REFERENCE QUERIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN CARLOS LIBRARY SYSTEM: BASES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PACKAGES FOR LIBRARIANS

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by

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ABSTRACT

This study looked into the reference queries received at the USC Library System in relation to the search strategies provided by the librarians with a view to designing an instructional package. The reference queries received were gathered from the nine (9) unit librarians handling general (General Reference, Periodical, Filipiniana, and Cebuano Studies Center Libraries) and college (Arts and Commerce, Engineering and Architecture, Law, Science, and TEC/Nursing) libraries. The records of reference queries for a two-year period were examined and analyzed to enhance the competencies of reference librarians in the reference process. A follow-up interview for the unit librarians including the Director of Libraries were conducted in relation to the search strategies they employed in response to the reference queries.

The results revealed that a large percentage of reference queries were received at the general libraries compared to the college libraries understudy. Likewise, a greater number of reference queries were handled under the ready reference type of which most were under the subject area on generalities. Furthermore, the general reference collections were the heavily utilized sources of information consulted in response to the reference queries received. Meanwhile, the reference librarians have indicated that the key to successful searching is getting the correct question in the reference interview. Once the patrons' real need was identified the search started. The reference librarians also believed that a well-defined search strategies influence the success of retrieving the right source of information in response to the query.

Based on the findings of the study there is an urgent need to improve and enhance the knowledge, skills, and competence of the reference librarians in the conduct of the reference process. This need for improvement is realized in the implementation of the proposed instructional packages designed for the study.

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THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to look into the reference queries received at the University of San Carlos Library System in relation to the reference process provided by the librarians. Based on the findings, an instructional package for librarians is designed.

Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What reference queries are received by the USC Library System?
2. How may these reference queries be classified according to:
    2.1 patron
    2.2 subject area
    2.3 type and
    2.4 sources used?
3. What search strategies are employed by the librarians in response to the queries? How appropriate are these processes?
4. What instructional packages for librarians may be designed to enhance their competence in the reference process?

Significance of the Study

The function of answering reference questions is a qualitative output measure of public library (Goldhor, 1987:159). This statement holds true to any type of libraries since reference service is the most important function of reference librarians. It is the goal of the library to reach out to its users so that maximum utilization of its materials will be realized. Through the study of the reference queries received at the desk, the information needs of the users are determined. The subject of the queries that needs to be strengthened