Library Support Staff need to communicate effectively with library users, library staff, and others in a variety of situations to offer high quality customer service.

1. **Library Support Staff (LSS) know the basic concepts of interpersonal relations, customer service, teamwork, and communication.**

   **Portfolio Development Suggestions**

   1.1 Prepare a list of 20 key terms related to interpersonal relations, customer service, teamwork, and communication. Briefly define each term. Explain why you selected the terms and what sources you consulted. How could this list be used for training library employees? Did you find conflicting definitions?

   1.2 Locate a set of interview questions that a library uses to judge the interpersonal relations, customer service, teamwork, and communication skills of a job candidate. Give examples of answers that would indicate that the candidate had these skills. Design a follow-up question for each of the original questions.

   1.3 Prepare a list of five key principles or skills for each of these areas: interpersonal relations, customer service, teamwork, and communication. Explain why you selected the principles or skills and what sources you consulted. Explain the importance of each principle or skill as it applies to libraries, using examples from your personal experience if possible.

2. **LSS select the most appropriate medium for communicating based on the language, communication styles, and needs of library users and colleagues.**

   **Portfolio Development Suggestions**

   2.1 Read five articles or book chapters about the varied communication styles and needs of different groups of library users (for example, children, teenagers, nonnative speakers of English, people with visual or hearing impairment, or the elderly). Briefly summarize your opinion of what you have read. Based on your research and your own experience, what techniques are helpful in communicating with these diverse users?

   2.2 Write two short news articles about a library service aimed at two different target groups of library users. Explain the differences in these articles and how these differences reflect the needs of these two groups. For example, what is the difference in words used or tone depending on the audience? Where might you distribute these articles to reach the target audience?
3. LSS resolve conflict in a positive and productive manner and judge when to refer situations to a supervisor.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

3.1 Describe a frequent conflict between the library and its users or among staff. What methods can library staff use to resolve the conflict? What might be the different reactions of individuals on both sides? What communication and negotiation skills do library staff need to resolve this problem? Could the library avoid or reduce the conflict by changes in policy or procedure?

3.2 Read and cite three articles or book chapters on techniques for conflict resolution. Summarize the contents of each article and explain how the techniques could be useful in a library setting. Relate what you have read to your own experience. How might you use these techniques in the future? Cite the resources you used and indicate which of the conflict resolution techniques would be most successful.

3.3 Identify five interpersonal conflicts or time management conflicts that you have seen at your job. Describe if the frontline staff resolved the conflict or referred it to a supervisor. If the staff referred the conflict to a supervisor, how did the supervisor resolve the situation? What recommendations would you make for the conflict resolution process at your job?

4. LSS understand and use effective communication skills to enhance approachability and to transmit information.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

4.1 Choose a library where you have worked or where you are a user. Think about different groups of users (for example, children, teens, seniors, or other groups served by the library). What aspects of staff behavior at that library are welcoming and unwelcoming to those groups? Prepare a list of approachable and welcoming behaviors and indicate why you included these behaviors on the list.

4.2 Choose three groups of library users for whom library use may be difficult. What strategies could the library use to provide services to these groups? How can a library and its staff make it easier for these groups to use the library?

5. LSS practice proactive customer service by anticipating and maintaining awareness of users’ needs.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

5.1 Identify and briefly describe three research studies of different types of library users. How do these research findings compare with your own opinions or experiences with these user groups? What additional information might you want about these library
users and where might you find it? What new services might the library offer to these library users?

5.2 Identify a new library service and the groups who can influence, are affected by, and will use this service. Describe how the library staff should involve these groups in developing and implementing the new service.

6. **LSS use effective verbal and nonverbal skills that provide the library user with a positive interaction.**

**Portfolio Development Suggestions**

6.1 Read and cite three articles or book chapters on active listening and describe its key characteristics. What situations in the library would require particular need for active listening? Give three examples of situations in which failure to listen and transmit information accurately could lead to misunderstanding in the library. How might staff members manage these situations differently?

6.2 Describe three issues you have encountered or select three case studies from *Library Journal* or another publication. Analyze the situation in each case specifically from the point of view of communication problems and solutions. Who were the key people to whom information needed to be communicated? Did different pieces of information need to be communicated to different people?

6.3 Describe how you typically communicate with your peers, your supervisor, and library users. Maintain a log for a week of your communication patterns. What types of issues do you communicate about, and to whom? Are there better strategies you could use to facilitate your own communication? Are there means of communication you typically avoid and, if so, why?

7. **LSS know and use the tools of delivering difficult or sensitive information.**

**Portfolio Development Suggestions**

7.1 Describe three situations in your job or at a previous job in which you need to deliver difficult or sensitive information to library users, coworkers, or supervisors. How do you decide when, how, and what information to share with them?

7.2 Prepare a detailed description of a complicated issue in a library that has no simple solution and that may make library users unhappy with the decision. Share this situation with three people and document how they would prepare for delivering information that may be unpopular with library users and how they would answer users’ critical questions or comments.

8. **LSS participate effectively on teams, commit to meeting agreed-upon goals and objectives, communicate respectfully and professionally, and support team decisions.**
Portfolio Development Suggestions

8.1 Describe guidelines for effective communication during meetings. Take notes at three different meetings and comment on how the information distributed at the meeting affected the quality of discussion, clarity of communication, attendee behavior, achievement of meeting goals, and other aspects of the meeting. Describe the differences in communication techniques used in successful and unsuccessful meetings.

8.2 Develop an annotated bibliography listing five to seven articles, books, or book chapters on teamwork. Your bibliography should be both descriptive and evaluative. What are the essential aspects to developing effective teams? What are the major pitfalls? Compare and contrast what you learn with your own experiences working on a team.

8.3 Describe a situation in which you were a member of a team that had difficulty coming to agreement on a policy, procedure, or process. How did the team finally reach agreement? What role did you play in helping the team come to agreement? Did you personally have any difficulty in supporting the final decision of the group? If so, how did you handle this personal difficulty?

8.4 Think about a time when you were part of a group, team, or department in which there was internal conflict or miscommunication, or where members felt they could not work together. Describe methods that the group used or could have used to address the situation. Could changes in the communication styles or processes have minimized the situation?

9. **LSS seek, give, and accept constructive feedback from coworkers, supervisors, and users.**

Portfolio Development Suggestions

9.1 Read three articles or book chapters on techniques for performance evaluations. Summarize the contents of each article and explain how the techniques could be useful in a library setting. Relate what you have read to your own experience. How might you use these techniques in the future? Cite the resources you used and tell which of these performance evaluation techniques would be most successful.

9.2 Discuss at least three instances of formal or informal feedback on your job performance. How did you feel about and respond to the feedback? Was the feedback constructive or destructive? If you would have liked to have received this feedback in a different way, explain what that might be. Describe the circumstances that led to the feedback, your response, and the changes that were made based on the feedback. Analyzing this experience, how does it impact how you might give feedback to others?
9.3 Obtain employee performance evaluation forms from at least two different types of libraries. Read three articles or book chapters on employee evaluation. Compare the library evaluation forms to what you learn in your research. How might these libraries improve their performance evaluation based on your research?