[Error: No translatable content with required tags was provided. The input appears to be a filename only: “谈谈读者培训模式存在的问题与对策.doc” . Please provide the full document text containing the ···structural markers to proceed with translation.]

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Abstract

Reader training constitutes one of the key endeavors of libraries and represents an important means for libraries to fully exert their supportive role. This article analyzes the problems existing in the course training model, lecture training model, and self-service training model of library reader training, proposes practical and feasible countermeasures, and provides references for libraries to carry out reader training.

Full Text

On the Problems and Countermeasures of Reader Training Models

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Abstract

Reader training represents a key focus of library work and an important means for libraries to fully leverage their supportive role. This article analyzes problems inherent in three reader training models—course-based training, lecture-based training, and self-service training—and proposes practical countermeasures to

provide references for libraries planning and implementing reader training programs.

Keywords: Library; Reader training; Training model; Problem; Countermeasures
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In the library profession, reader training is referred to by various terms, including reader training, user training, user education, information quality education, and information literacy education [1-2]. In reality, the specific terminology matters less than whether the training effectively addresses readers' interests and needs. This paper categorizes library reader training into three models—course-based training, lecture-based training, and self-service training—and discusses the problems and countermeasures associated with each, aiming to spark discussion among colleagues in the field.

1. Course-Based Training Model

1.1 Existing Problems

The course-based training model refers to a systematic and standardized training approach integrated into institutional teaching plans, with established curricula, scheduled times and locations, designated instructors and trainees, and supplemented by examination or assessment mechanisms that mandatorily require trainees to master relevant information retrieval competencies. This model is primarily implemented in universities, while public libraries rarely employ such formal course structures for reader training. Research institutions generally have readers with educational backgrounds at the bachelor' s level or above, and few libraries in these settings conduct training through formal courses. However, graduate students in the Chinese Academy of Sciences system spend their first year at the Graduate University (now "University of Chinese Academy of Sciences") receiving foundational education that includes information literacy courses, with some training units requiring their graduate students to complete these courses as mandatory requirements. In fact, a considerable portion of the general public also needs systematic information literacy training, and large public libraries should consider planning annual series of training courses offered free to the community.

The primary problem currently facing course-based training is weak teaching capacity. The vast majority of universities assign library staff to teach information retrieval courses, with very few establishing dedicated faculty positions. While many libraries have numerous staff members, few are qualified to conduct course-based training. Some libraries assign staff without information science backgrounds to teach simply by purchasing an "information retrieval" textbook and lecturing directly from it, yielding unsatisfactory results. Furthermore, this "teaching how to fish" course has been marginalized through various unreasonable arrangements and planning, resulting in students not taking it seriously [3].

1.2 Countermeasures

1.2.1 Top-Level Design for Course Offerings Course-based training provides systematic instruction that can comprehensively develop readers' foundational information competencies. Given China' s actual circumstances, this should be strengthened primarily within university education, and the Ministry of Education should consider mandatory implementation. Universities must unhesitatingly shoulder the responsibility for information literacy education centered on information retrieval capabilities, determining the training provider based on their specific circumstances. For instance, universities with information management departments or schools, such as Peking University, Wuhan University, Nanjing University, and Anhui University, should have faculty members or doctoral students from these programs undertake information literacy education for the entire university community. Universities without such departmental resources could establish an "Information Literacy Training Center" and recruit master' s or doctoral graduates in library and information science as professional instructors. If a library possesses a strong training team, it can be directly utilized; for example, the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences' information literacy courses are conducted by the powerful information center of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. If general universities are unwilling to establish professional teaching staff, they should entrust the library to organize instruction but must support the development of the library' s professional training team, which can also effectively promote or drive the library' s transformation toward knowledge services. Public libraries should actively plan and explore course offerings based on readers' needs for systematic information literacy training, rather than remaining passive observers.

1.2.2 Curriculum Design for Required and Elective Courses The author believes the name "information retrieval education" requires revision. With network 普及 and the simplification of database interfaces, many university students believe their "information retrieval" skills are already adequate. Coupled with weak demand for foreign-language materials, they do not perceive the necessity of improving these skills. Therefore, it is recommended to establish two course titles: "Foundational Information Competency Training" and "Applied Information Competency Training" or "Advanced Information Competency Training." Such names would increase students' sense of practicality, which can be validated through high-quality teaching that connects theory with practice, quickly generating a positive ripple effect. Foundational information competency training should be a required course for universal education, while advanced information competency training can be offered as an elective for interested students or senior researchers seeking voluntary training.

