superheroes  
      4. Departmental themes – librarians with liaison faculty  
      5. We will decide on Spring’s theme by fall break.

3. **How do we deal with patrons who wander off topic for long periods of time?**  
   a. Be friendly and helpful for as long as you can, but eventually do (once it’s clear that there is no reference question being asked any more) let the patron know politely that you have other things to.

4. **What should circ students do if a patron calls and asks not to speak with the librarian at the desk.**  
   a. The student should transfer the call to Chelsea.  
   b. If Chelsea is not there, the student should ask to take the patron’s information and someone can get back to them.
5. *Citation help*
   
   a. It is appropriate for the librarian to show patrons citation resources, and to assist in using the tools available.

**Next Meeting:**

July 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Action Items:**

Angie:

- Give lanyard design to Robert. (7-14-11)
- Ask Adrianna if she wants to be on the digital frame. (7-14)
- Bring in photo equipment. (early July)

Dana:

- Purchase lanyards when procards are cleared. (7-14-11)

All:

- Let Angie know if you want a new photo. (7-14-11)
- Send pet photos (up to five) to Angie, and let her know whether or not you want a collage. (7-14-11)