SO, I CAN’T JUST DO HOMEWORK?:
TRAINING AND USING STUDENT WORKERS TO THE FULLEST
Direct Supervisor
- The Bethany Memorial Library employs 8 student workers
  - 1 senior, 1 junior, 3 sophomores, and 3 freshmen
- 1 library volunteer
  - Currently in library school

I interview, hire, schedule, train, and supervise all student workers.
Library Work Study Application
- Open for the first 2 weeks only to students with work study in their financial aid
- Compare class schedule to tentative schedule of returning students

Interview
- Within the first week of school
- Only 10 minutes long
- Questions like “Why do you want to work at the library?” and “Do you have any other on-campus jobs?”
Training

Individual Training
- LC Easy
- Student Handbook
- Library tour
- Circ Desk 101/Privacy Policy

Group Library Instruction
- A Saturday a week or two into school
- In-depth library tour
- Team exercises
  - Using the copier
  - Rearrange a cart by call number/collection order
  - Shelve a cart of books
- Databases and LibGuides
The library is fun!

Students help with library displays, special projects, decorating for holidays/events, book processing, and various library/librarian side projects.

We thank our students with birthday cards, potlucks (holidays and end of the semester), and gifts (usually candy).

**Education takes priority over working.**
So I Can’t Just Do Homework?...
Training and Using Student Workers to the Fullest

JONI D. MYERS
Public Access Team Manager, MSU/Mankato

HELP WANTED
Work Study Undergrads
Training and Using Student Workers to the Fullest

- **Training on the “BIG PICTURE” topics for all library student workers** — I do not directly supervise any student workers, but supervise staff members who supervise student workers. I work with the manager of the Tech Services Area to plan the training.

- **Memorial Library at MSU, Mankato employs around 55-60 student workers**
  - About 20 work in Circulation
  - Some areas have only 1 or 2 student workers

- **Most are work study**
  - We do not interview or select work study students—they are just assigned to us
  - We employ a few students outside the work study program. These tend to be students whom we acquired as work study, but who no longer qualify or did not receive a work study contract but that we want to keep.

- **Teaching about the “nuts and bolts” and specific tasks in each area falls to the direct supervisors** — I plan, schedule, and carry out training on more wide-ranging topics, for example...
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- **Dean’s Welcome**—just what it sounds like; the Dean spends 15 minutes talking to the students, letting them know this is a “real” job and that we need them!

- **Library Tour**—an hour-long jaunt through different areas of the library, with stops where various staff or faculty talk for a few minutes

- **Customer Service**
  - I have three different presentations that I can alternate between (varies from 20-60 minutes)

- **Emergency/Disaster Preparedness**
  - Often have a faculty librarian lead this one
  - Tend to combine this one with a short presentation on “Materials Handling”

- **ADA/Diversity**
  - We usually try to bring in someone from Accessibility Services and someone from the International Center to lead this

- **Others**
  - Counseling Center “Keeping Cool in Hot Situations”
  - Security and Affirmative Action “Sexual Harassment”
So I Can’t Just Do Homework?...

Training and Using Student Workers to the Fullest

• **We have a lot of students.** We tend to offer 2-3 date and time options, doing each event 2-3 times

• **Do training early in the Fall semester**—usually wrap up all the “big” student training by mid-October

• **Talk to your direct supervisor**—I always refer students to their supervisors with any area specific questions

• **Coordinate with the student supervisors**—I ask for input from supervisors on topics, timing, effectiveness, etc.

• **Treats!** Food can be a motivator and a reward. I often offer an assortment of small candies at the end of any training

  **Student Potluck Lunches**—In the Fall and Spring we put on a themed potluck lunch for our students. These are immensely popular and unforgettable. Our students deserve it!
Anne Stenzel
University Archives Technician

- 5 student workers
  - 3 work-study
  - 2 student help
- Initial contact by email with brief overview of what we do
Training

- Detailed checklist
  - Archives orientation, Library tour, Student Handbook, LC Easy, etc
  - Small group training
  - Powerpoint, readings

- Emphasize end results
- Recognize mistakes as possible training lapses
Sharing is caring

• Sharing student workers with other areas within the library when needed AND asking for help

• Providing tasks that can be done anywhere within the library.
  o Digitization conversion of Oral Histories
  o Oral History transcription
  o Obituary index, both paper and microfilm
Encourage & Support

• How can I help my student workers be successful?
  o We’re a team!
  o Tap into individual strengths
  o Get to know each student
  o I ❤ Questions!
  o Be open to suggestions
  o Celebrate with parties, food, prizes, etc
Discussion

Do you select/hire your student workers or are they assigned to you?
Do you allow your more senior student workers to train newer student workers?
What were your biggest training successes

...and your biggest flops?
How do you train your students on highly technical processes?
How do you thank your student workers?
How did you successfully engage your unmotivated student worker?
How do you keep them busy all the time?
What are your biggest supervising challenges?
**Jessi Zimmerman**, Reference & Acquisitions Coordinator
Memorial Library, Bethany Lutheran College

**Joni Myers**, Public Access Team Manager
Memorial Library, Minnesota State University, Mankato

**Anne Stenzel**, University Archives Technician
Memorial Library, Minnesota State University, Mankato