Beyond attractive course titles, practical and targeted content is essential. For general students, information retrieval principles and concepts should be streamlined to core knowledge, explained in simple yet profound terms, with emphasis placed on practicality and relevance. Therefore, foundational competency

content should be organized around comprehensive needs, divided into practical themes such as "Acquisition and Utilization of Network Information Resources," "Acquisition and Utilization of Database Information Resources," and "Practical Skills Enhancement for Research Learning Tools," with relevant textbook sections selected and integrated into a coherent teaching system based on these themes. Advanced information competency training should similarly adopt a practical theme approach but focus more on professionally applied analytical skills, methods, tools, and in-depth usage of advanced resources.

1.2.3 Process Control in Course-Based Training Whether foundational or applied information competency training, the instructional process must be engaging and dynamic. Existing information retrieval courses typically rely on teacher-centered lectures supplemented by PowerPoint presentations, with students listening without interacting with actual retrieval tools, making the content abstract and rigid. An interactive teaching model should be adopted, emphasizing student agency in the learning process. Utilizing available teaching facilities through group discussions and teamwork can stimulate student motivation. Particularly for advanced competency training, practical training effects should be enhanced rather than relying solely on PowerPoint or textbook lectures. The case method is worth promoting. For example, one instructor used case-based teaching for foundational competency training covering information retrieval steps, techniques, and database usage. The case method demonstrated every step—from analyzing topics and determining search terms, to understanding Boolean operators and constructing search expressions, to trial searches, adjusting strategies based on results, and finally formal retrieval and full-text acquisition—allowing students to experience and master information retrieval processes through real research scenarios [3]. How could such training fail to engage students?

1.2.4 Assessment Control in Course-Based Training Course-based training has the clearest and strictest evaluation criteria among all training models, with examinations and grades as the final form. However, many students reportedly do not take "information retrieval courses" seriously, and instructors fear that making this "minor subject" a stumbling block for students —especially for electives—might discourage enrollment. Consequently, some instructors provide exam questions in advance and grade leniently, creating a negative ripple effect where new students learn they can pass without attending, even praising such instructors as "good." In reality, these seemingly "popular" instructors are being irresponsible to students and damaging the library' s reputation—perpetuating the misconception that library work requires no real expertise. Therefore, course instructors must not only develop solid professional skills but also be upfront: "This course will benefit you for life. I hope you listen carefully, participate actively, and promptly raise any issues. Do not expect me to lower standards; unless you choose not to take this course." Throughout the teaching process, strict verification of student mastery ensures

genuine development of information competencies. Students will appreciate this when they compare themselves with others and realize their skills are lacking. Information competency training is highly practical and can yield immediate results; if students remain uninterested, it only reflects on the instructor' s competence or methodology.

2. Lecture-Based Training Model

2.1 Existing Problems

The lecture-based training model refers to a flexible training approach where libraries determine topics based on actual reader needs and institutional conditions, then designate training times, locations, and instructors. This model generally imposes no mandatory requirements on trainees, who may even leave during the session. Due to scheduling conflicts and other factors, attendance is often unsatisfactory. For example, Fudan University' s Handan Campus Library conducted 12 reader training sessions in the second semester of 2013, with 385 total participants; except for a few overcrowded sessions, each training attracted only about twenty attendees [2]. Zhang Jiajia's survey of four university libraries (Capital Normal University, Suzhou Vocational University, Jilin University' s Agricultural Division, and Zunyi Medical College) revealed similarly unsatisfactory participation, with some universities reporting that 78.87% of readers had never attended library training. Most readers considered the training effectiveness mediocre, and existing training outcomes failed to fully meet reader needs [4].

2.2 Countermeasures

2.2.1 Determining Training Needs While low attendance in lecture-based training has some objective causes, the key issue lies in training relevance. South China Normal University Library's targeted training for a research group proved highly successful and received excellent evaluations [3]. The authors' library conducted EndNote training in two sessions—"Basic Skills"and "Advanced Skills" —attracting over 200 and over 100 participants respectively, from a research staff of just over 300. Therefore, libraries must consider readers' genuine training needs when developing lecture-based programs.

First, analyze and determine which general or routine training can be incorporated into course-based or self-service models, then list potential lecture training programs with clear project names and objectives, allowing readers to freely propose additional needs. Compile these into a catalog for readers to select from or submit special requests. After aggregating reader demand, analyze implementable projects and their priority order. To facilitate accurate training, department heads should designate a dedicated information service liaison (referred to as an "information service specialist") to coordinate with the library. This frontline service team can then identify departmental information competency training needs and determine specific participant numbers, even providing

planned attendee lists, enabling the library to accurately arrange appropriate venues. This prevents situations where training rooms are too small, forcing some readers to stand outside or leave [2].

