10-28-2016

"It all starts with a smile": Training Student Employees in a Learning Commons Environment

Heidi Gauder
University of Dayton, hgauder1@udayton.edu

Patricia Meinking
University of Dayton, pmeinking1@udayton.edu

METHODOLOGY

- Nationally distributed survey, 141 responses
- 40 questions about training methods, techniques & content; estimated training hours; follow-up training; supervisor satisfaction.

QUESTIONS

- What are the best practices for student employee training?
- Is it possible to quantify the ideal number of training hours?
- What are the most important training components for students working in a busy service environment?

TASKS PERFORMED BY STUDENT EMPLOYEES
(may check more than one). N=141

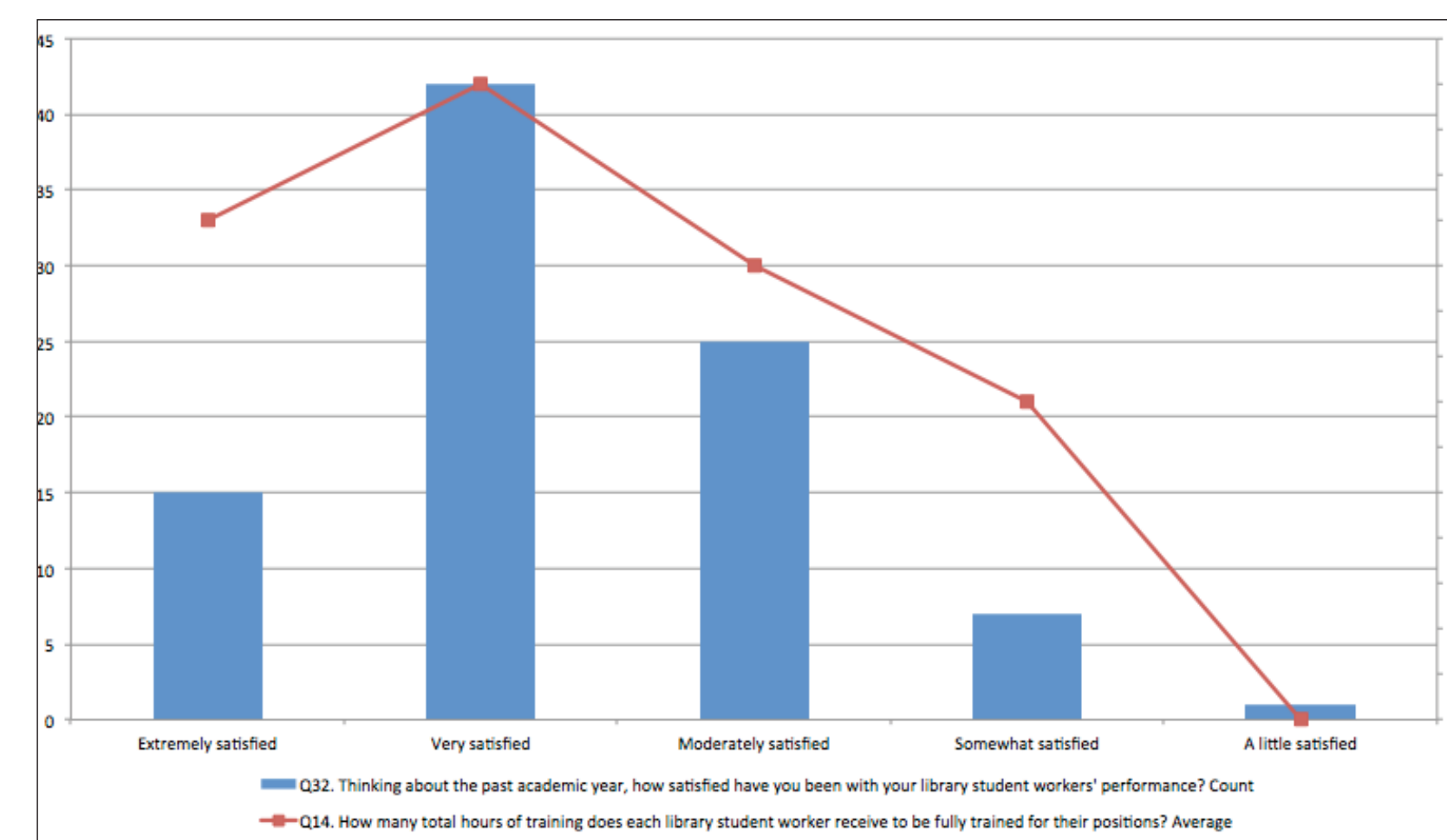|	
Directional help	110
Technical support	91
Check out materials	84
General office support	81
Reference help	59
IT training	15
Shelving	13
Tutor support	8
Other	13
Reservations	6
Promotion and outreach	5
Writing support	4

