Library Sidekicks: Training Student Employees as Peer Instructors

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What is a peer instructor?

What do you think a peer instructor is?

Peer teaching is a method by which one student instructs another student in material on which the first is an expert and the second is a novice. (Briggs, 2013)
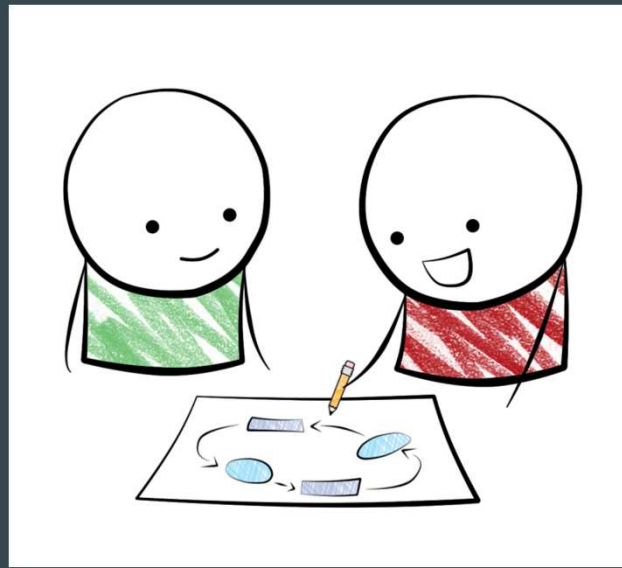
Miami University Regionals

- Regional campuses located in Hamilton and Middletown Ohio.
- 4,500 FTE
- Mix of traditional and non-traditional students.
- Majority are domestic, although there is a growing number of international students primarily from China.
- Gardner-Harvey Library (Middletown)
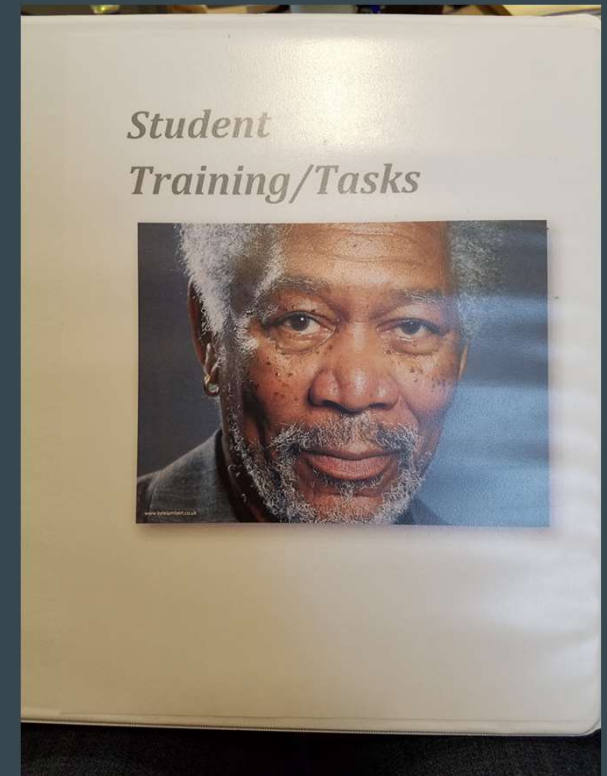 - 5 full-time staff
  - 3-8 student workers

Initial Training- The Book

 ❧ Training manual created by students for students

 ❧ Overseen by Student Supervisor

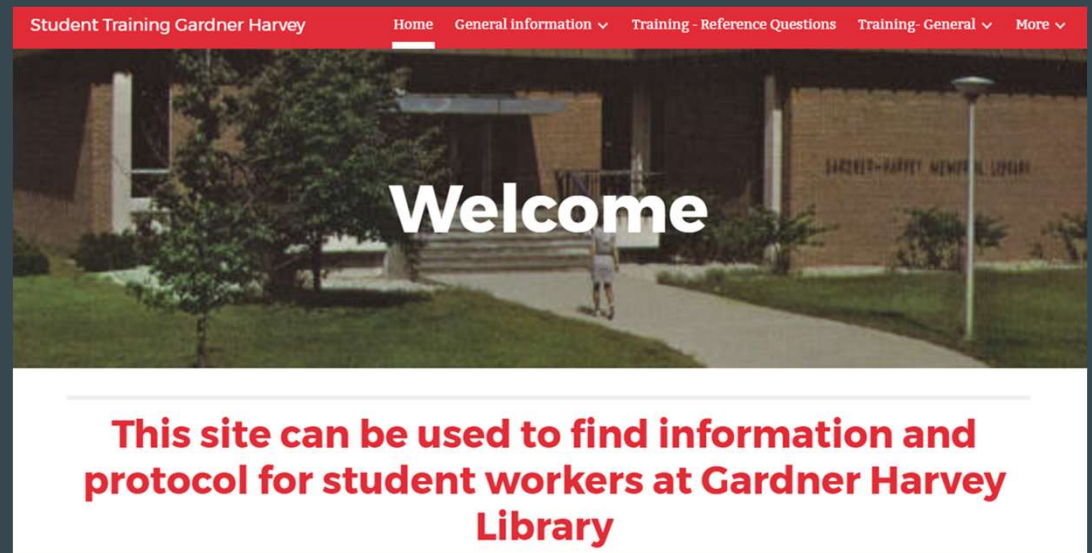 ❧ Includes information for quick reference (break policies, login info.)

