

Student Assistants: Hire, Train, Retain



Ben Hogben – July 30, 2015

Supervising Students Employees

Student Supervisors:

- ▶ May not have had prior training or experience.
- ▶ May need to create their own processes, documentation and forms.
- ▶ Might be learning the job at the same time as the students who are being supervised.

“To become a more effective leader, understand the many ways you naturally influence others.”

Ellis, D. *Becoming a Master Student*; 2013; Wadsworth

Career Building Skills

“The 2010 census data paints a bleak financial picture for recent graduates, and as the recession lingers, it's clear that many of the students enrolled at your institution will be graduating into a very difficult market.”

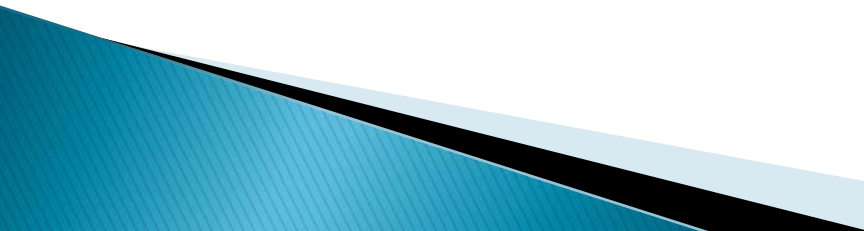
September 29, 2011 Daniel Fusch, Academic Impressions

Working, while attending school, is necessary to pay expenses, and **more importantly, build a resume.**

College degree + a marketable skill-set

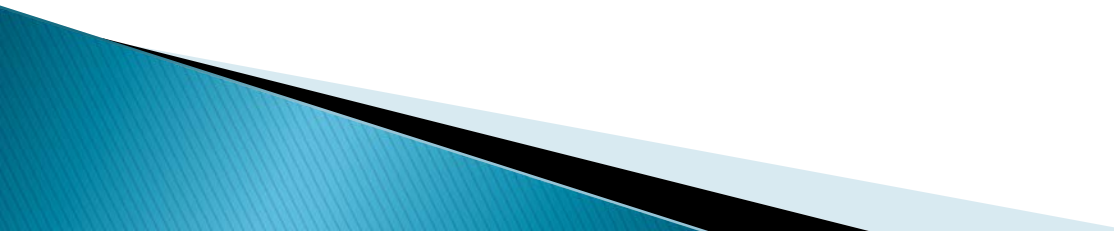


Advertising for Student Employees

- ▶ Work/duties/tasks to be performed
 - ▶ Hours per week, along with available shifts
 - ▶ Starting pay
 - ▶ Job qualifications
 - ▶ Consider asking for a Statement of Interest, as well as references
 - ▶ Deadline for submitting applications, when applicants can expect to be notified of the search results
- 

Hire the Best Worker?

What are the learning outcomes for your student assistant positions?

- ▶ Communication skills
 - ▶ Customer service skills
 - ▶ Leadership/supervisory skills
 - ▶ Technology (e.g. scanning, editing, spreadsheets)
 - ▶ Preservation techniques (i.e. Bindery)
- 

Go Beyond The Basics – Building the Skill-Set

Answering the Phones

- *Customer Service Skills*
- *Explain Policies and Guidelines*
- *Assist With Problem-Solving Library Accounts*

Work in the Interlibrary Loan

- Search Databases to Verify Journal Articles
- Scan, Crop/Edit Using Adobe or Proprietary Software
- Prioritize Work Processes for the Most Efficient Turn-Around

Tell Me More!

