

Effectiveness of Library Staff Training on Use of Gimlet in Reference Statistics Recording

Abstract

This study focuses on library employees' reference question coding accuracy. Employees were asked to code questions using the Warner Scale both before and after a library-wide training session on reference question coding. Initial results indicate that the training session had little impact on overall accuracy, but improvements were seen in specific employee demographic groups and for coding between specific question levels. Future efforts will focus on developing a more effective training model for all library employees.

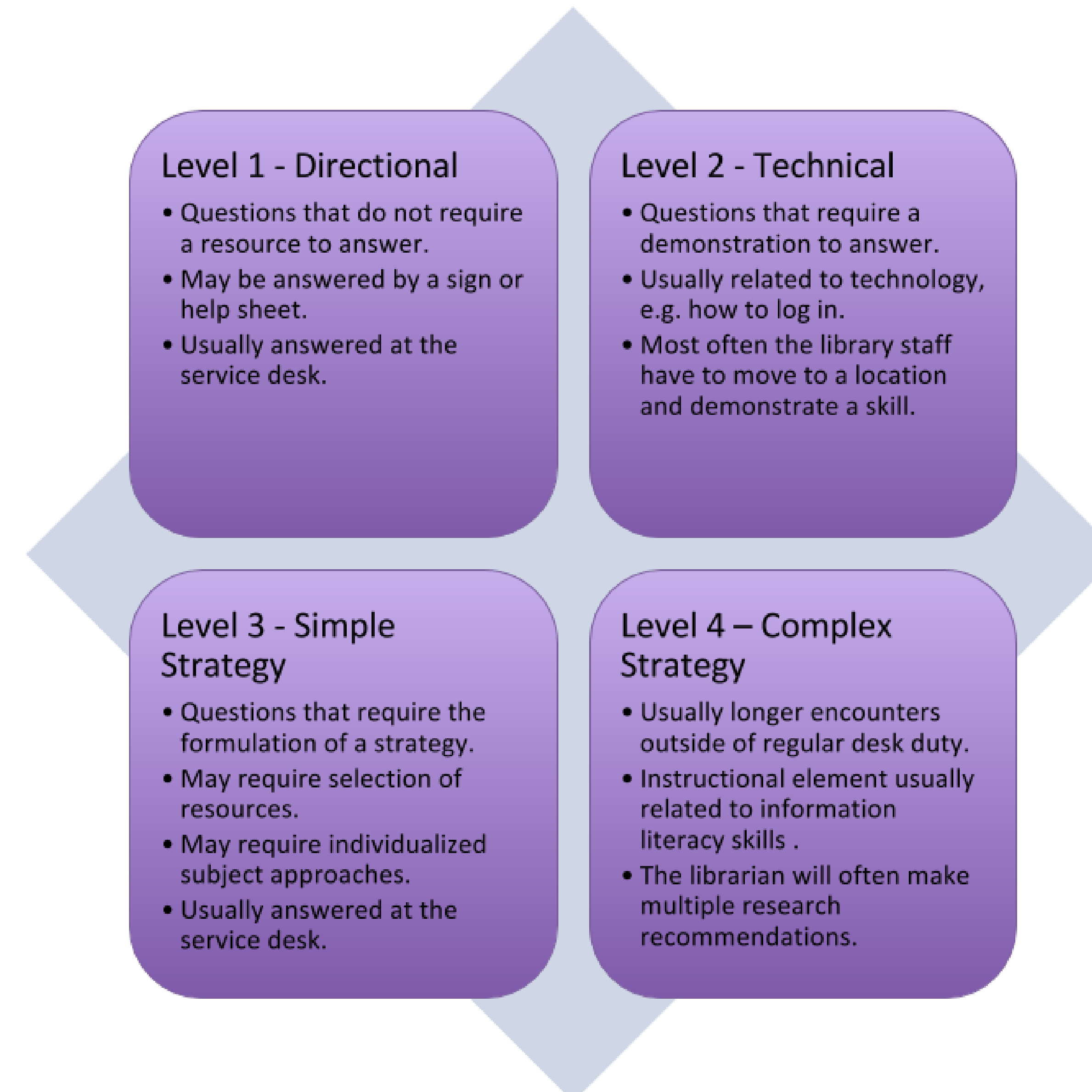
Background

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library is a joint partnership between San José State University and the City of San José. King Library serves as the University Library and as the main branch of the public library system of San José. Employees across both institutions answer questions at public service points and log their transactions into Gimlet.



