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Abstract

Skilled and knowledgeable staff equipped to respond to change is a key learning and growth goal of the University of Wollongong Library. But how do front line staff develop and maintain their client-centred service skills and behaviours? How do they manage the myriad of diverse needs and expectations from a constantly changing student population, within a volatile technological environment? By challenging established approaches to service delivery training, it was possible to demonstrate a need to be more adaptable and responsive. We recognized that earlier approaches such as on-the-job training were no longer adequate. In 2009 the University of Wollongong Library introduced competency-based training. This represented a new approach to staff training and an opportunity for renewal. Numerous factors contributed to this decision, with the overarching goal being to keep our staff on the cutting edge of service delivery. A systematic approach was used that involved researching competency-based training ideologies; identifying core client service skills, knowledge and behaviours; identifying learning outcomes; developing module content; identifying assessment criteria; and programme delivery.

Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Social and Behavioral Sciences

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A New Perspective on Client Service: From on the Job to Structured Competency Based Training. The University of Wollongong Library Experience, a descriptive case study.

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Introduction

This article traces the journey of the University of Wollongong Library as it developed a competency based training framework. Anticipated increases to student numbers, evolving information and research needs, technological developments and changing client services, challenged the Library's established approaches to training staff. Following investigations of vocational training models, Library staff adapted a suitable existing model, to develop a home-grown competency based training framework.

The framework renewed existing training and professional development practices to a comprehensive, systematic and structured approach encompassing all aspects of client service. A multi-skilled, dynamic workforce that provides consistent and exceptional service in an evolving information and service delivery environment has been achieved.

Ensuring staff have a greater preparedness and readiness to perform their role has been realised. Increased confidence and capability to affect service delivery consistency has been evident since the introduction of the training program.

Background

The University of Wollongong Library (UWL) has long recognised its staff as its most valuable resource, critical to its success and sustainability. In 1999 UWL was the first Australian Library to be recognised as a *Best Practice* organisation for the management and development of staff with the awarding of certification against the Investors in People (IiP) Standard. IiP is an internationally recognised standard concerned with achieving best practice in the management and development of people to achieve organisational goals. Today IiP is widely regarded as one of the most effective organisational and people development tools.

For more than 15 years UWL has used surveys as a mechanism for the evaluation of client service satisfaction. This approach has provided invaluable feedback on how clients rate their perceptions of the importance and the performance of a range of Library services. Survey results are historically high and pointedly demonstrate the UWL success in the delivery of service excellence. Within an organisational culture of continuous improvement, survey results assist in determining areas for improvement.

The Library participates in the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) Client Satisfaction Survey. This survey is administered, collated and analysed by Insync Surveys, a private data collection service provider. This instrument measures libraries performance against each other. These benchmarking results highlight best and good practices and encourage participating libraries to improve and develop the highest possible standard of service to library users.

The survey uses a seven-point scale to clearly differentiate stakeholder attitudes. Insync Surveys (2009) have found through their research that a seven-point scale (1= low and 7= high) is sufficient to apply standard statistical tests. The results produced involve analysis of the mean responses to each of the questions asked, across all demographics.

The need for change… renewal begins

The survey achieves two objectives: to provide UWL with a mechanism to identify key client concerns, and to facilitate open and honest communication between clients and the Library management team. The last CAUL Client Satisfaction Survey was conducted in 2008. UWL recorded an overall score of 80.3%, placing it in the top 25% for client satisfaction of all libraries surveyed. Overall feedback was very favourable and achievements included:

- High raw performance scores (2008 weighted performance index of 80.8 per cent)
- Continued improvements on performance in previous years
- Low gap scores i.e. the difference between the importance clients place on our service and their perception of our performance. Almost all categories were statistically insignificant, i.e. <2
- High performance relative to other libraries. UWL outperformed 75 per cent of other libraries for all the six best practice categories: communication, service quality, service delivery, facilities and equipment, library staff**,** and virtual library Clients provided written comments on Library services, the newly completed Library building, and Library staff.