2.2.2 Determining Time, Location, and Trainers While lecture-based training cannot accommodate all attendees' schedules, it should consider the convenience of the majority. Location selection should follow principles of appropriate space and proximity. Trainer selection is crucial. Some libraries have conducted practical 专题讲座 on thesis writing and project proposal development [5], which require genuine expertise. Libraries should not simply assign internal staff to compile content from books and online sources into lecture notes to "sell knowledge." Instead, relevant experts and professors should be invited to provide high-level instruction, as one must possess deep knowledge to enlighten others—without extensive personal experience and insight, it is difficult to convey true understanding or resonate with readers.

2.2.3 Publicity for Lecture-Based Training Lecture-based training requires effective promotion, which libraries often conduct through multiple channels, including posters in dormitories, main corridors, and teaching buildings, or even distributing flyers [4]. In fact, promotion need not be so "grand" — the key is reaching readers. Publicity through websites, email, QQ groups, and BBS is essential. With mobile internet 普及, WeChat should be particularly considered. Paper-based promotion should be moderate; posting notices on relevant bulletin boards suffices. Readers 反感 seeing training advertisements on utility poles or in restrooms. The authors' library primarily uses four promotional channels: website, information specialists, cafeteria bulletin boards, and group email reminders on training day morning (as all staff have work email addresses).

Training notices should be concise, eye-catching, and clearly informative [6]. Therefore, wording and poster design are critical, enabling readers to obtain the most useful core information in minimal time to decide whether to attend. For example, the authors' library used this promotional language for a SciFinder training session: Title: "SciFinder Competency Training—Sharpening Your Axe Won' t Delay Your Woodcutting!" Tagline: "Massive investment, 51 million substances, 61 million protein and gene sequences, 39 million single- and multi-step reactions, 42 million commercial chemicals and regulated substance records! Training focus: Precise retrieval of substances, structures, and reactions!" All notification information was concentrated on one A3 sheet, using font size, bolding, and color to allow readers to instantly grasp what the training covers and its benefits. EndNote training promotion highlighted functions with questions: "Can reference order auto-adjust when extensively revising a paper? Can formatting auto-convert when submitting to a different journal? How to manage and utilize large numbers of downloaded documents? Attend EndNote competency training to solve these problems!"

2.2.4 Process Control in Lecture-Based Training Do not disturb participants. Regarding attendance statistics, trainers can simply count attendees after the session begins or take a full-room photograph. Requiring signatures upon entry, especially when everyone arrives in the final minutes, creates congestion and annoys participants. Even after seating, passing around sign-in sheets is disruptive. Some trainings require participants to complete questionnaires, with some still filling them out after the session has begun, causing impatience. Therefore, avoid on-site questionnaires; at most, provide them at the end for voluntarily remaining participants.

Training facilities should be checked in advance, with any malfunctions during the session promptly resolved. Equipment failures such as microphone issues, network interruptions, or projector problems not only disrupt the training process but also affect participant morale. Important trainings require video recording, with camera placement and maintenance carefully managed to minimize disruption.

Lecture-based training must achieve its objectives within limited time. Trainers must maintain focus, stay on topic, and present clear, structured content without digression or delay. Simultaneously, to fully engage participants, trainers should possess not only solid knowledge and skills but also the ability to explain concepts simply and interact effectively, with a distinctive and compelling presentation style. Using examples and live demonstrations are essential for professional training.

A "live Q&A"session must be included to enable timely interaction and problem-solving. Since participant backgrounds are unpredictable, contingency plans are necessary for emergencies. Lecture-based training is the most unstable and prone to anomalies, requiring sufficient attention, especially for public libraries.

2.2.5 Follow-Up Work for Lecture-Based Training Trainers typically share their PowerPoint slides after sessions, but slides without accompanying narration and embedded content contain minimal information and are difficult to follow, especially when experts' slides are sparse and rely mainly on demonstration and explanation. For those who missed the training, understanding is even more challenging. Therefore, important trainings should be recorded to reproduce the entire session, particularly benefiting those unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts such as business trips, experiments, or important meetings.

After each training session, the library should publish a news article on its website, with important trainings also featured on the institutional website. These articles should be concise yet informative with images, clearly indicating how to access training materials and recordings for reader utilization.

3. Self-Service Training Model

3.1 Existing Problems

The self-service training model refers to an approach where libraries collect or produce clearly themed, appropriately methoded training materials based on reader needs, then provide them through convenient channels (primarily online) for readers to master knowledge or skills through self-study. This model features openness and extensibility—anyone within the designated scope can download training resources, which may originate from course-based or lecture-based training, library-compiled materials, or even online-collected resources.