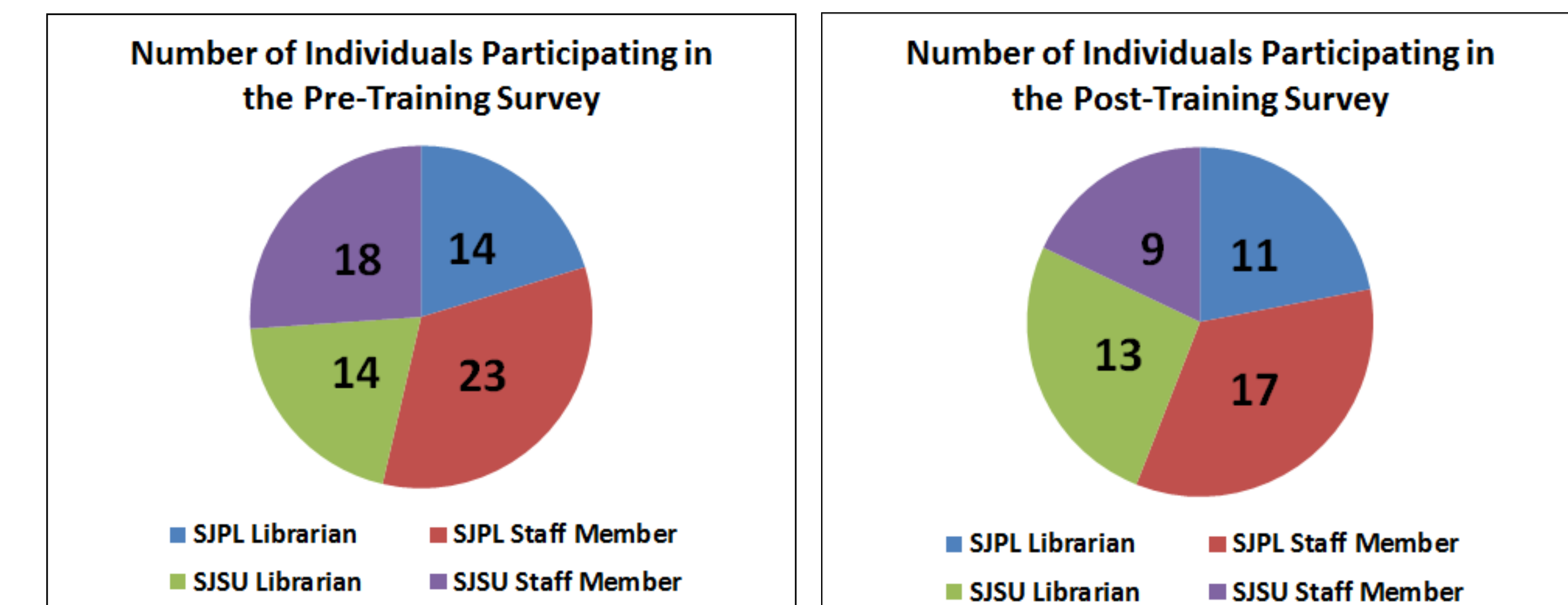
Modified Warner Model at King Library

At the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, a large joint academic and public library, employees code all patron transactions with a modified Warner Scale.

