

NLLN Continuing Education Scholarship Reports for 2007/2008

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PLA National Convention
March 26-28, 2008

I attend the PLA convention in Minneapolis on March 26, 27, and 28. This is the 1st library convention I have attended and it provided me an opportunity to network with members from libraries across the United States. The attendance estimate was about 10,000 attendees. Since I work in Human Resources I focused on the Staffing Track seminars.

The seminars I attended were:

The Opening Session with John Wood. John recounted his experience with Room to Read, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping over one million children across the developing world break the cycle of poverty through the power of education.

What I Really Meant Was:

This focused on what stops us from listening. We can listen at a rate of 500 words per minute and speak at about 150 words per minute so our minds may wander, or we are thinking of our defense. We also stop listening if the speaker pushes one of our "hot buttons". Words mean different things to different people. We all have filters in how we hear and process information. The number 1 cause of miscommunication is the other person can't read our mind. We need to say exactly what we mean and use "I" statements. Some key phrases to Communication are:

1. Help me to understand.
2. What I heard you say was.
3. What I really meant was...

Miscommunication results when information fails to get from your head to another person's head exactly as you mean it.

There are 4 Communication Styles: 1. Driven. 2. Analytical. 3. Amiable 4. Expressive. We need to be able to use all 4 styles for effective communication.

Everyone is Getting Crabbiar:

Most of us are doing more with less at work and home while juggling the ever-increasing expectations of bosses, co-workers, family members, and friends. Here are some tips on what you can do. 1. Prioritize, decide what matters, not deciding is actually a choice. Focus on the end, not the means.. 2. Plan, enjoy the "now". Have project based plans but stay flexible. 3. Simplify and Organize. Just say NO and eliminate what doesn't need to be done. Many things do not need to be done perfectly and 4. Manage the Clock. Each day is only 24 hours long. Know your personal rhythm, morning or night person. Plan according to your personal rhythm.

Mix It Up: Blended Learning for Staff Training:

3 phases to blended learning: Phase 1, Know the tools, and just not using them. Phase 2, Experimenting with the mix, and Phase 3, Mixing and using the tools

Barriers to Staff Development:

1. Cost to bring people together.
2. Resistance to technology
3. Desire for people to interact with technology and
4. Getting people to commit to learning.

How to Work Positively and Constructively in a Unionized Environment:

Union Officers from Cuyahoga County Public Library and Whatcom County Library System presented this. Cuyahoga County Public Library has 607 Bargaining Unit employees covered by a Union contract. The critical elements to a positive and constructive labor-management relationship are: Respect for each other; Trust that each side is committed to providing the best service possible to the library's customers; Understand that each party has an obligation to

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represent their respective sides; Recognize historical events and actions; Be open and up front with your intentions and have the courage to propose real change.

Both of these library systems have used Interest Based Bargaining with success. They recommend we try to be collaborative rather than adversarial. It is easier to maintain a good working relationship than it is to mend fences.

Handling Upset Patrons: From the Irate to the Insane:

This seminar presented tips on how staff can deal with patrons. There are different levels of emotion patrons may be in when they are in the library. They can be remembered by the acronym ABCC.

A. is anxiety, want to complain but are civil. You need to stop, look and listen; genuine empathy goes a long way. You can say, "I know you are upset but we're going to get this resolved."

B. is belligerence, shouting and cursing, You can say, "I'm willing to help you but you need to stop talking like that." You need to establish control, don't get emotional, need to make eye contact. Never tell anyone to "calm down"; it is like pouring gas on a fire. Never talk about rules, policies, instead just say "the library doesn't allow that."

C. is control as in "out of control" now they are cursing YOU or making a threat to YOU or 2 patrons doing this to each other, may also be on drugs or performing sexual acts. You tell them to leave and if they won't go, call 911 and then keep them out of the library as long as possible by filing a trespass order.

Security procedures do not get you in trouble as long as you treat everyone the same.

CC is Calm. This is what you want to see and 95% of patrons are in this emotional state.

Partnering to Recruit and Educate New Librarians:

This seminar talked about the programs that are available for employees to obtain their MLS.

The Librarians for American Libraries Grant, the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the IMLS Librarians for the 21st Century all have programs.

Information 911: Competencies for 21st Century Library Service:

As national and local demographics continue to shift, library personnel need to be able to work with an increasingly diverse user population. Need diversity to speak to everyone in the community. The world is now global.

5-10% of people live outside their birth country in the US. Do we have signage in English only or do we also have signage in other languages?

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