

Chapter Six

It's not Business as Usual! CPD as a Change Imperative for LIS Professionals

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Review status: Peer reviewed

Introduction

The ubiquity of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in current library and information services (LIS) has necessitated the need to redefine the purpose of the library and the role of the librarian within the environment of the “digital native”. The ability to adapt and respond to the demands of the digital native may be perceived as both a challenge and opportunity for academic libraries to shift from the “business as usual” mind-set that largely prevails within the LIS sector.

Within the business context, business as usual companies are those that focus on normal business operations such as production, processes and managing customer relations on a daily basis. However they are fast realising that, in the face of global challenges, emerging technologies, shrinking economies and the need to be competitive, the tried and tested ways of doing business cannot continue. Increasingly the questions being asked are why must businesses change? How do they change? What do they change to? What are the processes to be followed and resources required to become different; and most importantly, how does the human capital of a business embrace and adopt change?

Despite different contexts, this shift in thinking is also being felt widely by and applicable to the academic LIS sector. Libraries to a large extent may be described as business as usual entities based on their stability, funding, processes and services. However the changing education landscape; shrinking budgets and increasing costs of

resources; and the impact of technology on services and operations have triggered the realisation that business as usual is no longer possible for library and information services globally.

There is also the realisation that library staff, including management, need a mind-set and paradigm shift to accommodate the changing electronic work environment. This could be in terms of new information services and the assumption of new roles and competencies so that the academic library environment reflects its alignment with institutional goals as well as changing user needs. While changes in the physical environment may be considered, it is the long-term investment in library staff that will elicit the greatest results. Therefore, CPD which is generally accepted as the means “to improve upon skills, understand new techniques and maintain previously learned knowledge” (Ukachi and Onuoha, 2013: 269), cannot continue as an ad hoc activity. It needs to be adopted as an organisational strategic imperative for library staff to remain relevant and attuned to the fast changing academic landscape. Ukachi and Onuoha (2013) further suggest that CPD could also be seen as an enabler to creativity and innovativeness towards doing things differently. This paper discusses CPD as a strategic imperative for academic librarians in South African higher education. It highlights challenges and opportunities in higher education that require a dynamic LIS sector to keep up with emerging library trends and new roles that require commitment, leadership

and initiative to keep abreast through CPD because business as usual is no longer possible.

Drivers of change in academic libraries

South African academic libraries have for many years been comfortable with the perception of being support services within the academic project. However this support role is being challenged by new demands of the evolving higher education landscape, such as economics, demanding organisational dynamics and culture, and emerging technologies. These demands offer excellent opportunities for academic libraries to understand their context, review their standards and infrastructure, and redefine their role, position and value within the academic project of their institutions in order to emerge as focused and dynamic academic partners.

Higher education landscape

The 1999 review of the historically segregated South African higher education landscape resulted in the National Plan for Higher Education which led to the restructuring of this sector from 36 historically white or historically black universities, technikons and colleges of education, into 23 merged higher education institutions (HEIs). These merged HEIs comprised of 11 traditional universities, six comprehensive universities and six universities of technology, all with the specific aim of redressing historical educational imbalances. An additional three HEIs were established during 2013/2014 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015).

In the 2014 LIS Transformation Charter, some of the challenges confronting higher education were listed as “transformation and redress imperatives” and noted as “rapid increases in student numbers, students who are ill-prepared for the demands of higher education, increasing uptake of and demand for ICTs in teaching and learning, the drive towards quality assurance, pressure for increased community engagement, changing pedagogic practices, and concern about the employability of their graduates” (Department of Arts and Culture and National Council for Library

and Information Services, 2014:69). In response to these challenges, the 2013 White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013) envisions the type of post-school education and training system to be achieved by 2030 and articulates strategies for this system to contribute to the building of a developmental state with a vibrant democracy and a flourishing economy. It further speaks to huge reforms in the higher and vocational education sectors as well as a planned enrolment of 1.6 m students by 2030. The rudiments in the vision are expanded access, improved quality and increased diversity of provision; the need for “outstanding researchers that are capable of producing ground-breaking work” (Nzimande, 2014); the regulatory role of professional bodies; an increase in post-graduate numbers; greater support for the emerging academic and researcher; and an increase in research in the humanities. Given this vision for higher education and the changing higher education landscape, to what extent are academic libraries ready to meet these research, teaching and learning expectations and able to demonstrate their value, effectiveness and increased efficiencies?

