QUESTIONS FROM NEWBIES: FACILITATING COMMUNICATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ME, THREE YEARS AGO (AND MAYBE TODAY, TOO)

I KID YOU NOT.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON.
DOES ANYBODY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

Um...no...not right now, I guess.
A FEW POSSIBLE REASONS A PERSON WOULD NOT ASK A QUESTION

- They don’t want to look stupid.
- They don’t want to waste someone’s time.
- They don’t want to appear in need of help.
- They don’t want to hold up the discussion or class [or meeting].
- They think it’s the wrong time to ask.
- They think their questions aren’t good questions.
- They think that everyone else in the room already understands everything.
- They were put on the spot and couldn’t think of anything to ask.

“Creating a Question-Friendly Environment” by Scott Ginsberg
CREATING A QUESTION-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

1. Make anonymity optional
2. Diffuse defensiveness
3. Post past questions
4. Be curious, not judgmental
THE "NEWBIE DOC" IS BORN  DOB: July 2016
“...I'D LIKE TO ADD NEWBIE COLLECTION MANAGER QUESTIONS TO THE AGENDA. THANKS!”

Question
I’ve been asked to select a memorial book. How do I start?

Answers

Question
A vendor wants to visit and demo a product for me. Do I invite others? If so, who? What rooms are good for demos?

Answers
**DOCUMENT STRUCTURE**

- Shared Google doc
- New questions are added at the top of the document above a line
- Questions are moved below the line once answered
- Each question has **Question** and **Answer ()** sections, with the date and context of the answer added in the parentheses
Question

How do I learn about creating a question-friendly environment?

Answer (2019-04-01 NC Serials Conference)

- Read “Creating a Question-Friendly Environment” article
- Attend “Questions from Newbies: Facilitating Communication and Professional Development” lightning talk
DOCUMENT USE

- Anybody with a link to the document can add a question
- “Anonymous”
- I add to agendas and read questions out loud
- Recording of answers is a team project
- Sometimes questions and answers are added outside of meetings
44 questions have been answered since July 2016

~ 1 question/month, on average.

Questions range from those with more or less straightforward answers to those that warranted a larger group discussion.
THE FUTURE OF THE NEWBIE DOC

I guess I’m not a newbie anymore
WHAT’S NEXT?

- Continue to use the newbie doc
- Might consider more structure
- Department guidebook
I have questions!
TIPS

- Low barrier to entry
- Find a willing person to read the questions out loud
- Don't ask people to add their names to questions
- Encourage newbies and non-newbies to contribute
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Thank you!