UWL's Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance Committee (SPQA) considered the above results, with particular interest given to the verbatim comments. Within an organisational culture of continuous improvement and innovation SPQA made recommendations to address gaps between client expectations and perception of performance. A number of improvement strategies were identified and included the key areas: *addressing easily solved complaints, managing client expectations, managing client usage of facilities and reorganising services*

Key motivators for investigating and reviewing existing training methods were driven by qualitative statements. Over 10 per cent of clients surveyed commented on Library staff, in total 948 comments. As one of the top 10 themes, these results were closely scrutinised. With only 6.9% of these comments considered negative, it became apparent how critical staff are to the Library's success and reputation for service excellence. A sample of the top ten themes, client comments and Library responses were made available to clients on the Library homepage. These survey results alone were not the impetus for change but a seed had been planted.

SPQA reviewed other related survey results focussing on opportunities for improvement, in particular client satisfaction ratings with service delivery staff and service delivery consistency. UWL participated in the survey of comparative contact centres in the tertiary sector carried out by Customer Service Benchmarking Australia. The survey involved making mystery shopping calls to a range of units within the University. 42 tertiary institutions participated in this survey which was conducted in 2008 and 2009 (*Table 1)*.

The 2009 results indicated UWL performed extremely well when compared to the tertiary sector's average score. UWL achieved 'best practice' across three of the five key measures when compared to the other tertiary institution participants, with significant improvements achieved across all key measures.

Key Measure	**2009 Result**	**Tertiary Sector**	**Tertiary B/mark**	**2008 Result**	**Tertiary Sector**	**Tertiary B/mark**
Customer Satisfaction Score	**182**	158	190	**165**	155	187
Average Connect time (sec)	**11**	38	6	**10**	39	6
Greeting Quality Index	**92**	88	98	**78**	55	96
Best Practice Manner	**92**	74	100	**89**	75	100
Enquiry Resolution Index	**90**	82	100	**69**	81	100

Table 1 Mystery Shopper Survey comparative data results for 2008 and 2009

The 2008 and 2009 Mystery Shopper results were clearly high, further gap analysis of survey results, together with the Insync survey results, and comments from Library staff on training via their Annual Performance Plans highlighted an opportunity to improve both the skill set and knowledge base of service point staff.

A decline in borrowing activity in 2008/09 coupled with increased demand for specialised research help was instrumental in the decision to reassign responsibility for the Information Desk from Information & Research Services (I&RS) team to the Client Services team. This restructure of service delivery responsibility provided further motivation for improving existing training practices and would provide up-skilling opportunities for existing staff. Traditionally responsibility for reference services and information literacy development rests with the professional staff of the I&RS team. The Client Services team, comprising of para-professional staff, provides front line services to all library users and are responsible for shelving, membership and borrowing functions.

Strategic objective identified

This provided UWL with an opportunity to build on existing service delivery success and support the up-skilling of staff. A key strategic objective was identified in the *Library's 2009 Business Plan, with two distinct goals:*

> *Highly skilled, client-focussed staff delivering excellent services.*
>
> 1. *Introduce a new approach to supporting multi-skilled client services team for selected service points*
> 2. *Implement systematic approach to delivering training programs.*

With the strategic objective identified and the goal to improve existing training methodologies outlined, we needed to revisit our commitment to training and development and ensure sustainability through initiatives and innovation. By challenging established training practices it was possible to demonstrate real benefits for both service delivery staff and Library clients, if we could ensure greater service consistency and responsiveness at point and place of need.

The release of the Bradley Review (2009) was also pertinent in our planning. This Government initiative targets an increase in the number of 25 to 34 year olds with a bachelor degree to 40 percent by 2010, and 20 per cent of undergraduate enrolments in higher education from low socio-economic backgrounds.

This anticipated increase in the volume of student numbers coupled with rapid technological change and an evolving suite of client services challenged established thinking and approaches to service delivery.

It became evident that existing client service staff training practices, such as on-the-job training and core training workshops, would no longer be adequate. According to Billet 'the workplace was once seen as a place to work, not a place to learn. Learning happened prior to employment, part of an "apprenticeship" or special training period'. The demands of today's workplace are more and more complex (2001: 1). Whilst past training practices had stood the test of time it was unlikely that UWL could guarantee service delivery consistency under these changing circumstances. A review team consisting of representatives from the Client Services Team and the Manager, Service Quality was established to investigate and evaluate alternative training models suitable to the UWL environment.

