Mining the Knowledge Base
## *Wiki Technology and Constructivist Learning in a Reference Services Training Program*

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Introduction

To maximize staff presence and reference capabilities at HSB, reference training was implemented for the branch's two paraprofessional employees. A wiki format was selected to collocate different resources and formats in a single location. The collaborative functions of the wiki complemented the branch's team-oriented environment. Each staff member selected materials of interest and augmented the wiki conversation with their previous experiences.
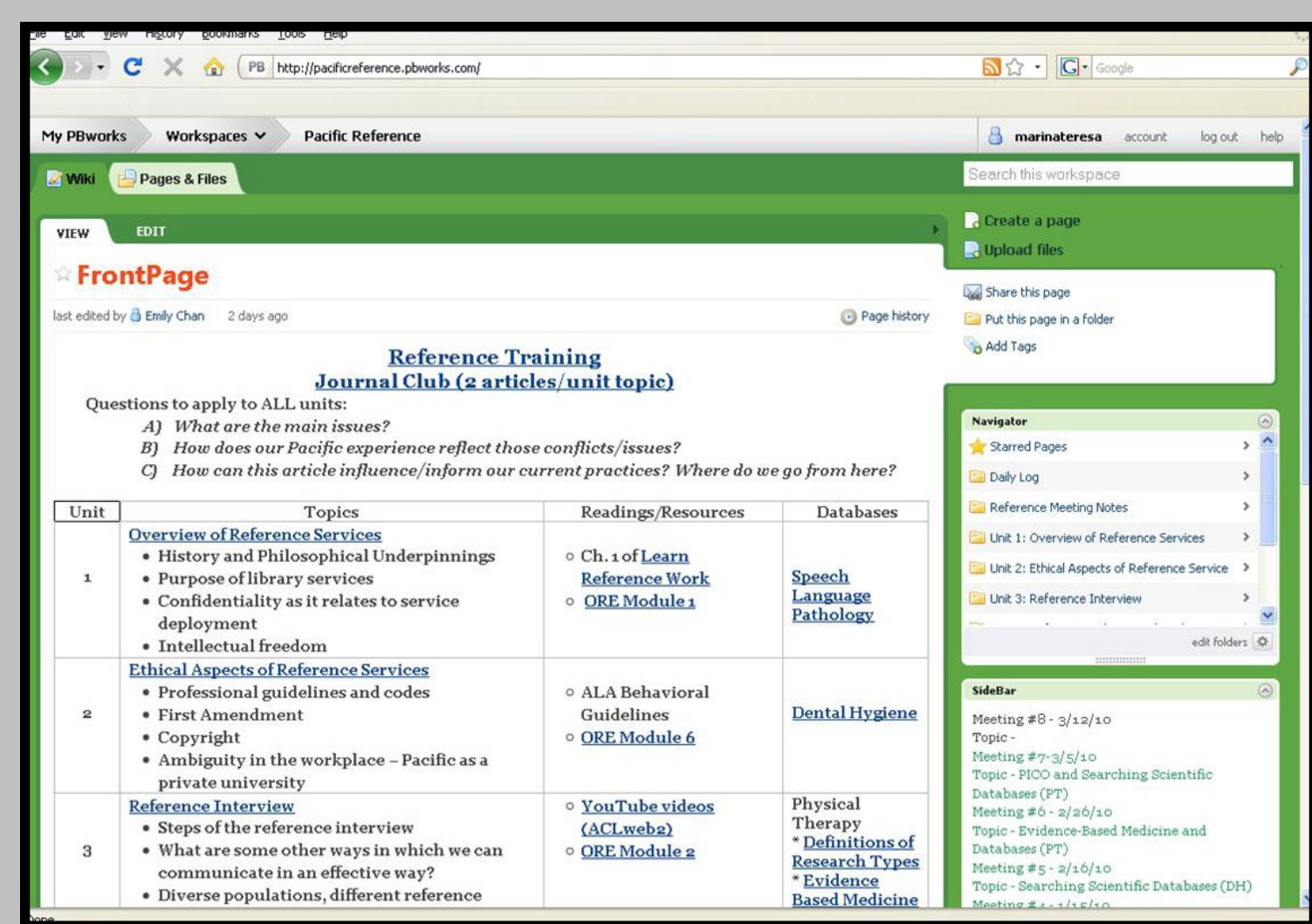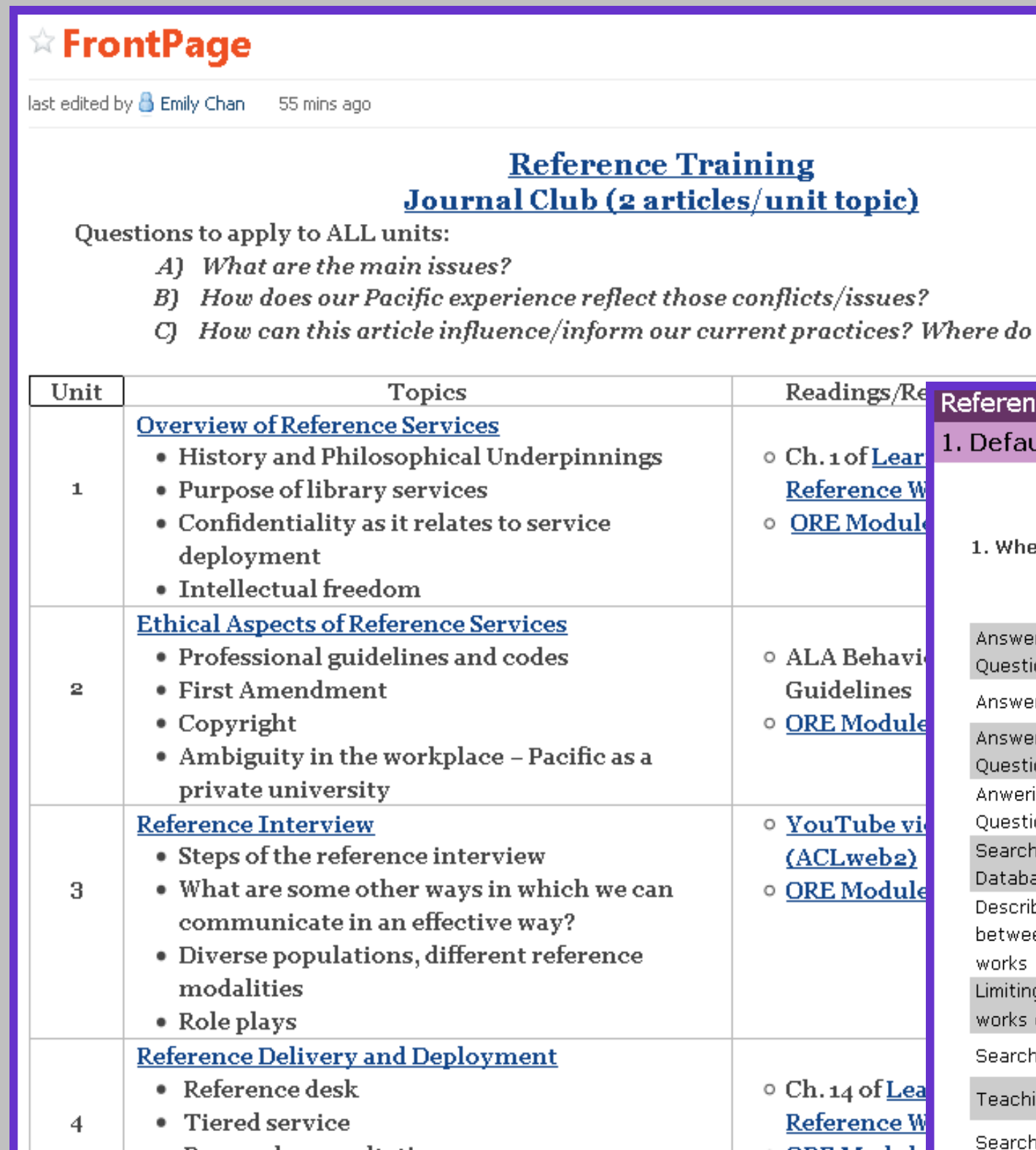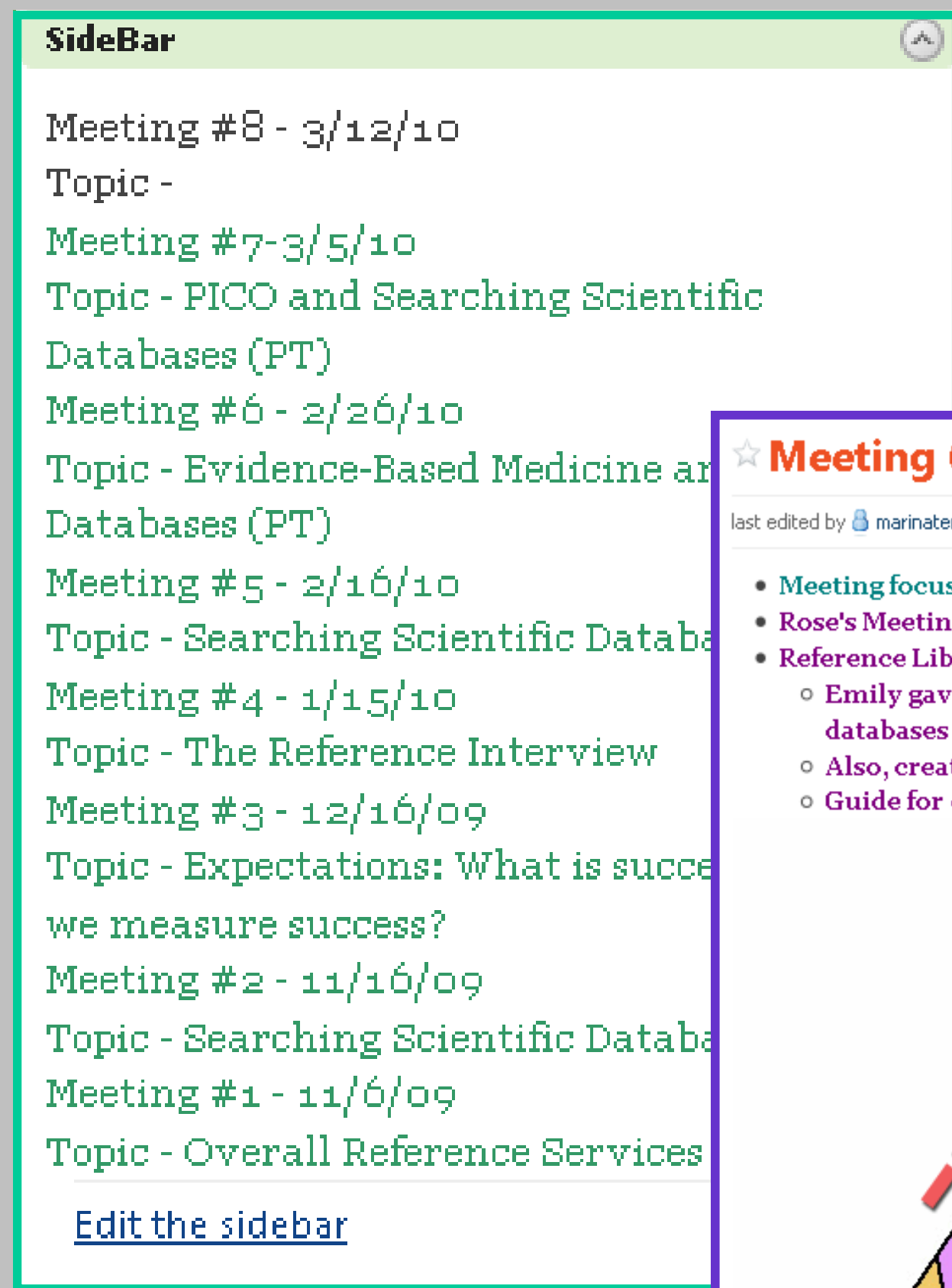
Objectives