Training - The Website

- Created to appeal to students that are comfortable with technology
- Easy to update
- Students can work at own pace
- Can hold more information
- Can be viewed anywhere

Student Training Gardner Harvey   Home   General information ˅   Training - Reference Questions   Training- General ˅   More ˅

Welcome

This site can be used to find information and protocol for student workers at Gardner Harvey Library

Training- Reference

Reference training includes:

❧ Books and More
❧ Articles and More
❧ Citing Sources
❧ Determining Information Needs
❧ Textbooks on Reserve
❧ Getting Full Text
❧ Statistics

Peer training

- Students proficient in level 2 categories are able to train new workers.
- Rollover of student workers allows for continued peer training.
- Training also allows for sharing student strengths in technology, organization, and creativity.
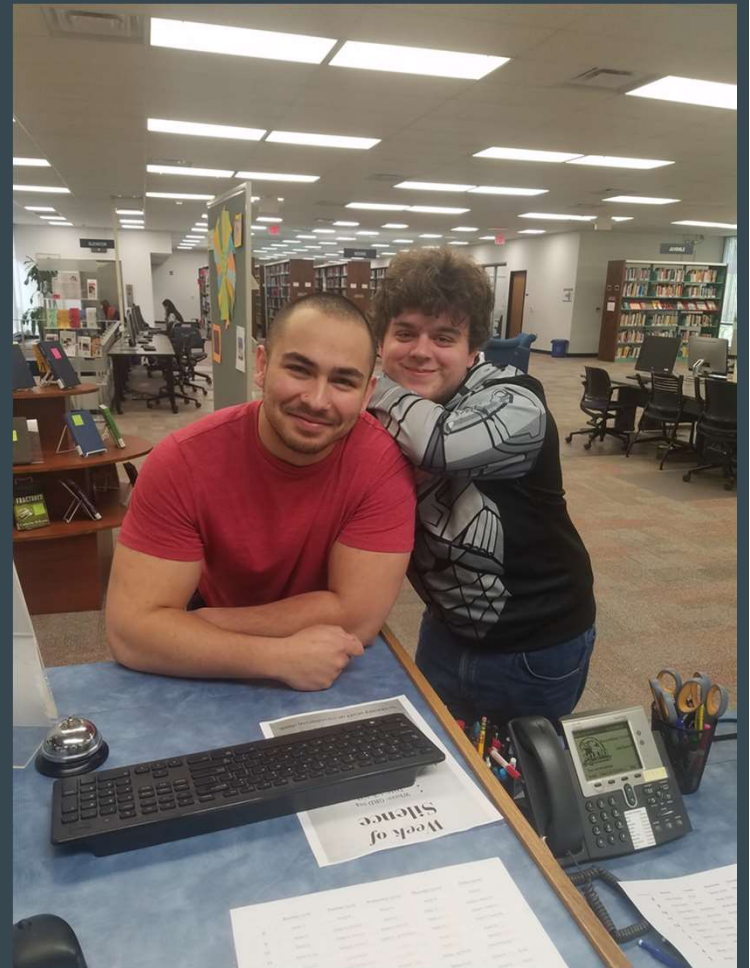
Peer Reference

- Students cover majority of InfoDesk hours = Face of the library
- Student workers are empowered to answer a variety of patron questions - phone, chat, face-to-face
- Patrons are more comfortable asking employees who are their age for assistance with everything from printing, to locating a resource, to citations

Our International Students

- Middletown ELL program
  - Intensive English Program for approximately 200 international students, mostly from China
  - Levels 1 - 5 for language development
  - Library hires levels 4 and 5
- Hiring international students bridges the cultural gap
- Staff and students learn about other cultures and build friendships

Motivation

- Project management

- Accountability

- Free food

- Recognition

Image courtesy of:
https://www.onwardhardware.com/docume
nts/docsPr/36/22/YZ/BC/3622YZBC/11446
06_700.jpg

Date: 3/8/17

Daily Tasks ✿

Morning Shipments Packed	☺
Manifest Entered & Erased	☺
MU Unpacked	BK
Ohiolink Unpacked	BK
Night Shift Packed	AL/BK

Special Tasks ✿

| Clean White Board in 110 | AL |
| Trash Jan. Newspapers | BK |

University of Mount Union Library

UMU Library

- Open ~90 hours per week
- Six full-time staffers
- ~ 40 student staffers (10 hours per week maximum)
- ~10 student supervisors (12 hours per week maximum)
- ~2300 FTE
- 2-3% International students

SuperCirc!