Investigation and research

To support a formal and systematic approach the review team's investigation centred on competency based assessment models. Competency based training models are recognised to be valuable to organisations concerned with improving employee performance and organisational effectiveness (Chan, 2006). They establish a base level of training and encompass core skills and knowledge to successfully align people to strategies and organisational goals. Rowe (1995) defines competence as describing *what* people do in a particular job and competency as describing *how* they do it.

Our literature review identified a number of possible competency based models. A competency assessment model needs to be "robust, dynamic, fluid, and flexible to change with technological, economic, and other changes" (Dubois, 1993; Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999, in Ennis, 2008). An effective competency model needs to be able to cater for the differing levels of responsibility and variety of tasks within the organisation. An effective competency model needs to encompass the four fundamental areas of meaning (understanding the culture of an organisation and acting in accordance), relation (creating and maintaining relationships with the stakeholders of the tasks or the organisation), learning (identifying solutions to tasks and reflecting on experiences so that what is learned improves the next task completed), and change (acting in new ways when the task or situation calls for it) (Raven & Stephenson, 2001 in Ennis, 2008).

The review team examined these findings and explored potential models. Much of the literature provides models for competency based assessment across an organisation, rather than focusing on specific service delivery areas. The Task Analysis (Russ-Eft 1995), Modified Task Analysis (Zemke, 1982 in Dubois, 1993), Job Competence Assessment Methods (Dubois, 1993) models would not be the most appropriate to the UWL context.

The review team identified the Functional Job Analysis model (Russ-Eft, 1995; Fine, 1999) as easily adaptable and the most appropriate for developing training for Client Service staff at UWL as described in table 2.

Features	Benefits	Drawbacks
Task inventory created through a group process (focus group session). Existing data about the job is reviewed, and subject matter experts list the outputs, knowledge, skills, and abilities they consider crucial to effective performance of the job. A task	Collaborative nature involves the staff member directly in the process, allowing them a degree of ownership. Draws on knowledge of experienced staff to provide a realistic appraisal of the tasks	Reliance on subject matter experts – Russ-Eft states that the literature identifies a discontinuity of opinion between experts and novices as to what is important for a job. With rapidly changing technologies, subject matter experts need to

bank is then created, with tasks being grouped by similarity. This assists in identifying critical performance standards. Subject matter experts consider the criteria for performance as it emerges from interaction between employee, organisation, and the task itself.	required. Encompasses functional skills, specific content skills, and adaptive skills.	remain very up to date, or risk losing their 'expert' status.

Table 2 Functional Job Analysis (Russ-Eft, 1995; Fine, 1999)

By adopting this approach the review team believed they could introduce a legitimate and sustainable training program. The Client Services team would become the "pilot group". Successful implementation of a new training framework, to this large client facing team, would help prove the viability and value of the new training regime to Library Executive and provide the impetus for large scale change across all service delivery teams. What the review team didn't anticipate was this new approach to training would eventually permeate Library wide and be adopted as the training methodology for all teams.

The transformation begins

Throughout the review it was evident that changing training techniques from on-the-job to a competency based assessment model would require a monumental shift in training practices. Comprehensive change would be needed to support the new approach. Guided by the Functional Job Analysis model we set about transforming training practices within the Client Services team.

With the review process complete, a suitable model identified, together with the support of Library Executive the review team morphed into a development team and commenced transforming training practices. Resistance to change was anticipated and as outlined by Senge (2006: 88-90) it almost always arises from perceived threats to traditional norms and ways of doing things. A greater alignment between our strategic goals and operational goals would ensure clarity and commitment to the change process for staff. By selling the benefits of the new training program including multi-skilling, up-skilling, and service delivery consistency, commitment from the "pilot group" was obtained.

The pilot group

The Client Services team is responsible for the delivery of front line services to Library clients in the Main Library and at the Curriculum Resources Centre (CRC). The CRC is located in a separate building to the main Library and predominantly services students undertaking teacher training. Service areas in both locations include Loans, Short Loans, Information services and shelving.

50 permanent and casual staff work in the team, with casual staff employed predominantly during university sessions. All staff members are rostered at each service point and casual staff also work nights and weekends.