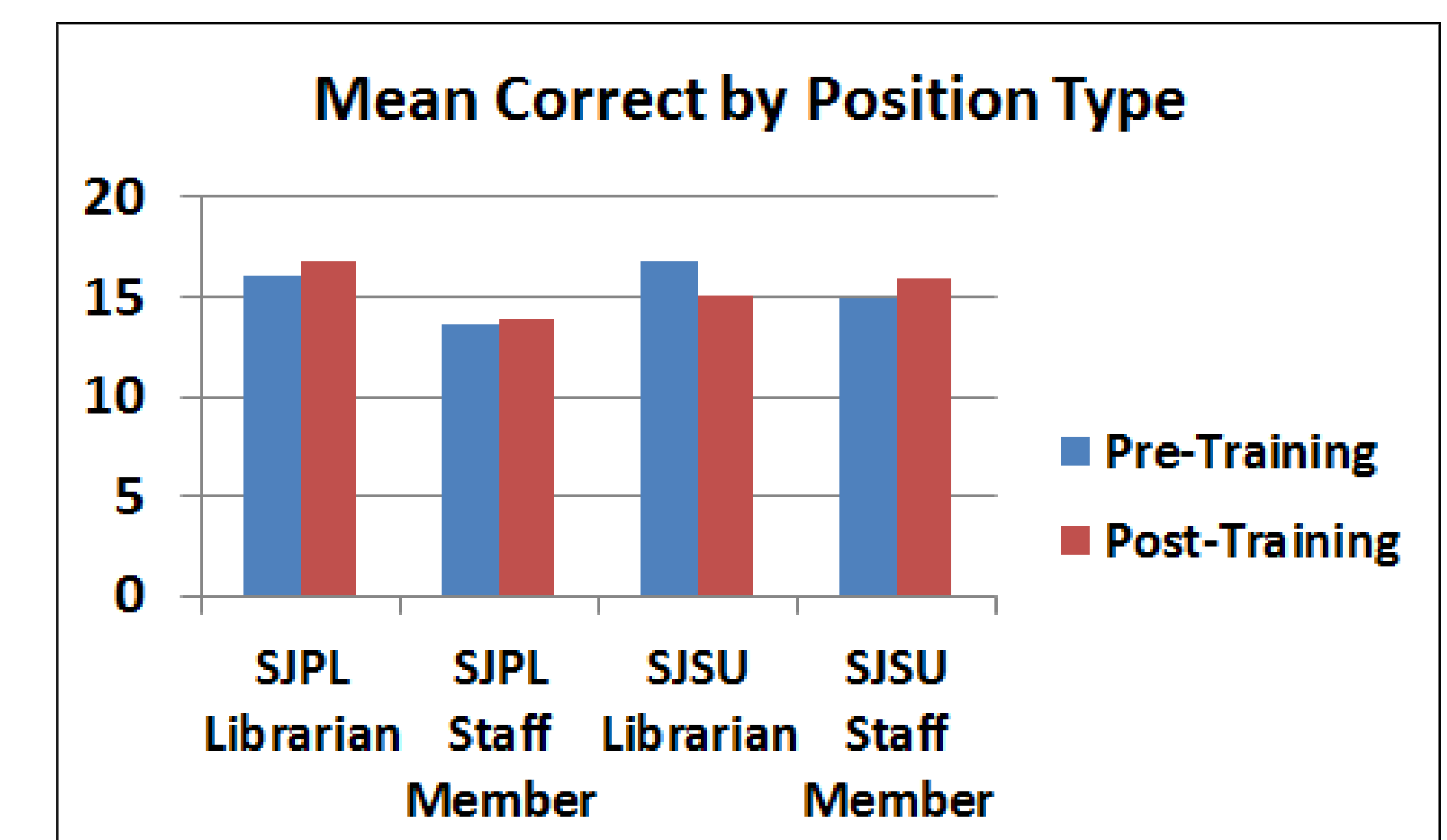


Results

The same Qualtrics survey was administered before and after the reference coding training session. There were 37 and 28 San José Public Library respondents to the pre- and post-training survey, respectively. For San José State University employees, there were 32 pre-training and 22 post-training responses.



Coding accuracy nominally improved across all demographic groups after the training session, except for San José State University librarians. For this subgroup, accuracy was higher prior to the training.