- Promote uniform level of reference provision
- Develop staff competencies and skills
- Provide flexibility at the HSB Library
- Build knowledge base of paraprofessional staff
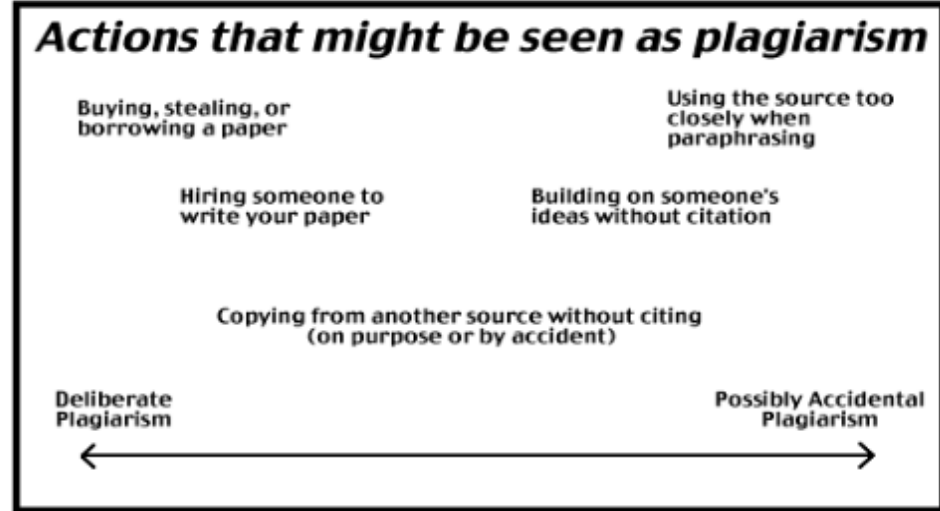- Ensure high level of customer service for students, staff, faculty
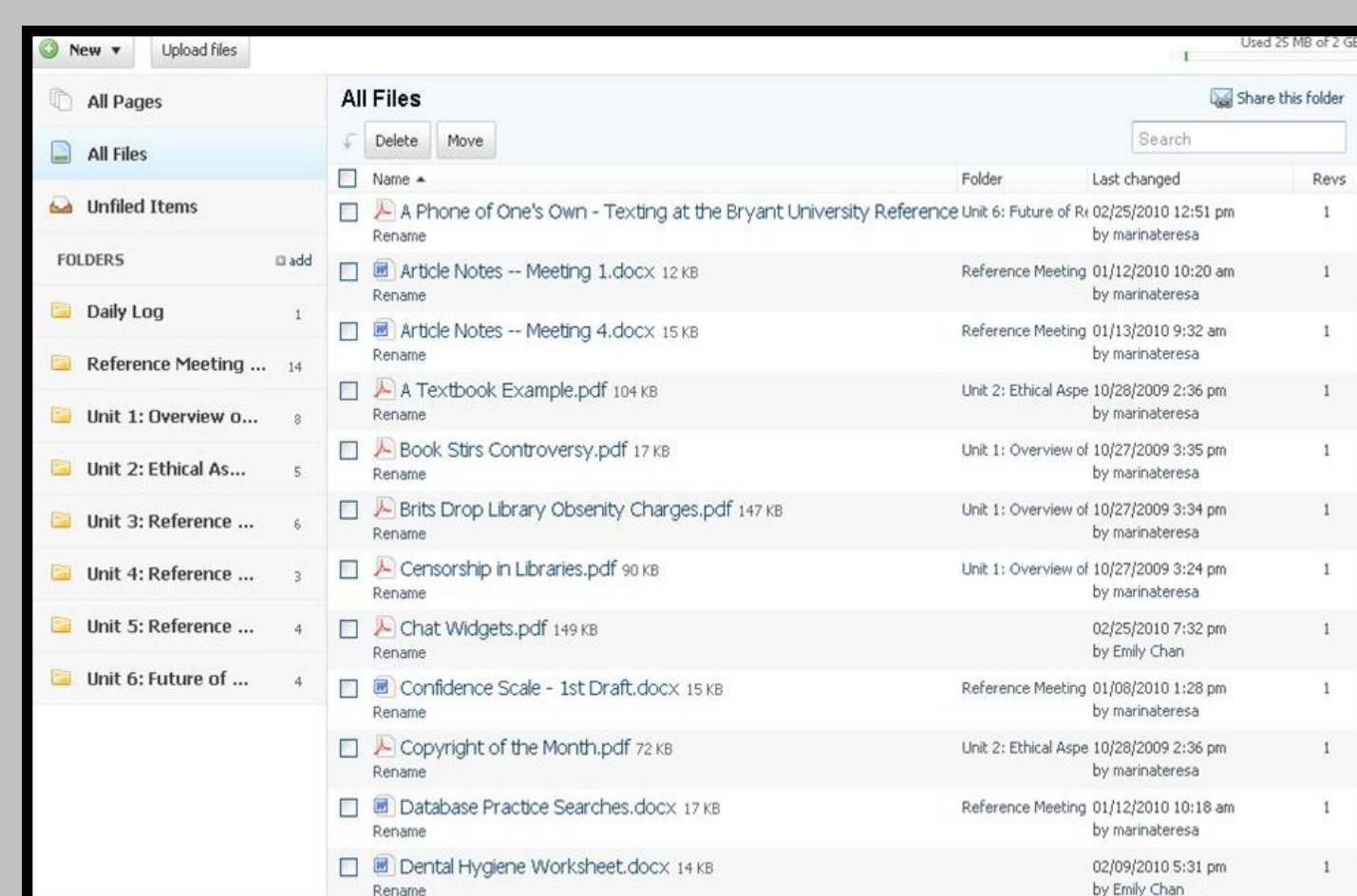
Materials