Talents/majors we court when hiring:

- Statistics

- Human Resources

- Graphic Design

- English/Writing

- Technology Nerds

- Research Skills

- Customer Service Experience

Peer Training provides:

- ❧ On-the-job training
- ❧ Opportunities to ask questions
- ❧ The chance to shadow more experienced workers
- ❧ Sharing tips and tricks learned over the years
- ❧ A more relaxed learning environment
- ❧ Résumé boosters for the trainers!

UMU Library iMentor Program
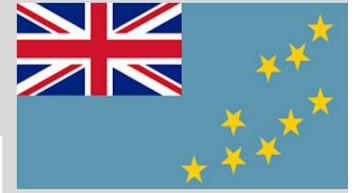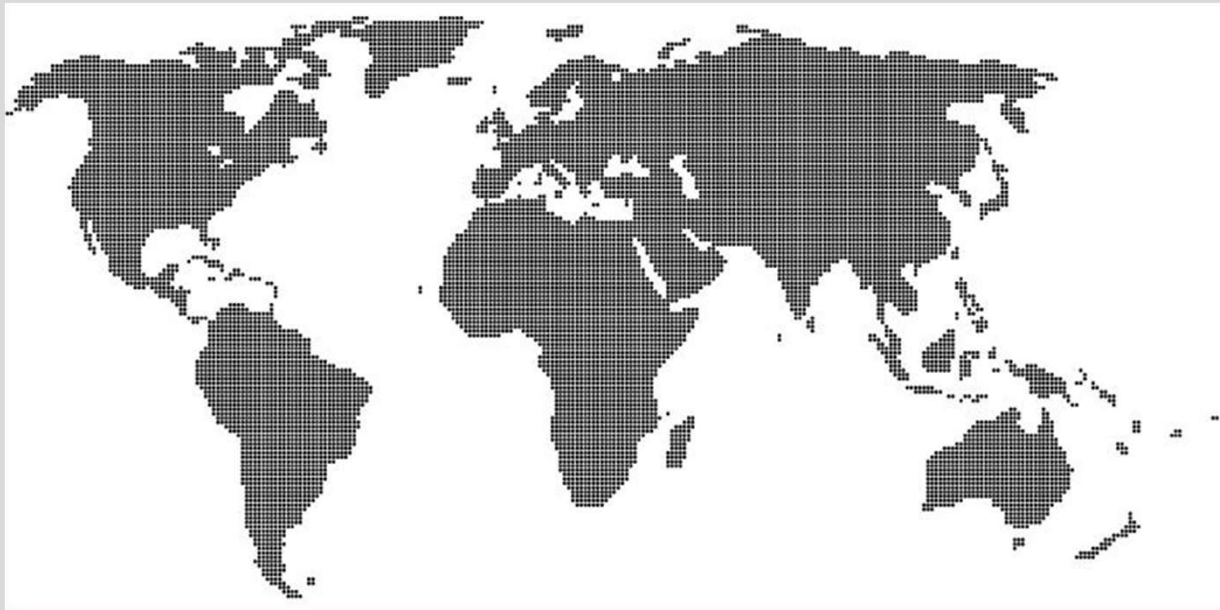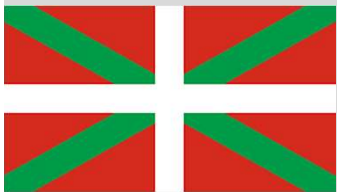
What iMentors Do

- **We will work one-on-one or in small groups.**

- **3 meetings will be offered within the first month of the semester.**

- **We'll help students become acquainted with the specifics of the services we offer.**

- **We provide a helpful library pocket manual for all students.**

Advantages of Using Students as Peer Instructors

- Cheap labor

- Frees up staff time

- Builds new skills

- Fresh ideas

- Skill-sets they bring

Studies have shown that some of the benefits of using students as peer teachers include being relatable, approachable, and easy to understand as librarians can sometimes overcomplicate explanations (Bodemer, 2014; Farrell and Driver, 2010).

Disadvantages of Student Employment on Employers

- Short work time

- High turnover

- Accommodating class schedules

- Immaturity/ personality conflicts

- Part-time work is not usually their top priority

Questions?

Image courtesy of:
https://s-media-cache-
ak0.pinimg.com/originals/d7/b3/31/d7b33138dc612ad
f07aee3e2ea522719.jpg

References

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☛ Bodemer, B. B. (2014). They CAN and They SHOULD: Undergraduates Providing Peer Reference and Instruction. *College & Research Libraries, 75*(2), 162-178.

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