ADVICE FROM THOSE IN THE TRENCHES

HIRING: Focus on personal qualities & communication skills. "It all starts with a smile and friendly greeting. Interpersonal skills and a strong work ethic are key; other things can be taught."
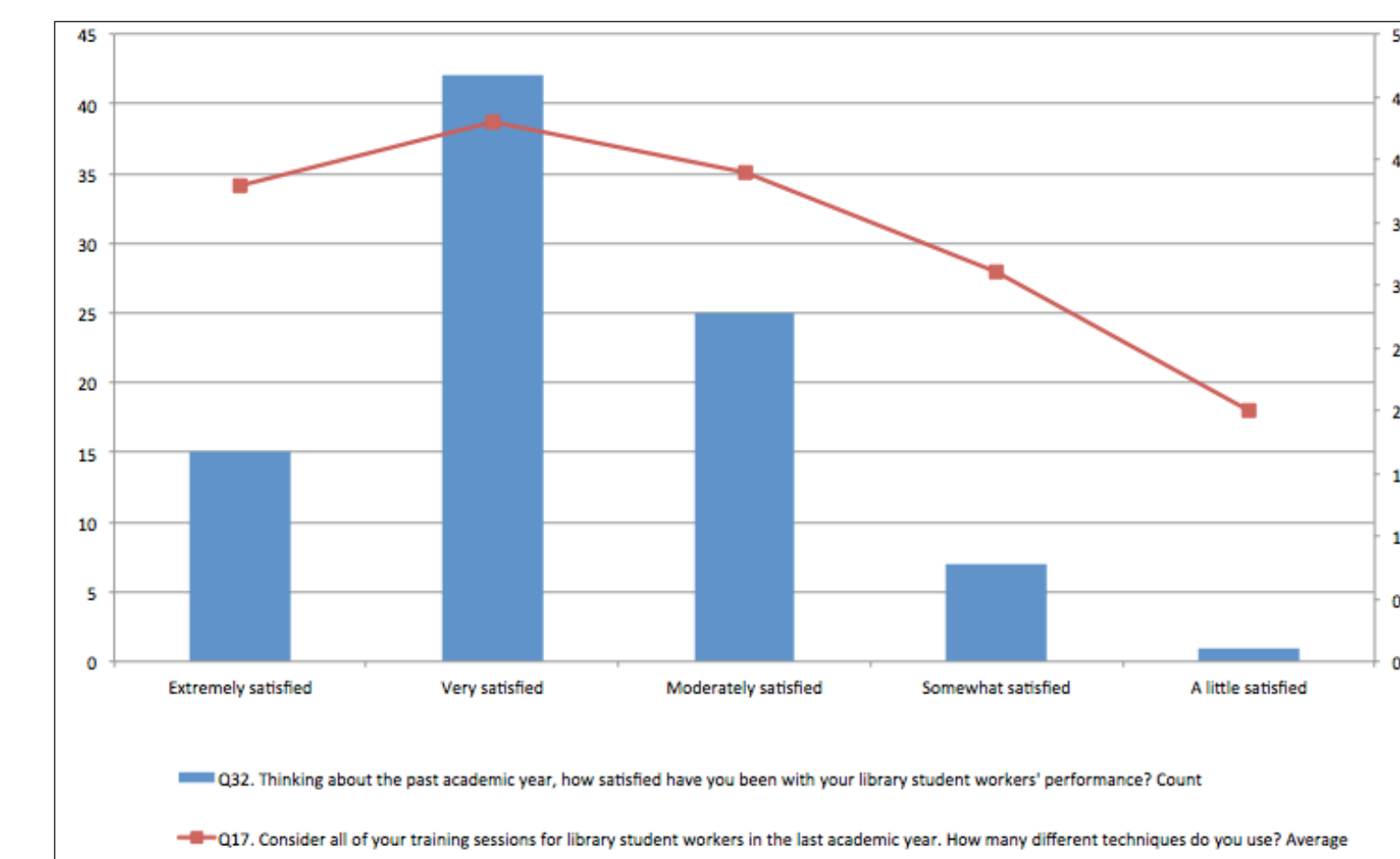
TRAINING: Involve experienced student employees, whether for leading training sessions or for shadowing. "Make the training very interactive and allow peer shadowing before fully scheduling the new student on their own."