- ▶ Seeking someone with library experience and customer service skills



Interviewing – Tell Me

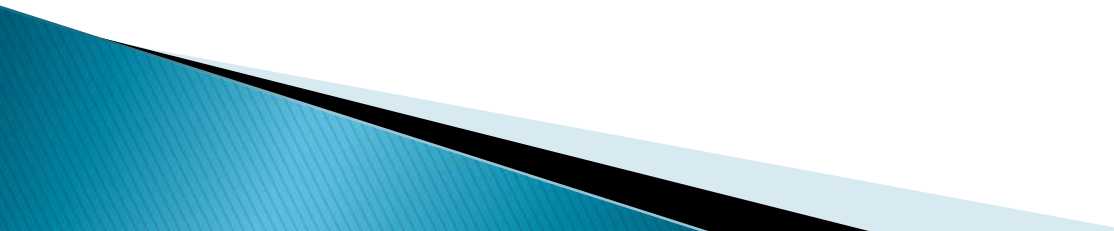
- ▶ Open ended versus closed ended questions
 - Have you ever worked with a difficult patron?
 - *Tell me about a time when you worked with a difficult patron, and how you resolved the situation.*
 - Describe the ideal training program for you when starting a new job.
 - What did you find useful or innovative about the Library web site?
 - *What questions do you have for us?*

Let's Try a Few Questions...

- ▶ **Have you ever supervised other volunteers/staff?**
 - *Tell me about a time that you supervised other staff.*

 - ▶ **Would others describe you as having initiative?**
 - Tell me about a project you worked on that required initiative.

 - ▶ **How familiar are you with Microsoft Office?**
 - *Tell me about some projects that you worked on that involved MS Office programs.*

 - ▶ **Do you prefer to work alone or in teams?**
 - *Tell me about a time that you worked on a team project, and what your role was.*
- 

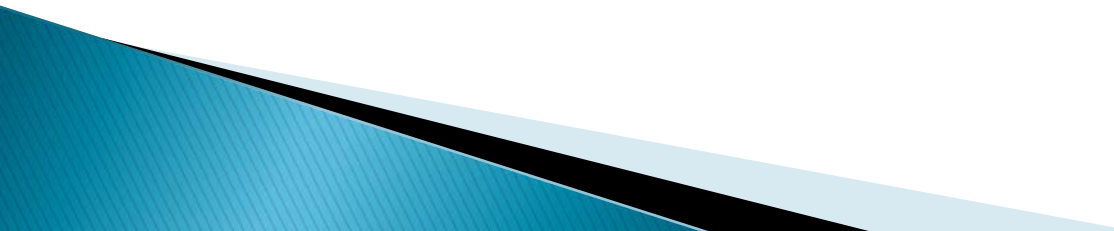
Questions to Avoid

- ▶ Disabilities/health problems
- ▶ Marital status
- ▶ Past arrests
- ▶ Ethnic background
- ▶ Age/what is your birth date?
- ▶ Religious affiliations
 - Source Weiss, Donald H. Fair, Square, and Legal: A Manager's Guide to Safe Hiring, Managing, and Firing Practices. (2004) AMA.

Do We Train or Teach?

“What if we train them and they leave for another position.”

“What if we don't train them and they stay.”



Train or Teach, or *Both*?

- ▶ Training : a process by which someone is **taught the skills** that are needed for an art, profession, or job
- ▶ Teaching : to cause or help (someone) to **learn about a subject** by giving lessons

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>



Why and How

- ▶ Explain *why* the process is important, e.g. what might happen if the process is not completed correctly.
- ▶ How the process affects customer service.



Learning Styles – VAK

- ▶ Visual
 - Iconic memory – lasts a brief amount of time
- ▶ Auditory
 - Echoic memory – may or may not be retained based on importance
- ▶ Kinesthetic
 - Performing a physical activity



