

Appendix F

Sample Critical Incidents

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A. Sample User Positive Critical Incident

User Positive Incident - #7

User (U11) Relational—Positive Librarian Attitude toward User

I. Just exactly to find what you're looking for. I want you to think back over times in your life when you asked a librarian for help, maybe a long time ago, or in your high school career, or sometime in a public library, any setting, if you can remember a time when you asked a librarian for help and you were very pleased with what you got?

U11. Well, the instructor in the [college x] library was *very* helpful. He showed us how to use the computers, which was very helpful and he gave us the sense that if we needed any kind of help, just to go back to him.

I. Okay, if you could put your finger on it, what exactly, was it that made you feel that he was . . .

U11. His patience . . .

I. He was very patient?

U11. Yeah.

B. Sample User Negative Critical Incident*User Negative Incident - #3**User (U04) Content—Lack of Technical Knowledge*

U04. Unpleasant. No. I've never met an unpleasant librarian, thank heavens. {laugh from I} Unsuccessful? Yeah, I can remember once when, I don't remember what it was about, I think it was biology maybe, and I needed to do a paper and she told me to use a computer and didn't tell me under what, didn't *know* under what, so even though I tried to use the computer, I didn't know where to start, didn't have anything specific to {something} couldn't understand it very well

I. Um hum. So what was it then, if you could put your finger on it, that made it unsuccessful?

U04. I guess it was [that] she didn't have any knowledge in the area, and I didn't have any knowledge in the area. I'm just learning about it, and that's what did it basically.

I. Um hum.

U04. If the librarian doesn't know about it, then she can't really help you with it.

I. But you didn't feel that she was unpleasant?

U04. Not at all, never had an unpleasant librarian.

I. So it was the, you enjoyed the interaction on one level. Was it pleasant on one level, but you didn't get the information that you wanted?

U04. That's right, yeah.

I. So for you that was unsuccessful.

U04. Um hum.

I. Okay, how, how would you have changed that discussion if you could

have? That one that was unsuccessful?

U04. I guess I would have gone back and asked my teacher first for specifics and then asked her if she had any knowledge of the specifics.

I. Oh so you felt almost that it was something on your part.

U04. Maybe, yeah, maybe I could have done something more, not just expected the librarian to do that.

I. Yeah, yeah, sometimes if students aren't very clear about what it is they're looking for, it's hard for the librarian to help.

U04. We do expect a lot. We do expect a lot. Like the librarian's got to know it's not always like that.

C. Sample Librarian Positive Critical Incident

Librarian Positive Incident - #3

Librarian (L05) Content—Technical Knowledge. Minor themes: systems related/retrieval of information/ accuracy, finding the “right answer”

L05. Then the student that I was just helping at the card catalog, she wanted books on whole-language approach

I. Um huh.

L05. And it's not a *subject* in the card catalog. So then I said, “Well, it must be language learning,” and there was language acquisition and language arts and language study and teaching and things like that. So I showed her that and I said, you know, you just have to flip through the cards and look for ones that maybe mention whole language or that sound like they're teaching approaches . . . are things that you can use and then check the book, check the and so . . . contents or index and see if whole-language approach is in there. And then she *did* when she was looking through the drawer found a few cards with whole language in the title.

I. Um hum.

L05. So then she was happy about that and then I checked the title side and it was the . . .

I. {something unintelligible} Yeah, yeah.

L05. . . . title of a few books which] began with whole language so that was good for her.

I. What do you think, for you makes if you were to think about the thing, that makes you feel that an interaction is successful? What are the things that . . .

L05. I, what I like to do is to, besides answering the question, is to try to explain a little bit about how libraries are organized and how *information* is organized *in* the library. And how that then you find what they want . . .

I. Um hum.

L05. . . . and sometimes explain to them that it may not be in the form that they have in mind or they have to use certain tools or different approaches that they didn't realize so . . . that's, like, you know, and try to help them see where they're how they can find what they want in the library . . .

I. Um hum.

L05. . . . and also learning a little bit about the library 'cause at an academic library, you know, the process is also part of, I think, what they should learn here.

D. Sample Negative Librarian Incident

Librarian Negative Incident - #7

Librarian (L08) Relational—Negative User Attitude toward Librarian (User Impatient)

L08. Yes, {laugh} it was a young woman who came in and wanted information about statehood and Puerto Rico. It took a while to even get to that point because of her accent, and each time I would suggest some-

thing, she said, well, she already knew it or she had done it, and also it was one of those interviews where she kept jumping in each time I made a suggestion. And we finally got to a point but it was frustrating because she seemed to think that I was either not attempting to help her or that I was asking too many questions. And when I finally I think what I had to tell her was she had to first of all have some background about what Puerto Rico was like and *why* they wanted statehood, not just to jump in and say I need the information on statehood alone and nothing else. But it was *frustrating*.

I. Um hum.

L08. I did get to the point where she did understand that she needed a little bit more about the background . . .

I. Um hum.

L08. . . . about why the Puerto Ricans wanted statehood.

I. So again, can you put your finger do you think, to tell me *exactly* what it was that made it frustrating or unsuccessful?

L08. I think the frustration was that she, I'm not sure whether she was listening or not or whether she had thoughts of her own, but she kept interrupting each time I, *almost* each time I, I shouldn't say each time, but frequently interrupted whenever I had a question as to exactly what it was she wanted and perhaps this is what we ought to do.

I. So she was, like, impatient?

L08. Impatient and also, yeah, maybe impatient with me, as if to say I didn't quite understand what it was that . . .

I. Um hum.

L08. . . . she might really be searching for.

I. Um hum.

L08. . . . and now when I did give her information we found, I left her at the computer for a while and I went and she was gone, and I said, “Oh there was an *excellent* article I just came upon, did you take that information?” It was from the *New York Times Magazine* which is always a good, *almost* always a good source {laugh} and she said, “Oh no, no.” She really didn’t have the time. So that was also frustrating as if she did not really have the time to do it at that moment.

I. Um hum.

L08. And she said, “I’ll come back.” And I don’t know whether or not she did, but she knew it was there if she wanted it.