



**CONTINUING
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT &
WORKPLACE LEARNING**

UPDATE

CPDWL

*Newsletter of the **Continuing Professional Development & Workplace Learning** Section #43 of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions*

Inside this issue:

<i>Standing Committee, Officers & Corresponding Members.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Letter from the Chair, Jana Varlejs: Much Accomplished, More To Do.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Reports and Features</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Obituary: Anne Clyde, international librarian and personal friend – from Blanche Woolls.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Bibliography: The works of Anne Clyde collated by Paul Genoni.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Book Reviews</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Coping with continual change – change management in SLIS. Reviewed by Ian Smith.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Serials in the park. Reviewed by Ian Johnson.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Feature Article Library Assistants – are they undervalued? by Judith Field..</i>	<i>13</i>

Standing Committee, Officers & Corresponding Members

Roles and Responsibilities

NAME	ADDRESS & CONTACT NUMBERS	TERM	RESPONSIBILITIES
Officers			
Jana Varlejs Chair	Associate Professor Rutgers SCILS, 4 Huntington Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1071, USA Tel: 1-732-932 1726, 1-732-846 6850, Fax: 1-732-932 2644 varlejs@scils.rutgers.edu	2005-07 2nd term	Oversee strategic direction and revision of Strategic Plan 2004-05 Section representative at Coordinating Board meetings Co-project leader for 'Quality guidelines for CPD activities' Program organiser Seoul 2006 Chair Durban satellite conference 2007 Newsletter editorial group
Ian Smith Secretary /Treasurer	Manager - Library Human Resources La Trobe University Library Bundoora Vic. 3086 Australia Tel: 61-3-9479 1918 Fax: 61-3-9479 3018 i.smith@latrobe.edu.au	2005-07 2nd term	Organise committee meetings and manage agenda/minutes Manage section budget, accounts and project accounts Co-project leader for 'Quality guidelines for CPD activities' Treasurer proposed Durban Satellite conference (2007) Newsletter editorial group
Sylvia Piggott Information Coordinator	Global Information Solutions Group 3835 Northcliffe MONTREAL, H4A 3K9, Canada Tel. +1-514-860305 spiggott@sympatico.ca / sylviapiggott@hotmail.com	2005-09	Manage website and provide information to IFLA website coordinator Program committee and marketing for proposed Durban Satellite conference (2007) Consolidate mailing and membership lists Newsletter editorial group
Standing Committee Members			
Linda Ashcroft	Liverpool John Moores University, School of Business Information 98 Mount Pleasant LIVERPOOL L3 5UZ, United Kingdom Tel. +44-151-2313425 Fax +44-151-7070423 L.S.Ashcroft@ljmu.ac.uk	2005-09	
Mary L. Chute	Institute of Museum Library and Services 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Rm 802 Washington DC 20506, USA Tel. +1-202-6065419 Fax +1-202-6061077 mchute@imls.gov	2005-09	Program committee proposed Durban Satellite conference (2007)
Wanda V. Dole	Washburn University 1700 SW College Avenue TOPEKA, Kansas 66621, USA Tel. +1-785-231010 ext 1486 wanda.dole@washburn.edu	2005-09	
Gitte Larsen	Royal School of Library and Information Science Birketinget 6 DK-2300 COPENHAGEN S., Denmark Tel. +45-32586066 Fax +45-32840201 gl@db.dk	2005-09	Marketing and promotions Program committee proposed Durban Satellite conference (2007) Newsletter editorial group
Diann Rusch-Feja	Director JISC,SURF,DFG,DEF Knowledge Exchange Office Bibliotheksstyrelsen Nyhavn 31 E 1051 Copenhagen K, Denmark Tel. +45-33733373 Fax. +45-33733372 druschfeja@t-online.de	2005-07 2nd term	Joint project manager for project 'International survey of CPD programs and providers'
Susan Schnuer	University of Illinois, Mortenson Center for International Library	2005-09	Joint project manager for project 'International survey of CPD programs