SUPERVISOR NEEDS: Provide structure and communicate the value of the work students perform, so that student employees can see that they play an important role in fulfilling the library mission. "Lower expectations [in terms of] when to expect students to 'know' all of training. Explain why they are being tasked to do jobs, to help library, or staff member on projects not just for busy work."

"It all starts with a smile"
TRAINING STUDENT EMPLOYEES IN A LEARNING COMMONS ENVIRONMENT

Heidi Gauder, Coordinator of Research and Instruction

Patricia Meinking, Acquisitions Assistant

UNIVERSITY of DAYTON
Roesch Library

Using at least 4 training techniques results in higher supervisor satisfaction.

Supervisors are more satisfied with employee performance when they invest at least 10 hours of training.
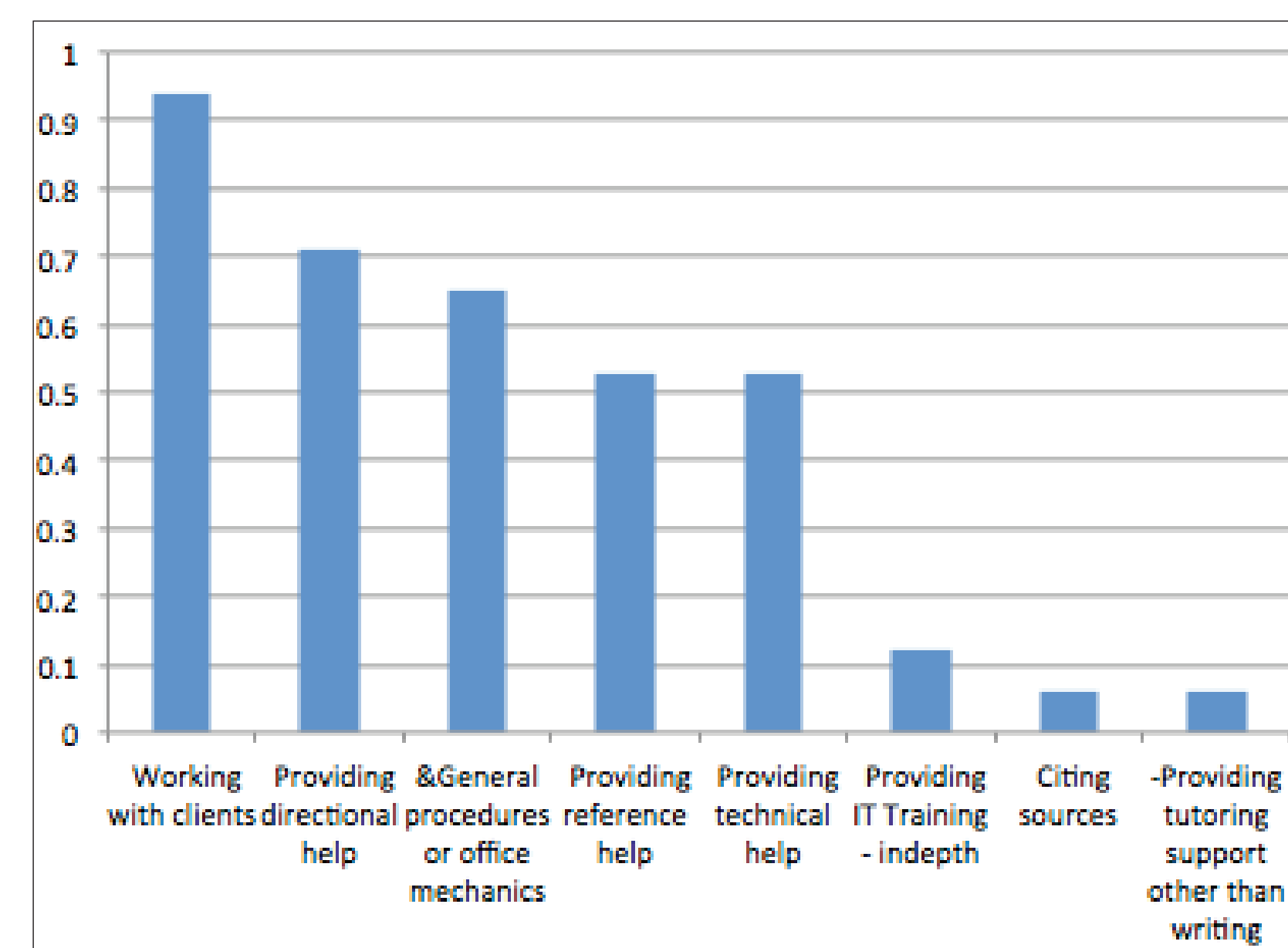
Supervisors who were highly satisfied with their library student employees and spent 9-13 hours on training focused more on customer service skills, directional assistance, and general office procedures.

FINDINGS

Training techniques: The lecture and reading the manual techniques were not used by supervisors who were Extremely Satisfied and were mentioned minimally in the Very Satisfied category.

The lecture technique was most prominent for supervisors who were Somewhat or A little Satisfied.

TRAINING TIME: Supervisors who provided Very or Extremely Satisfied ratings spend an average of 13 hours to fully train each library student worker.

AREAS OF FOCUS: Supervisors who provided Very or Extremely Satisfied ratings spend an average of 13 hours to fully train each library student worker.

