ONLINE LEARNING
TIPS FOR SUCCESS

This training on Building Skills for Virtual Reference is delivered through a face-to-face orientation and online learning.

Online learning or e-learning is flexible and convenient and saves you the time and expense of travel. But it requires that you, the learner, effectively manage the time that you spend in training. To achieve success in online training, learners must "view themselves as being in charge of product development, and the product is themselves."

Here are some tips for success with your online training experience.

- ✓ Find the time of day when you work best online. Are you most productive in the morning? When are there likely to be fewer interruptions?

- ✓ Remember that sitting at a computer and staring at the screen are physically demanding. You may want to print longer documents rather than read from the screen. Take a break, stretch and relax your eyes at regular intervals.

- ✓ Talk with your supervisor and co-workers about your online learning schedule. It is important for them to know the times that you will be unavailable because of e-learning. How will you indicate to co-workers that you are involved in online training?

- ✓ When writing assignments to post to the training listserv, work offline. Write your assignment in a word processing application, save as an RTF file, then copy and paste to an e-mail message. Doing this creates a backup copy of all your assignments in a format that is easy

to put into an e-mail message. Don't use attachments. These can create problems for the other learners who may not have the same software to open the attachment.

✓ Create a schedule for yourself so that you meet the deadlines for completion of assignments. If you fall behind, it is more difficult to catch up and you get "out of sync" with the other learners.

✓ Participate actively in the listserv, online meetings, and learning activities. The most powerful learning will come from the conclusions reached and the experiences shared by both learners and trainers.

✓ Take time to reflect on what you learn from each activity (Getting Chatty, Virtual Field Trips, Secret Patron, etc.). Mentally apply the concepts and ideas to your own library and share your conclusions with other learners via the listserv.

✓ Share what you are learning and exploring with your co-workers, even if they are not involved in the training. Discussing your experiences maximizes your learning.

✓ Keep in regular contact with the trainers. Ask questions. Offer ideas. Give them your feedback on how things are going. Let them know right away if you run into any problems.

✓ Last, but not least, enjoy the process of learning new skills!

(These tips are based on an article
by Nuala Sweeney in Learning Circuits.)