Economics

Shrinking budgets, cutbacks and financial constraints are a constant refrain heard across the academic library sector. The challenge of “doing more, with less” and of retaining what one has, is a stark reality. Since 2014 South African academic libraries have been confronted with the triple hazard of annual price increases, fluctuating exchange rates and the introduction of 14% value added tax (VAT) on electronic resources. In many cases this represents as much as a 26% increase in the annual information resources budget, which is unsustainable in the long-term. These economic uncertainties have compelled librarians to engage more concertedly and regularly with their collections and user groups, scrutinise usage patterns and statistics to inform collection development and management, as well as explore resource sharing and recognise the benefits

of consortial membership. Membership of the South African National Library and Information Consortium (SANLIC), which negotiates and facilitates affordable access to scholarly electronic information in support of the teaching, learning and research activities of its members through collective negotiations with publishers and aggregators (sanlic.org.za), permits institutions to have access to “big deals” and aggregated databases which they could otherwise ill-afford. Another option for the sector is the national big deal being explored under the aegis of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAF) for the Department of Science and Technology. This will facilitate access to information resources by a wider community and will be paid for by government.

Universities cannot afford to lose academic libraries, which exist to provide information expertise and facilitate their research and information needs in alignment with universities’ priorities and those of their community. The constraints in budgets, where the bulk is focused on information resources with the balance being juggled between staffing, services and facilities, has prompted academic libraries to think beyond traditional services and to embrace innovation in order to remain relevant as a non-business entity. It has also led many libraries to reimagine and reconfigure their library spaces, to accommodate and reflect 21st century learning styles and social behaviour.

If the perception of the academic library as a worthwhile investment is to be fostered and strengthened, it becomes the responsibility of the library to ensure the return on this investment by facilitating its own transformation in order to contribute dynamically and distinctively to institutional, student and research success. However this can also be compromised if the library – in its structure, culture and leadership – does not visibly adapt itself to the changing needs of users and their habits, preferences and environments; position itself in the academic midst; deliver cost effective, creative services and tools of value; and make the work of users easier, more productive

and pleasurable (Rochkind, 2013).

The Library organisation

Organisational development is key to accomplishing organisational change and success, enhanced performance and effectiveness of its human capital and inculcating a knowledge and learning environment. Martins and Terblanche (2003:73) identify “strategy, structure, support mechanisms, behaviour that encourages innovation, and open communication” as the core elements of organisational development and a culture that stimulates creativity and innovation.

The need to demonstrate value and relevance has seen the emergence of academic libraries as strategic organisations in alignment with the goals of their parent institutions. Regular strategic reviews, SWOT analyses, LibQUAL+® surveys and evaluations based on business related systems such as the Balanced Scorecard are all contributing to redefining organisational leadership, culture, positioning and operations. These analyses enable the library to adapt to the future.

Strategic organisations are being defined by the congruence between goals, outcomes and processes and the purpose, values and culture of the organisation. They are further based on the assumption that capable leadership is available to steer organisations through change and turmoil (Pasmore, 2014). Studies have further revealed that organisational leadership has moved away from the individual positional leadership model to that of formal and informal leadership that permeates every level of the organisation in support of organisational goals.

Dynamic organisations also thrive on interdependent, connected leadership and a culture that is rich in diversity. It is a culture that fosters collaboration, learning, collective responsibility for outcomes, and opportunities for development (Pasmore, 2014). It also recognises that knowledge, talents, skills and competencies of its human capital drive change and innovation, as well as informing future workplace planning and intergenerational dialogue.

Given the above trends, to what extent are

South African academic libraries engaging in strategic thinking and strategic planning for organisational development, over and above the expected alignment with the academic project? The need to foster new organisational cultures has never been more urgent than the present. The future of academic libraries lies in the process of transforming the current stable and static business as usual environments into robust and dynamic learning environments, where staff are able to take charge of their knowledge exchange and skills transfer towards developing new expertise for evolving roles and competencies.