Responsibilities:

- Loans, returns, holds and renewals
- Shelving
- Short Loans (a collection of high demand items made available to clients for a period of 2 hours)
- Membership and fines management
- Missing books

- Responding to informational and directional enquiries

Recruitment and training programs for casual staff were formally established in 1995, when the Casual Staff Coordinator role was established.

Recruitment

- Casual staff recruited bi-annually approximately one week prior to session commencing
- Permanent staff are recruited through competitive selection
- All staff complete an in-house induction program. This includes a tour of the Library building and campus, administrative and reporting requirements, and an overview of the organisational culture and expectations of staff

Training

- On-the -job training covered all service points and was based on:
    - Reference to the appropriate procedures
    - Demonstrations and practical application
    - Support from an assigned training buddy
- Casual staff were considered *In Training* during the first four weeks of session before working independently on the roster
- *In Training* staff were encouraged to take notes and consult with the assigned buddy to support their ongoing training needs
- Training moved rapidly from basic skills to more advanced and complex skill levels enabling staff to work independently within the team environment.
- The level of responsibility increased relative to skill attainment.

The development team conducted a comprehensive examination of existing training practices which is summarised in table 3.

Week 1: Observation	Week 2: In-training under supervision	Week 3: Independent
Induction: • Training checklist used to record and align training instruction to required content On the job training at service point: • Verbal description of processes • Reading of, and reference to procedures • Observing processes and client interaction	Practical Training: • Returns • Loans Desk • Short Loans Rostered with experienced staff • Intensive exposure to a wide range of interactions during peak weeks of session reinforcing the required skills and knowledge	Rostered: • Across all service points including nights and weekends • Informal assessment • On-going training

Table 3 e.g. of training practices prior to prior to introducing new Competency Based Program

On-the-job training is not uncommon and represents a legitimate and formal training practice. A research report produced by the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research describes on-the-job training as 'taking place in a normal working situation, using the actual tools, equipment, documents or materials that staff will use when fully trained. On-the-job training has a general reputation as most effective for vocational work' (Woods, 2004).

Training evaluation was obtained by informal observation plus feedback from both the trainee an experienced staff member rostered with the new team member. In general it took new staff up to four weeks to feel competent in the range of services, functions and complexities involved in providing client services within this team.

This method of on-the-job training was not providing evidence of skill attainment and did not accommodate varying skill levels, capabilities or disparate employment backgrounds. Nor was there any real guarantee that all new staff were receiving the same training, and consequently no guarantee that the transfer of the required knowledge and skill set was being achieved in a consistent manner.

Planning the new training program

Although traditional recruitment and training practices had been closely aligned with the needs of the Library in providing service delivery to clients, Library needs, technologies and service options had changed. It became evident that existing practices were in need of a renewed approach.

Around the same time the casual staff employment applications process was streamlined. Online applications became possible through a University of Wollongong centralised recruitment initiative. This change facilitated employing casual staff earlier and with the introduction of the new training program, a longer timeframe would be necessary to deliver training and to complete on-the-job *in-training* hours prior to session commencing

Planning the new approach to training commenced and included mapping existing training practices and identifying a suitable flowchart for implementing a competency based assessment training model (*Figure 1*). Using the Functional Job Analysis model as a reference point the development team identified a training framework suited to the UWL environment and in particular the Client Services team.

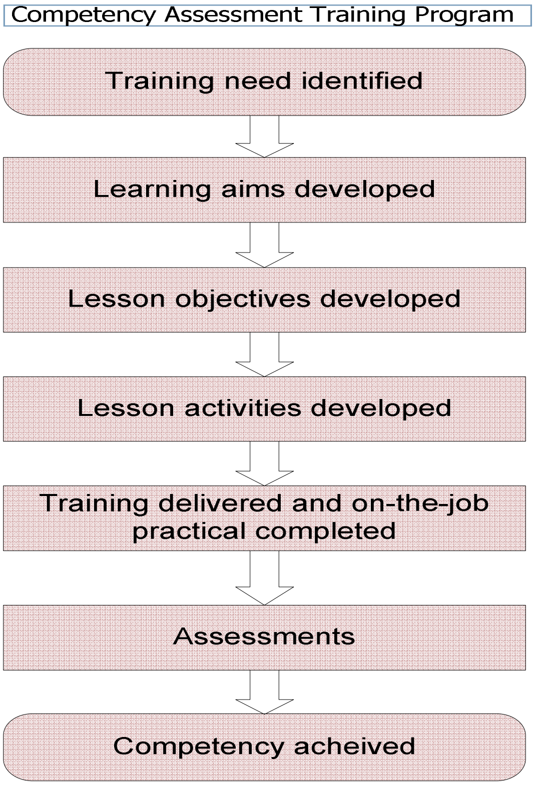
Competency Assessment Training Program
Training need identified
Learning aims developed
Lesson objectives developed
Lesson activities developed
Training delivered and on-the-job practical completed
Assessments
Competency acheived