Training materials for the Reference Services Training Program included scholarly articles, librarian-created documents, supplemental videos, online training modules, embedded images and more. Staff members were surveyed at various points on 28 criteria, including their comfort with database searching, content knowledge, and behaviors associated with reference services.
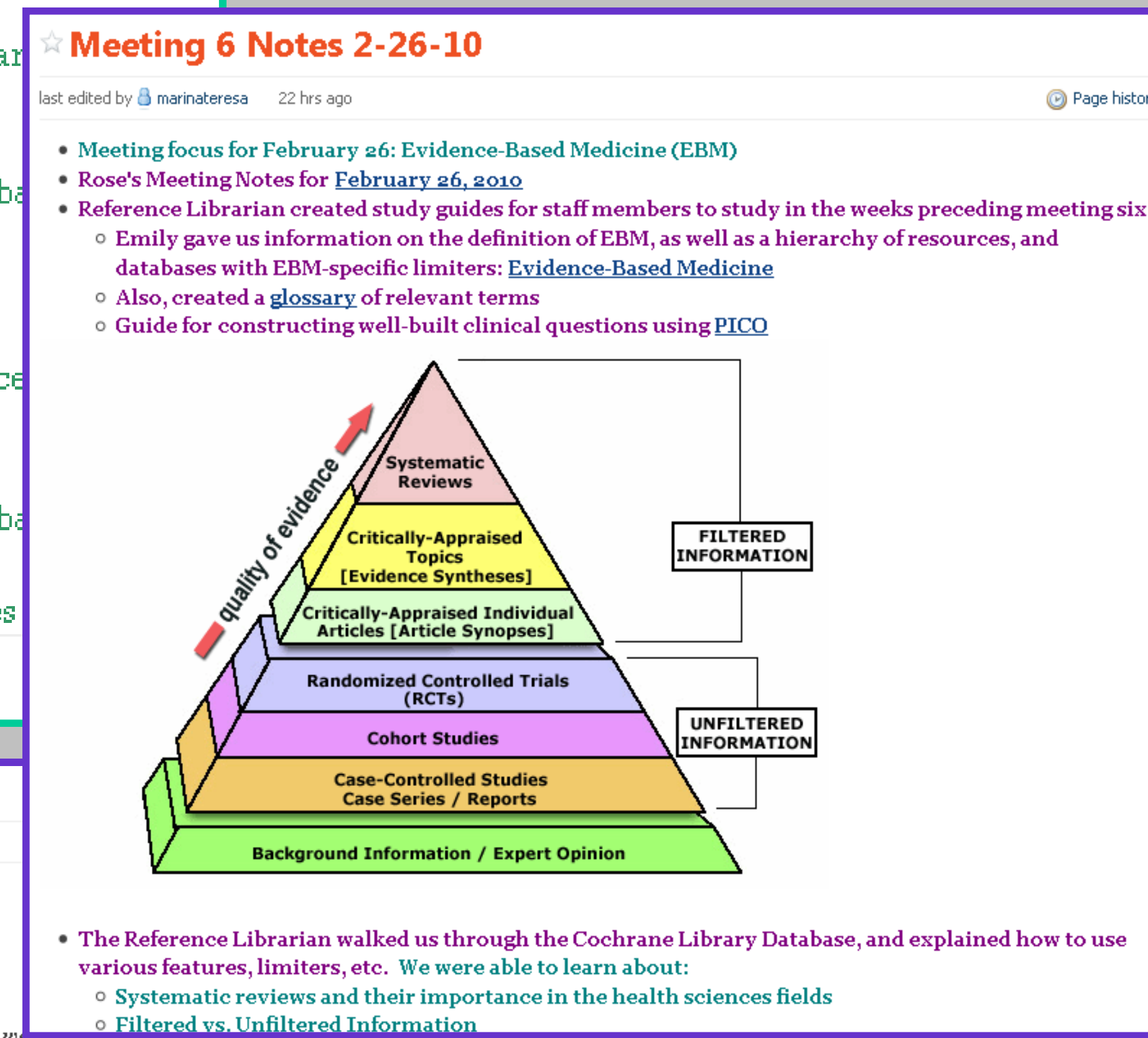
Methods