Although Johnson (2007) posits that leadership is not taught in library schools, some LIS schools in South Africa such as the University of Cape Town and University of Western Cape do indeed teach LIS leadership. Moreover, librarians are well positioned within their organisations to take the lead in ensuring that their communities optimise their use of available resources, thereby contributing to the social and economic advancement of the nation. Core to this is the internal development of leadership that takes collective responsibility for defining the purpose and success of the library; that is able to respond and adapt to the changing user needs and demands; possess the ability to envision and plan for the future; and be able to raise the levels of practice within a broader context.

Technology

Technology is widely acknowledged as the major enabler of change and innovation in the academic library sphere. It has infused and reinvigorated every aspect of library operations and services, and precipitated discussions about physical and digital spaces for access to information networks, new interactive learning opportunities, and collaboration and knowledge creation in response to users' current needs, demands and expectations. These discussions should also anticipate and incorporate flexibility for future pedagogical shifts and technological changes.

Technology-enabled academic library environments provide an integrated solution for teaching, learning, research and collaboration. This integrated solution includes a sophisticated IT infrastructure; networked, wired and wireless connectivity; discovery tools across platforms; customized interfaces for mobile devices that provide 24/7 access to information resources; and tools that support scholarly communication and enhance research visibility. In the face of the digital deluge of information, academic libraries have consolidated their positions as trusted places for authentic information in support of academic scholarship.

Breeding (2013) advises "to remain relevant, libraries must shape the way they deliver their services to accommodate each new wave of technology that captures the imagination of society." He further refers to greater collaboration and cooperation amongst institutions towards lowering costs, enhanced discovery and access through shared automated infrastructure, resources sharing, technical services and collection management.

Library practice in the digital age poses challenges and opportunities for South African libraries. While it may have prompted librarians to reimagine their roles, strengthen existing programmes, and learn new skills within this context, a sustained programme for skilling and training is required to respond appropriately to the fast pace of technological developments. The focus according to Chiware (2007) should be on ensuring an understanding of the current state and prospects of digital libraries and their importance to developing economies. There is a need for familiarisation with digital projects in other institutions, for skills in digital library design, architecture, development and management. LIS practice needs to master tools and protocols for interoperability and project management; technologies for digital content development and collection management; as well as scholarly communication including copyright issues within the digital

domain and information retrieval skills within digital libraries.

Emerging trends for academic libraries

Environmental scanning is crucial for keeping abreast with trends and developments, which inform strategic planning and continuing professional development within academic libraries. It is important to recognise that while these trends point to building on current, evolving and new trends, new competencies and redefined services, libraries need to embrace that which is appropriate to its context, staff development and future planning. A review of the 2012 and 2014 trends identified by the Planning and Review Committee of the Association of College and Research Libraries, the Australian Library and Information Association and the Horizon Report (Johnson et al, 2014) indicate issues relevant to a range of environments and levels of organisational capabilities. The issues resonant with current practice in South African academic libraries relate in varying degrees to:

- e-Resources purchasing and management
- Digital resources – access and preservation
- Mobile environments, content and delivery
- Open Access – mandates, accessibility to research content, publishing and publishing models
- The value and contribution of the library to student success and retention
- Embedding Information and other literacies in the academic curricula
- Altmetrics to measure the impact of scholarly works and research published on the web
- Scholarly communications
- User behaviours and expectations
- Rethinking the roles and skills of librarians

The reports identify the following emerging areas for discussion:

- managing big data

- digital humanities
- embedded librarianship

The Horizon Report (Johnson et al, 2014) recommends that when engaging with these trends, librarians need to be aware of the implications for policy, leadership and practice. When adopting new trends, academic libraries need to ensure that they are in harmony with the strategies and imperatives of the parent institution, the available resources and their role within the overall academic project.

New emerging roles for librarians

The above mentioned drivers of change, advancing tools and changing technologies, evolving research methods, pedagogies and changing research communication practices, the abundance of information in varied formats, all prompt the redefinition of the liaison role of the librarian. Greater engagement, relationship building and collaborative partnerships across the institution are now expected of librarians. This serves as an opportunity for academic libraries to review their core purpose, strategies and job profiles to reprofile and align structures to incorporate new roles and to reimagine their services. Whilst many view new roles such as teaching and learning with scepticism, the academic library is fast evolving into an environment that requires new expertise and specialist librarians in support of the changing teaching, learning and research paradigms.