Blue

Red

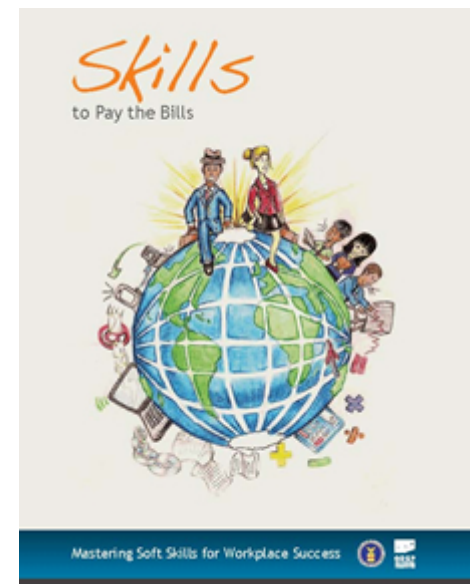
Brown

Orange

Essential Soft Skills

1. Communication
2. Enthusiasm and attitude
3. Team-work
4. Networking
5. Problems solving and critical thinking
6. Professionalism

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>



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Employers Want Workplace-Ready Grads, But Can Higher Ed Deliver? | From the Bell Tower

By [Steven Bell](#) on  March 19, 2014  [1 Comment](#)

A new survey reveals a wide gap between provosts and business leaders when it comes to judging college students' readiness for the workplace. What can academic librarians take away from the controversy?

As the cost of college tuition has skyrocketed in the past decade, students and parents expectations for a graduate's state of career readiness have grown. And as the job market continues to offer limited



Catalog & Digital Services Integration
For Libraries
AS SEEN ON  The Digital Shift 

RECENT & POPULAR

http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2014/03/opinion/steven-bell/employers-want-workplace-ready-grads-but-can-higher-ed-deliver-from-the-bell-tower/#_

Millennials

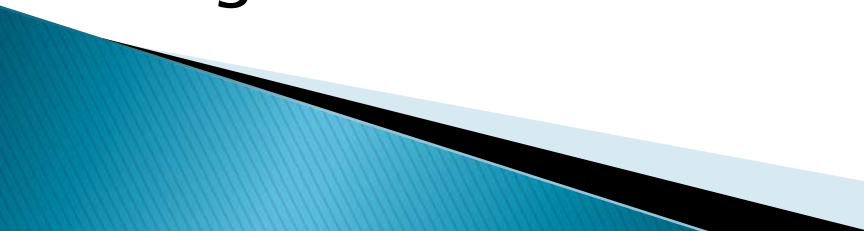
- ▶ “Millennials, even after graduation, maintain strong ties to their hovering “helicopter parents,” which... could translate to the workplace.”

Motivating Millennials: Improving Practices in Recruiting, Retaining, and Motivating Younger Library Staff : by Sara D. Smith and Quinn Galbraith

Student Assistant Diversity

- Avoid idioms
 - *You're pulling my leg*
- Be patient with language challenges
 - *Must have excellent communication skills*
- Be respectful of differences in culture

Exit Interviews

- ▶ What was the most challenging part of your job?
 - ▶ What was the most rewarding part of your job?
 - ▶ What services do you think the Library should offer that it doesn't now?
 - ▶ What qualities should we look for in hiring your replacement ?
 - ▶ How has this job prepared you for work after graduation?
- 

Thank You

- ▶ “Above and beyond” recognition = timely.
- ▶ How much time was put into “recognizing” the student employee? e.g. giving them a certificate versus a luncheon with the Library staff.
- ▶ Food is universal.



Feedback = Motivation

“Annual performance reviews are inadequate to Millennials, who want real-time feedback and often prefer scheduled face time for performance discussions.”

Sujansky, J. and Jan Ferri-Reed; Keeping the Millennials; 2009; John Wiley & Sons

Genuine feedback –

- *Avoid feedback clichés, i.e. Keep up the good work*
- *Positive feedback – “You did an awesome job helping that patron.”*

“Sandwich” Feedback

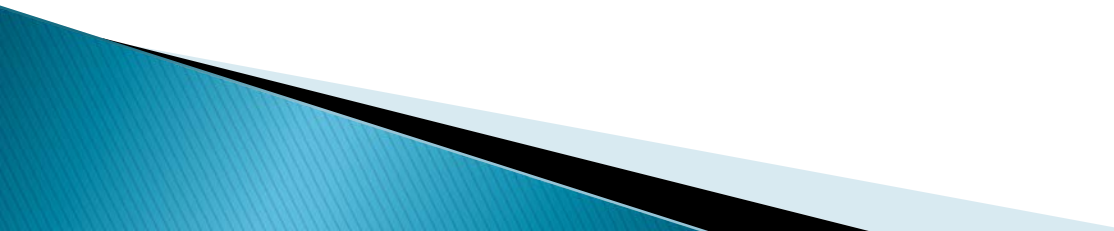
“Steer clear of the classic feedback “sandwich”: good news, followed by bad news, ending with good news.”