We used constructivism in our learning methods. Constructivism's key tenets include:
- development is learning,
- learning is socially and culturally mediated,
- reflection is a necessary part of learning, and
- collaboration contributes to a rich learning environment.

Wiki technology promotes constructivist learning through shared workspaces.

Results

During the course of the Reference Training Program, both paraprofessional staff repeatedly took the Confidence Scale Survey on the 28 criteria. At the end of the training process, the staff members took a final Confidence Scale Survey to investigate the overall utility and necessity of the Reference Training Program. Based on the initial and final surveys, the staff's confidence increased 84% amongst the 28 criteria with 16% remaining unchanged.

Average Overall Confidence Scale Percentages

Increased	84%
Unchanged	16%
Decreased	0%
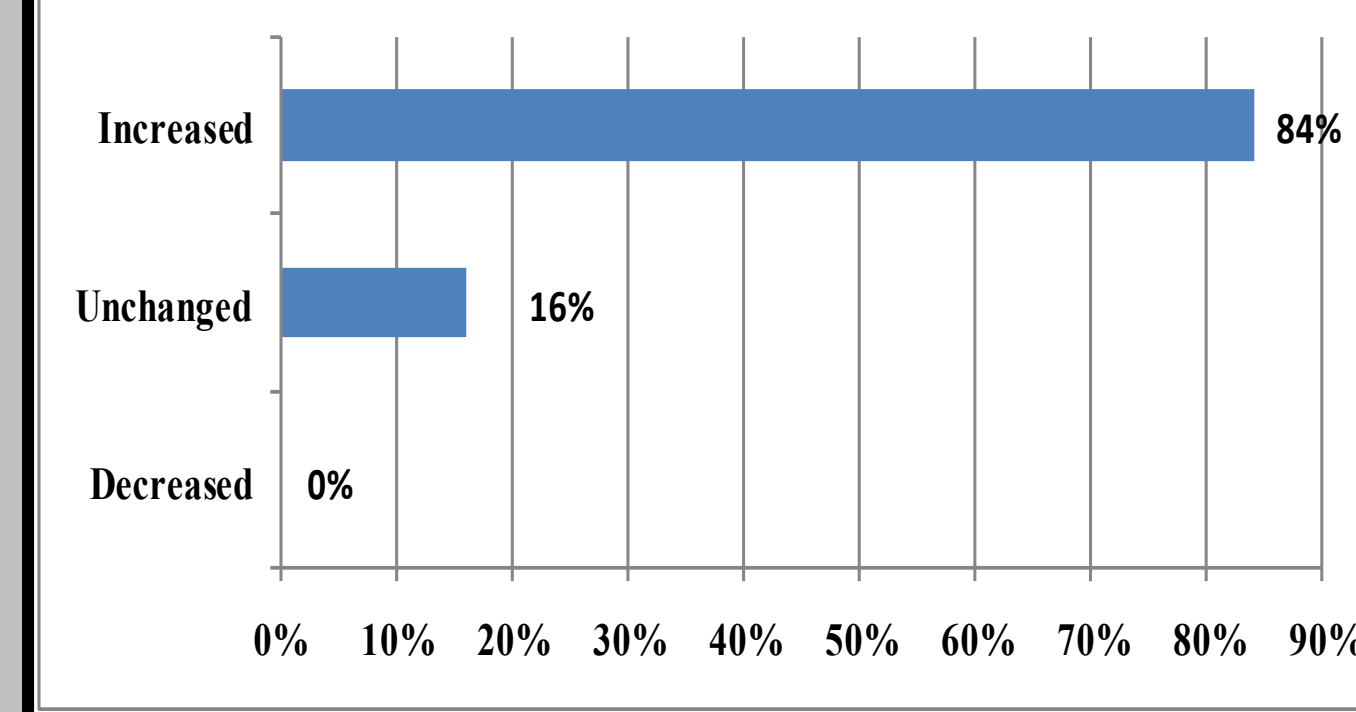
Conclusions

The Reference Services Training proved useful and relevant. The staff have higher rates of confidence in searching databases, identifying relevant resources, and exhibiting behaviors based on best professional practice. The Sciences Librarian and paraprofessional staff look forward to augmenting the training, updating the Wiki for future HSB staff, and possibly applying this training format for other purposes.