The changing education landscape is prompting academic libraries to connect more purposefully with their communities. Furthermore their relevance of purpose is enhanced by an understanding of the immediate academic and broader developmental contexts within which they function. User services are being determined by user needs assessments. Increasingly governance in academic libraries is devolving and becoming more participative and responsive. Therefore advocacy, project management, leadership and management are emerging as focus areas of staff development.

Some of these new emerging roles for academic librarians range from the “superliaison” librarian who acts as liaison to other librarians in the fields of “copyright, geographic information systems (GIS), media production and integration, distributed education or e-learning, data management, emerging technologies, user experience, instructional design, and bioinformatics” (Jaguszewski and Williams, 2013:07) to field specific specialists to embedded librarians. In South Africa, in addition to understanding and consolidating the principles of liaison librarianship, emerging areas of specialisation that are being explored by certain academic libraries include:

- scholarly communication and open scholarship
- digitisation and digital collections management
- electronic resources management
- training and development
- data management.

Given current roles and practice, and the above emerging areas of specialisation, the way for academic libraries to meet these new demands is by engaging in CPD.

Continuing professional development

Globally, professional bodies acknowledge and accept CPD as the means by which practitioners remain relevant and competent, and are able to practice at the accepted professional standards. Majid (2004:58) defines CPD as “a systematic method of learning that leads to growth and improvement in professional abilities, enabling individuals to function successfully in a changing work environment...the purpose of continuing professional development activities is to fill-in the knowledge gaps between formal education and the needs of the professional practice.” It is generally accepted that CPD enables professionals to:

- keep abreast of new developments and trends
- address scarcity of skills

- acquire new, relevant and/or appropriate skills
- plan their professional growth or advance in their careers
- identify and develop specialisation
- redefine roles and responsibilities
- become competitive in the labour market

CPD further enables organisations to introduce change and innovation through engagement with staff on new thinking, skills, competencies and services. Ukachi and Onuoha (2013: 270) confirmed that there is increasingly “global interest in the area of creative and innovative library and information services delivery” which is driving academic libraries to maintain their relevance and demonstrate their value in the overall academic project. CPD is largely located within the workplace, and accepted activities include both formal and informal learning interventions. Maesaroh and Genoni (2010) listed these activities as:

- structured orientation/induction programs
- on-the job training programs
- in-house short courses with internal trainers
- in-house short courses with external trainers
- job exchanges within the organisation
- visits to other library and information services
- staff exchanges with other organisations
- external formal study courses (e.g. diplomas, degrees)
- external short courses
- attendance at:
 - seminars and workshops
 - pre- or post-conference workshops
 - conferences
 - continuing professional education events
- guest speakers
- involvement in professional associations and activities

One can assume that given the current state, role and prospects of digital libraries, academic librarians must understand the immediate and broader contexts within which they function. Technologies in the workplace have increased the prospects of communication, collaboration and professional exchange amongst librarians. Chiware (2007) further reiterated that academic librarians must:

- keep abreast of major projects involving digital collections that are enhancing access, visibility and preservation of African research;
- develop advanced IT skills for digital library management, including knowledge of hardware, software and networking requirements; open source software; vendors and suppliers; and all web-based services including publishing;
- organise, manage and present digital information to users. This digital environment has elicited the need to develop “capacity and an understanding of the changing nature of collection development in the digital age” (Chiware, 2007: 04). This has opened a whole new arena of professional competencies including digital collection management, electronic resources management, information retrieval, cataloguing and indexing of e-resources, new copyright challenges, developing standards, tools, practices and policies; and facilitating ease of access to and use of digital collections.

Thus far, CPD within South African library practice has been adopted on an ad hoc basis in fulfilment of organisational human resources requirements. The changing workplace and emerging roles require CPD to be understood, embraced, aligned to organisational imperatives and located within the overall staff development strategy.

Whose responsibility?