Figure 1 – Training Flowchart

Training structure and implementation

Initially the process of identifying and developing modules was based on existing procedures and a little haphazard. Modules included aims, objectives and a small number of activities. Additional modules were then developed for all functions performed by Client Services and Shelving staff. The process for developing modules was improved by identifying “experts” to determine requisite knowledge and skills required by Client Services staff.

The new modules included:

- Quality and Service Excellence Framework
- Client Services Team Guidelines
- Shelving - Dewey and Moys (classification systems)
- Printing and Copying
- Individual modules to support Library Management System (Millennium) functions (loans, short loans, membership, returns, holds, renewals)
- Client Communication Tool (2-way radio system)
- Feedback Database system
- Complaints Management

Once the modules were developed the team established assessment criteria against the identified aims and objectives of each module. Competency assessments as stated by Orrell (2005) are deeply complex and must define the goals and outcomes of the student learning.

The first iteration of the competency based assessment training program was complete. The first training program was delivered to the pilot group in February 2009. Modules were presented in a classroom setting in one of the Library’s computer labs. All participants were provided with folders which included all modules and other material for the training sessions and could be used as a reference tool in the future.

The Casual Staff Coordinator and development team members co-delivered the modules which were immediately followed by on-the-job practical training. A further 16 hours *in-training* was then completed at the service delivery points alongside a dedicated ‘buddy’; an experienced staff member. The *in-training* hours were completed over the first four weeks of session before competency based assessments were scheduled for each team member.

Competency assessment

The competency assessment phase was initially met with trepidation by many staff who were threatened by the concept ‘competency’. Some casual staff voiced their concerns that any negative outcomes from the assessment could impact on their continuing employment. Training program developers were confident from their research and described by Orrell (2005) that using the term competency was valid and critical in conveying meaningful and sustainable viability for the program’s continuance.

Assessors reiterated at every opportunity the competency assessment was not a test, but verification that staff had acquired skills and knowledge necessary to provide a quality service. Reassurance was provided that if a level of competency was not met opportunities for re-training would be made available. Staff who completed their assessment were encouraged to share their experiences with colleagues. Word of mouth quickly spread that the competency assessment was not to be feared. One staff member remarked following her competency assessment “I didn’t realise I knew so much”. Assessments are now viewed as additional opportunities to learn from the training experts and demonstrate competency with confidence.

Competency assessments provided evidence of staff competence across 97 per cent of the modules. Although our assessment knowledge and experience were rudimentary, the results indicated a strong congruency between what we set out to achieve and what the staff could actually demonstrate competence against.

Training impact

Staff were surveyed six weeks post training to assess the training program impact and value on their preparedness for the job as outlined in table 4. Results were also used to inform content and delivery improvements.

Client Services Training Participants Survey – April 2009	**Results** 100% return rate
1. How relevant were the training/skills/ideas to the job?	93% found the training highly or very relevant
2. What elements of the training did you have most difficulty with?	57% none 33% printing 10% practical components.
3. How well did the training prepare you for on-the-job tasks?	94% agreed the training provided excellent preparation and felt confident from the outset
4. On the job, how helpful have the training materials been?	80% indicated they have referred to the training material on-the-job
5. Overall, how confident are you now in applying the new skills?	67% indicated an increased confidence in applying new skills
6. Please comment on the greatest benefit to you, from the training?	'Preparation for the job was excellent – I felt confident and prepared' 'I don't know how I could have learnt this amount of information on-the-job' 'Practical components and activities were excellent in reinforcing the learning for me'

Table 4 – Sample of Training Participants Survey

Overall, the survey results indicated that our new approach to training immediately enabled team members to effectively engage in their role within the Client Services team. Greater preparedness for the job further supported our goal of ensuring a consistent level of service delivery to clients.