Please summarize what we discussed.

<http://blogs.hbr.org/2012/11/have-the-courage-to-be-direct/>

Building Effective Teams

Using analogies/metaphors to translate the goals of the department.

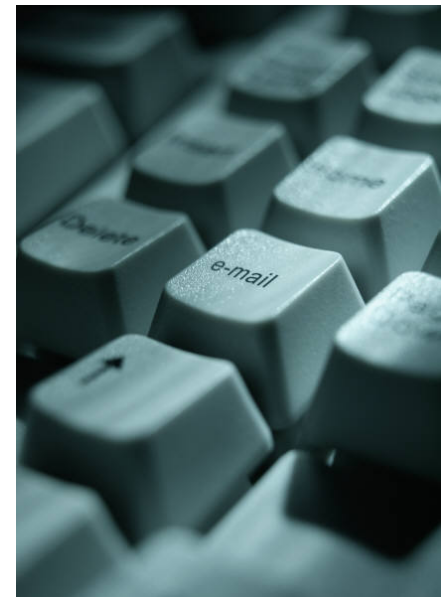
- Athlete = being a part of the team, and what happens when one is not playing to their potential.
 - Art = you create something that is your own work, i.e. pride in work processes.
- 

E-mail and Interpretation

If information or detail is missing in communication, the receiver will sometimes create the missing information, which may or *may not* be accurate.

For example:

“I didn’t say you were late to your shift.”



Supervisor and Coach

Is a performance challenge due to lack of a:

- ▶ **Skill set**

- ▶ *Follow-up training may be needed*

- ▶ **Tool needed to accomplish a task**

- ▶ i.e. hardware/software

- ▶ **Attitude/behavior**

- ▶ This may be a supervisory conversation, which discusses meeting the goals of the customer/department.




Performance Concerns

- ▶ Active listening
- ▶ Listen for repeated words or phrases
- ▶ Reframing
- ▶ Ask the student to look for alternatives
- ▶ Discuss possibilities
- ▶ Create an action plan
- ▶ Follow up

Hogben, B. *Coaching in the Workplace. Associates (2010):*
http://associates.ucr.edu/journal/?page_id=1047

Evaluating Performance

Rubric? Content? Both?

Criteria			
<p>1. Ability to prepare and organise for the information to be presented eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set up and use of data projector, video/ DVD player • bring a set of rules and appropriate playing pieces for students playing the game 	More thorough preparation was required for the presentation and performance to run smoothly	The preparation for the presentation was generally organised and the performance ran quite smoothly.	The preparation for the presentation was very well organised and the performance ran smoothly.

<http://img.docstoccdn.com/thumb/orig/2168091.png>

Name _____

Title of Poem/Author _____

	Very Weak	Weak	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Total
Voice and Articulation	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Level of Difficulty	1	2	3	4	5	6	

http://nestersteachingblog.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/handout_audioblog-performance-evaluation-rubric.jpg

Disciplinary Problems

- ▶ What do you have, in writing, to support your concern?
- ▶ What documentation did the student sign when they started employment?



Be Well

“During the last decade, university and college counseling centers have reported a shift in the needs of students seeking counseling services, from more benign developmental and informational needs, to more severe psychological problems.”

NASPA Journal, Vol. 41, no. 1, Fall 2003

- ▶ What policy do you have in place for mental–health concerns?



Thank you for attending!

*And thank you for helping our
student employees to succeed!*

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