Staff development has emerged as a strategic imperative for managing a dynamic changing

workplace and for organisational sustainability. A key driver for staff development, of which CPD is core, is the recognition that the greatest asset of an institution is its human capital; that its success is contingent upon an enabling work environment and the realisation that “every person has a different reason for working and their motivation to be the best stems from being valued for a job well done by those they hold in high esteem” (Satgoor, 2011:02). To date, CPD has resided predominantly within the aegis of human resources departments and treated in an ad hoc manner by library managers and librarians. However it is increasingly evident that CPD has to be treated as a shared responsibility of the individual, the institution, professional associations and LIS schools:

- Individual librarians need to be more proactive in identifying personal and professional development needs and conveying this during development conversations with their line managers. These conversations should culminate in professional development plans that clearly articulate the development needs, the proposed interventions and timelines for implementation.
- The library director together with the institutional human resources department determine the overall annual library development needs, the appropriate levels of interventions and the required resources.
- The human resources (HR) division is guided by the institutional HR development policies, which are informed by the national Skills Development Act (97 of 1998) and the Skills Development Levy Act (9 of 1999). Most institutions are committed to promoting a culture of learning within the workplace and to ensure that their human resources development is in compliance with government regulations, employment equity and steeped in a desire to retain, develop and utilise the skills

at the institution. To this end, the appropriate interventions are identified, opportunities and the necessary resources (funding and leave) are made available.

- The role of the professional association is critical for the implementation of CPD within the sector as the association is often responsible for setting professional standards and providing CPD opportunities. The Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) is now the South African Qualification Authority-registered professional body for library and information services in South Africa. The implication is that CPD is directly linked to the designation of professional librarian, which will require registered members to meet the requirements of an integrated and articulated CPD programme to retain the designation. This serves as an opportunity for academic libraries and LIASA to set the standards of academic library practice and determine the structured CPD programme, which is aimed at enhancing the scope and depth of learning.
- LIS Schools have an important role to play in ensuring that graduates exit with the core knowledge of library and information science, as well as of the current practices. There should be room for the regular review of curricula and in some cases re-circulation, so that they complement the technological needs of practice and evolving areas of specialisation, either at primary qualification level or as CPD certificated programmes.

The demand for CPD as a more formal and concerted intervention will precipitate greater engagement among the role players identified above, but it will also serve as a strategic institutional investment in developing human capital.

Taking the lead!

Given the above drivers of change, emerging roles and the importance of CPD, it can no longer

be business as usual for academic library directors and managers. The current climate in higher education is opportune for them to take the lead in charting a new course for their academic library in the following ways:

- Reflection on one's personal leadership style and being open to embracing a more participative and connected leadership style.
- Engaging with strategic planning as a transparent and an inclusive process. Strategies should clearly reflect the library's alignment to the institutional imperatives and demonstrate the value the library adds to the institution's success.
- Adopting staff development or CPD as a strategy with clear objectives and identified resources. The personal development plan must be actively used as a developmental tool and reviewed annually. This development conversation enables staff to recognise the institution's commitment to their personal and professional development, as well as acknowledging their role in contributing to the success of the institution.
- Revisiting the organisational structure so that it is in alignment with the vision and strategies of the institution. Given the emerging roles and redefined responsibilities, vacancies need to be reviewed and filled, resulting in changed structures that reflect new areas of specialisation and expertise.
- Inculcating a dynamic organisational culture that is reflective of strong values, a spirit of enquiry, collaboration, lifelong learning, experimentation and a mind-set of "one organisation, many leaders". Involving staff in rewriting the purpose, values and culture of the library will contribute substantially to fostering ownership and joint responsibility.
- Recognising technology as an enabler and ensuring that library technology,

standards and infrastructure need to be continually updated to keep pace with patron and researcher needs (Johnson et al, 2014).

- Regularly engaging with the academic community and staff to facilitate changes in perception and meaning of the library and librarians. This requires active advocacy, marketing and demonstrating the value which the academic library adds to teaching, learning and research. The perception of the librarian can also be influenced by librarians engaging in research and publishing.
- Investing in staff and technologies so that ease of access is ensured by the ability to

function optimally in a technologically advanced environment.

- Being open to collaboration within and beyond the institution.

Conclusion

Academic libraries as predominantly business as usual institutions are positioned to redefine, re-imagine, repurpose and reinvigorate themselves provided there is cognition that while technology is the enabler, people are the driving force behind change and innovation; and that institutional success is directly linked to a culture of continuous learning and acknowledgement. An investment in human capital will definitely reap dividends that will ensure sustainability.

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