- **Working with clients**
  (e.g., customer service, professionalism)
  94%
- **Providing directional help**
  (e.g, directing clients to locations, services)
  71%
- **General procedures or office mechanics**
  (e.g., submitting time cards, etc.)
  65%

RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve the most satisfaction with library student employee performance, include the following techniques in your student training.

- Practice skills individually
- Practice skills in groups or in pairs
- Provide quizzes or concept checks

Plan on devoting a significant portion of training to customer service and developing professional attributes for a library student worker.

Anticipate on budgeting at least 10 hours of training per student employee.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Firouzeh L. (2012). "Student Workers: Essential Partners in the Twenty-First Century Academic Library," Public Services Quarterly 8, no. 4.

Manley, L. and Holley, R. (2014). "Hiring and Training Work-Study Students: A Case Study," College & Undergraduate Libraries 21, no. 1.

Mestre, L., and LeCrone, J. (2015). "Elevating the Student Assistant: An Integrated Development Program for Student Library Assistants."College & Undergraduate Libraries 22, no. 1: 1–20. doi:10.1 080/10691316.2015.1001240.

Mitchell, J. and Soini, N. (2014). "Student Involvement for Student Success: Student Staff in the Learning Commons." College & Research Libraries 75, no. 4: 590–609. doi:10.5860/crl.75.4.590.