Currently, training materials mainly come from internal library sources, with online resources largely comprising partial courseware from library-organized training sessions. Few materials are specially compiled without accompanying course or lecture training, and even fewer are collected through other channels. Intellectual property protection and dissemination scope present challenges. Libraries generally use institutional repositories or library websites as the "base" for self-service training but rarely provide intellectual property explanations. Some libraries restrict self-service training materials through IP control or login requirements, limiting downloads to "library readers only" and offering poor sharing. Moreover, many libraries have yet to build systematic, categorized self-service training platforms.

3.2 Countermeasures

3.2.1 Securing Leadership Attention Due to its flexibility and openness, self-service training is highly popular among readers. For example, the authors' library' s EndNote training materials, restricted to institutional IP downloads, have been downloaded 786 times, while the research staff totals only over 400 —demonstrating substantial demand for practical self-service materials. Therefore, library leadership must fully recognize this training model' s importance, assign capable personnel to manage platform development, and establish regulations. For instance, require non-confidential materials from course-based and lecture-based training to be submitted to the platform administrator for publication; have relevant personnel compile highly operational training materials; and continuously enrich platform resources by collecting excellent courseware or other training materials from domestic and international sources based on reader needs and library realities.

3.2.2 Platform Construction Plan Libraries can create dedicated webpages named "Reader Self-Service Training" or "Practical Training Materials." The webpage should have organized sections categorized by practical reader needs, such as "Literature Acquisition Competency," "Information Analysis Competency," "Research Tool Usage Competency," "Thesis Writing Competency," "Project Application and Management Competency," "Intellectual Property Protection Competency," "Computer Operation Competency," etc. Within

each section, materials should be listed by importance (with brief competency descriptions if needed), allowing readers to click and download courseware or recordings. Since some courseware or recordings are large, database backend support is necessary. This enables readers to select relevant materials for autonomous learning based on their deficiencies or interests.

For example, training materials for using foreign full-text databases, e-books, Chinese full-text databases, dissertations, library collections, and patent databases can be grouped under the "Literature Acquisition Competency" section. Training materials for reference management software such as NoteExpress and EndNote can be categorized under the "Research Tool Usage Competency" section.

3.2.3 Utilization Control of Self-Service Platforms First, emphasize intellectual property protection. Regardless of the training courseware, explicit permission from the intellectual property holder must be obtained, with clear scope and conditions of use prominently displayed on the self-service platform. Some materials may even require a pop-up declaration when readers click to download. When independently collecting training materials, libraries must verify the producer' s usage license and, when necessary, contact relevant rights holders to obtain distribution authorization.

Promoting social sharing of training resources is essential. While information retrieval methods vary, they all serve to address reader needs, making even specialized training materials valuable for sharing. For instance, SciFinder database training materials, though purchased by few libraries, share fundamental usage methods that have reference value. Retrieval techniques and writing methods should certainly be shared socially. When many libraries collect and produce clear, highly operational self-service training materials, each can select and organize its own platform based on resource and reader conditions, greatly benefiting readers' information competency development and even comprehensively improving information literacy. Therefore, while protecting intellectual property, libraries should maximize openness of publicly shareable training materials to form collaborative training efforts and conserve social resources.

4. Strengthening Training Staff Development

Libraries should strive to recruit advanced information science talent to enhance overall services, particularly training capabilities. Internal human resource development is crucial and represents the current necessary path for service quality improvement. Libraries can develop reader training talent based on staff aspirations, individual qualifications, and position requirements—planning who should develop in which information training directions, through what means, and to what level within what timeframe. Combining self-study with formal training can cultivate needed talent, even versatile professionals. Rapid, systematic professional development can also be achieved through second-degree education

in library and information science or participation in professional training programs offered by institutions such as the National Library, National Science Library of Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Library Society. Libraries should not "cut costs" and overlook these excellent opportunities. The mindset of "expecting employees to become talented through self-study without investment" is unacceptable.

Leveraging external expertise is another important pathway. When facing staff shortages in urgently needed areas, libraries can screen and identify suitable training experts within their institution or nationwide to establish an "external training expert database," conducting targeted training through invited lectures with expert fees. Some university libraries in Hong Kong and Taiwan invite professors with relevant disciplinary backgrounds to conduct training [1].

The importance of reader training in library work is self-evident. The three models—course-based, lecture-based, and self-service training—each have distinct advantages. How libraries can fully leverage these strengths and utilize their complementarity to effectively conduct reader information competency training is crucial. However, regardless of the model employed, a skilled training team is essential. Therefore, libraries must do everything possible to build a strong information competency training workforce. This analysis of problems and proposed countermeasures for different reader training models aims to promote planned, step-by-step, and prioritized implementation of reader training. Only through innovation and demonstrating information support advantages through professional services can libraries gradually change the misconception that "anyone can work in a library" and establish a positive professional image.

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