In addition to the *Training Participants* survey the development team designed a new Client Satisfaction EXIT survey. More than 300 clients were surveyed following an interaction at a point of service delivery and asked to respond to five questions. These questions gauged their perception and satisfaction on the consistency of service delivery, staff member knowledge and confidence regarding products and services. 97 per cent of clients indicated a high satisfaction rating against four of the five questions. However, only 67 per cent of clients indicated that the staff member provided additional service information without prompting. This result provided critical information that was used by the development team to upgrade the content and activity elements of one of the modules.

The program evolution and extension

The development team evaluated and reflected on their experiences from the first training program and set about redeveloping module design and delivery of further programs. They drew on the expertise of the members of the Information and Research Services team, the Library's Information Literacy and Research and Teacher Training teams, research from learning experts such as Professor Janice Orrell and environmental scanning of other competency based training programs. The Casual Staff Coordinator, as a member of the development team responsible for implementing the new training program, completed an external course, *Train Small Groups,* to enhance her skills set.

Modules in the second iteration of the program included learning outcomes, integrated learning activities that developed and reinforced the learning outcomes, and assessment activities that tested the learning outcomes. Development and reinforcement of skills is now embedded in each module with learning outcomes clearly articulated and reinforced with appropriate activities. Learning activities became learner centred and required participants to become actively engaged in the learning process rather than passive observers. Module templates were redesigned to include new headings and format, and a lesson plan template was adopted. It was also decided that system, service or process experts would be approached to deliver particular modules for greater impact.

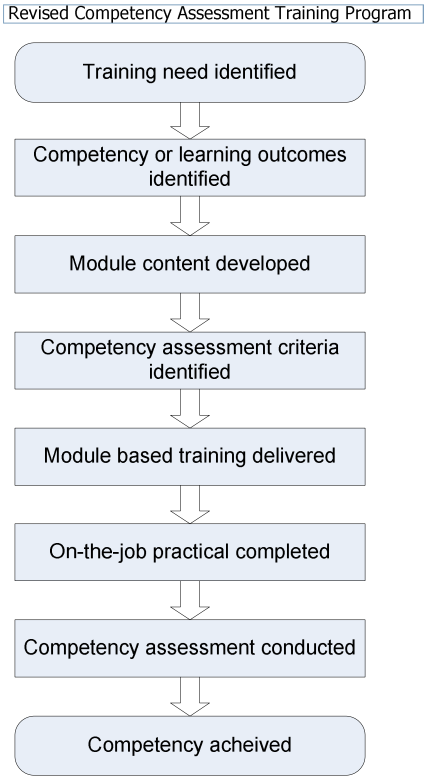
Revised Competency Assessment Training Program
Training need identified
Competency or learning outcomes identified
Module content developed
Competency assessment criteria identified
Module based training delivered
On-the-job practical completed
Competency assessment conducted
Competency acheived

Figure 2 – Revised Training Flowchart

The assessment process was upgraded to include:

- Trainee advised with 7 day notice and advise to review modules
- Training experts are assigned assessment workload
- Assessments conducted one-on-one with the trainee away from the service point

Anecdotal evidence and feedback suggests that observation and support for new staff continues informally by coordinators and experts alike. The team culture is supportive and encouraging for new staff in particular, and nurturing of staff in training is accepted as common practice.

As previously stated the UWL has a strong commitment to ongoing training. At this point a decision was made to expand the Client Services team competency modules to include Information Desk training, another key team responsibility. More than 50 staff were targeted for training and in July 2009 this ambitious target was achieved. A tool was required to manage the administration of the expanding program. A matrix was designed to record training and assessment activities. The Casual Staff Coordinator records training activity and is able to tell at a glance who requires training; who has attended training; who has completed the competency assessment; and who requires re-assessment. The matrix provides quantitative data on program delivery, participant numbers and assessment progress and is regularly sourced to inform business activity reporting.