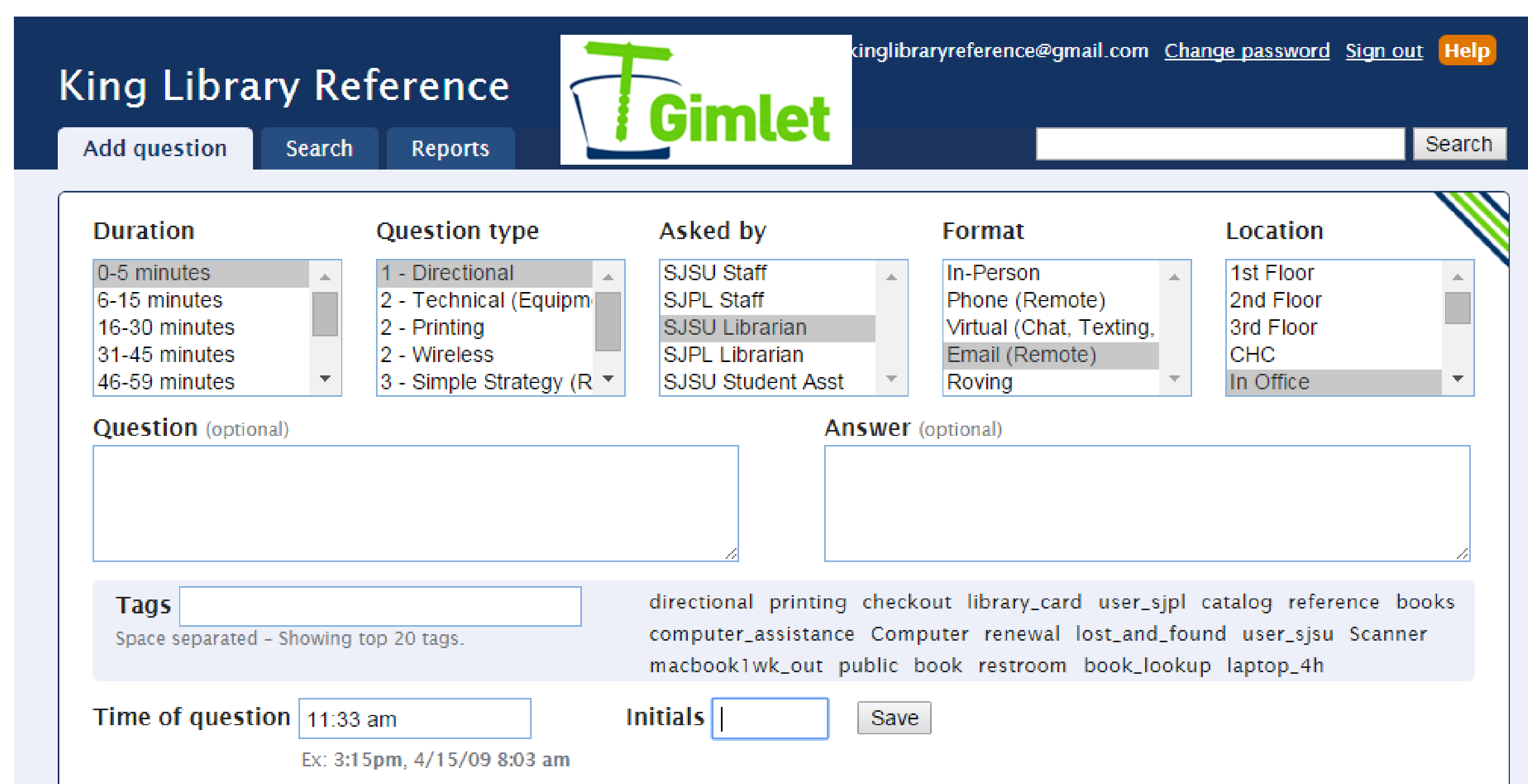
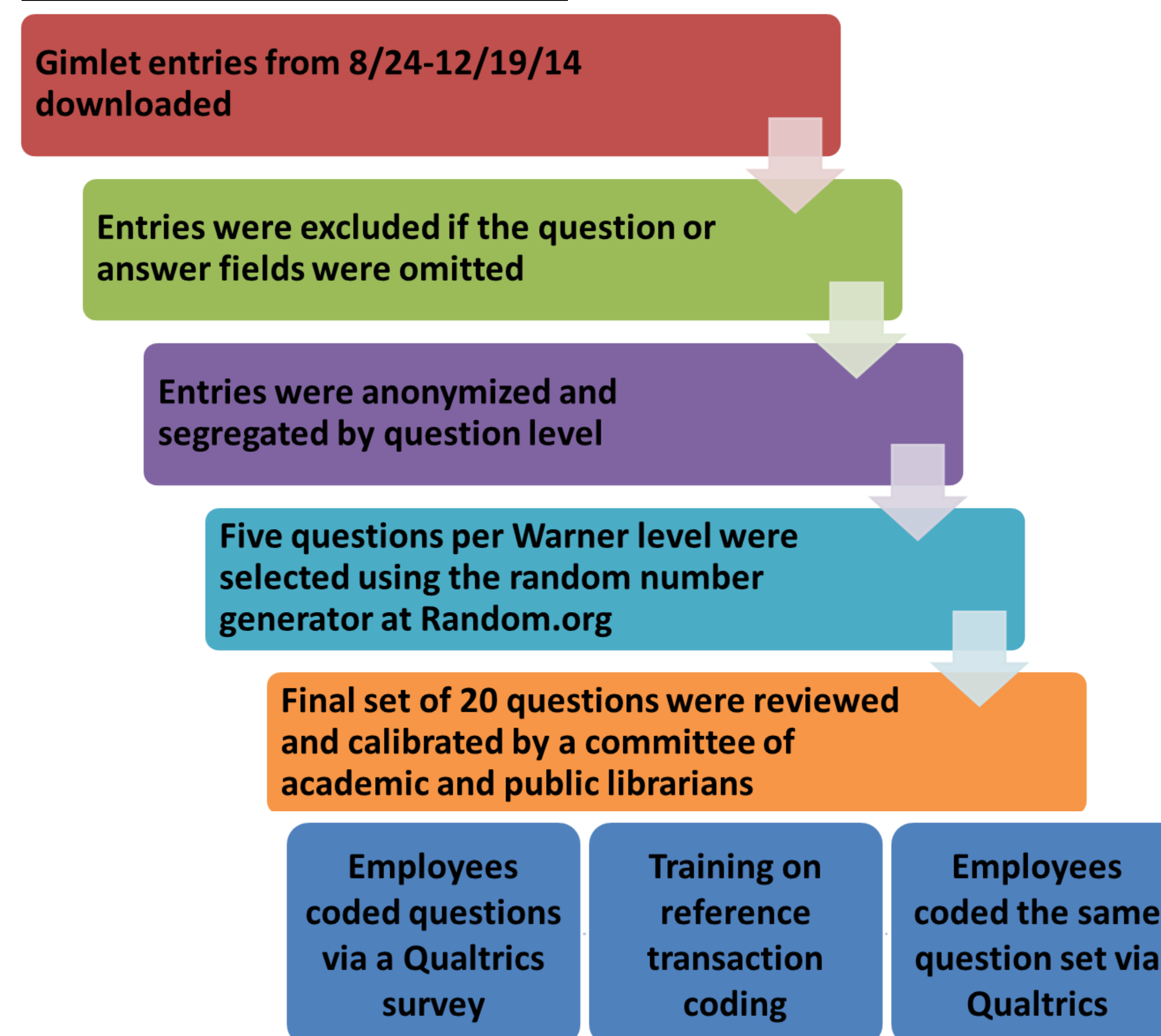
Conclusions and Future Directions

Coding accuracy decreased for the academic librarian group. It is unknown if the training session introduced greater ambiguity in coding reference transactions. The library-wide training session did not result in great improvements in reference transaction coding accuracy. Other methodologies for training will need to be explored.

References

- Meserve HC, Belanger SE, Bowlby J, Rosenblum L. Developing a Model for Reference Research Statistics: Applying the "Warner Model" of Reference Question Classification to Streamline Research Services. Reference & User Services Quarterly. 2009 Apr 1:247-58.
- Warner DG. A new classification for reference statistics. Reference & User Services Quarterly. 2001 Oct 1:51-5.

Materials and Methods



Gimlet is a web-based statistical tracking software solution. It offers users the ability to input details about interactions with the public and can create on-the-fly reports to visualize daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly trends. King Library uses this program to evaluate staffing and training needs.