

BUILDING CREATIVE BRIDGES

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Staff Training

Mentoring

Volunteering  
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Writing

**Excerpts from *Workplace Learning and Leadership:  
A Handbook for Library and Nonprofit Trainers*  
By Paul Signorelli & Lori Reed  
To Be Published by ALA Editions in Spring 2011**

It's an exciting time for those involved in workplace learning and performance (training) programs for libraries and nonprofit organizations—a group much larger than it initially appears to be. The number and rate of changes occurring around the world, the insatiable need for accurate information combined with a torrential overload of resources, and the need for continual learning just so we can remain professionally and intellectually afloat demands creativity and innovation. We struggle with challenges as simple as learning how to operate the latest tech toy we have purchased (or which our employees have purchased for us) and as complex as how to help our customers use even a fraction of the numerous resources we provide.

A minor revolution is underway: “trainers” are increasingly recognizing themselves as “trainer-teacher-learners”—hardly a new role but one which has not frequently been acknowledged—and they are increasingly finding that their roles require them to step forward as leaders within their organizations.

As if this were not enough to keep all of us busy for the rest of our lifetimes, we're also recognizing that lines are quickly blurring between what could be referred to as “formal” and “informal” trainers, or, as Peter Bromberg, Assistant Director for the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative, calls them, “Trainers with a capital T” as opposed to “trainers.”

Librarians have known for a long time that library members and guests do not differentiate between “librarians” and other staff members when they are in need of help; if you are working in a library, you are a “librarian” regardless of whether you have the graduate-level degree which many librarians have earned. In the same way, employees in libraries and nonprofit organization are increasingly recognizing that they do not need the word “trainer” in their job titles or on their staff identification badges for their customers to seek that level of assistance from them. In a knowledge-based service culture, almost everyone within a library or nonprofit organization is a trainer-teacher-learner, and anyone who hasn't noticed that everyone from the chief executive officer to the well trained and personable custodian has a role to play in this field is not paying attention.

**On Leadership and Influence**

**Trainers can be the life blood of an organization. They control the information being disseminated during sessions. They hold more power than they may realize.**

**--Catherine Vaughn, Continuing Education Coordinator  
Lee County Library System**

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Trainers must see themselves as problem-solvers for the big and small picture, and likewise as personal problem-solvers for every manager - our job is to help them make their jobs successful.  
--Sandra Smith, *Training and Development Manager, Denver Public Library*

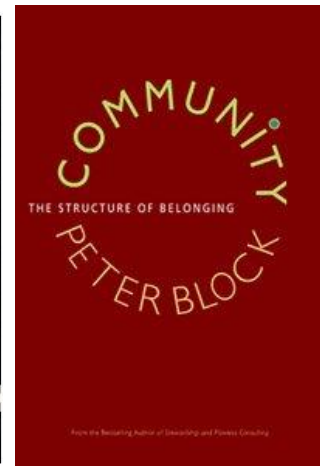
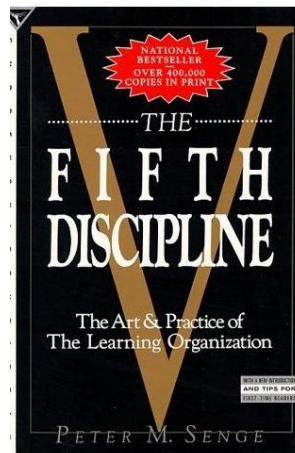
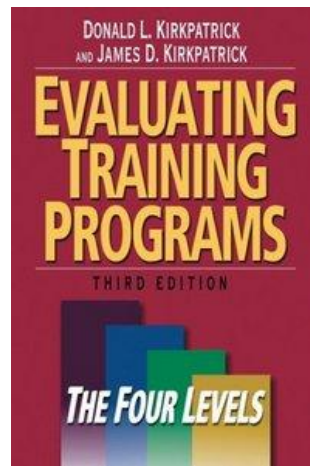
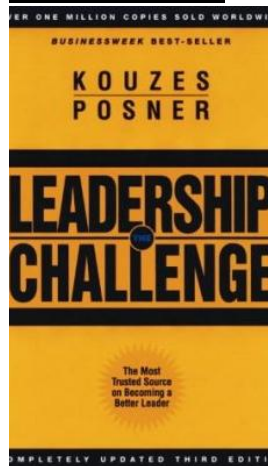
What I'm doing is I'm looking around and identifying other capable people and using their skills, helping them grow in a different direction. That's part of what a leader does: helps grow other people.  
--Louise Whitaker, *Training Coordinator, Pioneer Library System*

Be a learner before you are a trainer.  
--Maurice Coleman, *Technical Trainer, Harford County Public Library*

### On Evaluation

I tend to get better responses to classes on topics that no one has ever asked for.  
-Peter Bromberg, *Assistant Director  
South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative*

### Resources--Books



### Resources--Online

ALA Learning (ALA Learning Round Table blog featuring thoughts from trainers)  
<http://alallearning.org>

Building Creative Bridges Blog (articles tagged for leadership)  
<http://buildingcreativebridges.wordpress.com>

Infoblog (Infopeople's blog on libraries, training, and leadership)  
<http://www.infoblog.infopeople.org/tag/leadership/>

Lori Reed: Destination Training Blog (articles on master trainers, leadership, libraries)  
<http://lorireed.com/>

**Prepared for American Library Association Learning Round Table Training Session  
"Library Trainers as Leaders" at the American Library Association Annual Conference  
in Washington, D.C., 6/27/2010; for more information, please contact Paul Signorelli  
& Associates.**