The training program continues to grow

The program's success encouraged us to extend the training initiative to other Library service delivery teams including Research Help and Roving Support and to progress core training activities with the introduction of Information Technology (IT) Skills. This commitment to comprehensive training means that no staff member will work on a service point without first completing the requisite training program. The training program has provided assurance that staff have the required skills and knowledge to deliver service to meet expected quality standards and feel confident in their ability to do so.

The modules are dynamic, are easily updated, adapted or revised as required. Remote site libraries including CRC and Shoalhaven have also adopted the training framework and adapted the modules to suit their specific needs and environment. One great advantage of the modular approach is its ability to be customised to suit needs and location. Modules can be used for one-on-one situations such as retraining staff returning to work from long absences, training staff taking up job enrichment or job sharing opportunities.

The skills and knowledge required to staff the Research Help desk were so wide and complex that these modules were arranged in 3 stages. Stage 1 includes the "must haves". Buddying and competency assessment is completed following Stage 1 and prior to going "solo". Stages 2 and 3 include more complex or less required skills and knowledge, for example citation indexes and EndNote. Ongoing database training is also incorporated in these stages in acknowledgement of the constantly changing nature of technologies and software systems. This scaffolding of the training program has resulted in increased staff confidence in this new approach, evidence from the different evaluation surveys.

That non-client service delivery teams are undertaking this new approach to training their team members including Research Online. Access Services and Collection Services is evidence of the transferability of the training model. The Manager, Service Quality has been involved in the development of non-client service modules. She has been able to guide module development and share with others what has been learned along the way. All modules use the same structure and template; including learning outcomes that are practised and reinforced by the learning activities, and assessment activities that test the learning outcomes. This was initially challenging for staff whose workplace responsibilities are focussed on process rather than formative learning.

During the development of the non-client service modules it became apparent that all UWL staff would benefit from completing the "introductory" modules. These provide insight into team roles and responsibilities and highlight the inter-connectivity of team functions. This training program is currently under development.

Challenges

Increased workloads and demands on staff time continue to be a challenging aspect of our commitment to this approach to training. The timing of the training can be problematic and often needs to occur during peak periods impinging on the busy workload of staff. For example the IT competencies were completed by all Library staff. 232 staff hours were devoted to attending the training, during session break. This estimate does not include the time required for module development and follow up assessments. While we acknowledge these resource implications and costs involved in developing a training program of this scale, we believe the return on investment far outweighs any costs involved.

The program success is not based on the training modules alone. The on-the-job period is critical to reinforcing the learning outcomes. Buddying new staff proved very time intensive and required staff volunteering to support each other to cover additional shifts at service points during the busiest time of the year – the weeks leading up to, and including the first weeks of a new session. Buddying is seen as vital to the process as it is during this period the staff member practices their new skills and knowledge, gains confidence, and observes the modelling of the desired Client Service culture, and behaviour expectations. It is also during this period that experienced staff are able share their expertise, to mentor, coach and guide those less experienced.

Conclusion

In February 2009 the University of Wollongong Library introduced a new approach to staff training. The UWL culture of continuous improvement combined with Client Satisfaction Survey results informed the need for change. Competency based training is now the agreed method used by UWL. We built on existing training and development successes deeply ingrained within the UWL culture.

To keep our staff on the cutting edge of service delivery, a competency based training program was adopted. The creation of a systematic approach for skilled and knowledge attainment included: researching competency based training ideologies; identifying core client service skills, knowledge and behaviours; identifying learning outcomes; developing module content; identifying assessment criteria and program delivery. The Functional Task Analysis model has proven appropriate for developing the initial Client Service modules. As discussed by (Fine & Cronshaw, 1999) utilises the knowledge of in-house experts to identify the skills needed to effectively perform the job and combines this with the identified needs of the organisation and the needs of the staff member.

More than 90 per cent of participants are satisfied with their increased preparedness for their job and early Client Satisfaction results are also positive. Participants completing the programs are rewarded with a *Certificate of Achievement*. More than 190 certificates have been issued to 87 staff since the program's inception. These outcomes demonstrate a positive return on investment and have lead to greater *buy in* across the organisation. In 2010, all team action plans included a commitment to competency based training program development.

Due to its outstanding success, the authors have confidence in the sustainability and longevity of the competency based training program at University of Wollongong Library and its role in inculcating the Vision and Values of the organisation.

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