	<p>Programs 1402 Gregory Drive, Room 142 URBANA, Illinois 61801, USA Tel. +1-217-3330031 Fax +1-213-2650990 schnuer@uiuc.edu</p>		<p>and providers' 2006 Seoul Program Committee (with Preservation and Conservation Section) Program committee proposed Durban Satellite conference (2007)</p>
<p>Corresponding members and other roles Ann Ritchie Newsletter Editor</p>	<p>Assistant Director, Northern Territory Library, GPO Box 42, Darwin Northern Territory, Australia 0801 Tel: +61-8-8999-7364 Mobile: 0401 118 751 Fax: +61-8-8999-6927 ann.ritchie@nt.gov.au / annritchie@yahoo.com</p>	2005-07	<p>Edit and produce two newsletters per year Proceedings editor proposed Durban Satellite conference (2007)</p>
<p>Ujala Satgoor</p>	<p>Leader: Service Unit Economics & Management Sciences Academic Information Services University of Pretoria PRETORIA, 0002 Republic of South Africa Tel.: +27 12 420-2565 Fax: +27 12 362 5100 ujala.satgoor@up.ac.za</p>	2005-07	<p>Program co-convenor proposed Durban Satellite conference (2007)</p>
<p>Clare Walker</p>	<p>University Witwatersrand Library, Johannesburg Wartenweiler Library, Private Bag X1, Wits 2050, South Africa Tel: 27-11-7171903, Fax: 27-11-3397559 walker.c@library.wits.ac.za</p>	2005-07	<p>Program co-convenor and proceedings editor proposed Durban Satellite conference (2007) Newsletter editorial group</p>
<p>Vera Beraquet</p>	<p>Library School Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas Rod Dom Pedro, km 136 Campinas, São Paulo, 13020-904 Brazil Tel: + 19 3745.7025 Fax: + 19 3756.7012 beraquet@puc-campinas.edu.br</p>		<p>Newsletter editorial group</p>
<p>Roisin Gwyer Marketing Officer</p>	<p>Frewen Library, Cambridge Road Portsmouth, England, PO1 2ST United Kingdom Tel: +44-23-9284-3221 Fax: +44-23-9284- 3233 roisin.gwyer@port.ac.uk</p>	2005-07	<p>Develop and implement marketing plan and communications strategy Contact IFLA institutional members for membership drive Marketing for proposed Durban Satellite conference (2007); Sponsorship Newsletter editorial group</p>
<p>Graham Walton E-list Moderator</p>	<p>Service Development Manager University Library Loughborough University Loughborough, LE11 3TU, United Kingdom Tel: +44-1509-22-2355 graham.walton@lboro.ac.uk</p>	2005-07	<p>Moderator for CPDWL e-discussion list; Coordinator Section Review</p>
<p>Paul Genoni</p>	<p>Curtin University, Dept. of Media & Information, GPO Box U1987, Perth, Western Australia 6001 Tel: +61-8-9266-7256 p.genoni@curtin.edu.au</p>		<p>Newsletter editorial group Book reviews</p>

Letter from the Chair, Jana Varlejs: Much Accomplished, More To Do

Now that CPDWL is in its fourth year as a section rather than a round table, it is a good time to give ourselves a quick checkup: *Are we in good health as an organization that has a vital function in our profession? Are we making a unique and valuable contribution to IFLA?*



The six world conferences on continuing professional development and their published proceedings have been the most visible contribution that we have made over the course of more than twenty years. Our effort in this regard is ongoing, as we plan for the next satellite conference to be held in Durban next year. We can be especially proud that the resulting hard-cover IFLA publications are in the collections of many IFLA member libraries across the world and thus make information about CPD accessible to library staff who have never been able to attend an IFLA conference.

A more recent success story is the role we are playing in IFLA as a model for excellence in conference programming. In 2004, CPDWL presented a workshop, *Training the Information Literacy Trainer*, in support of IFLA President Kay Raseroka's theme of libraries as tools for education and development. The selection of presenters was competitive, and the program format showed how principles of adult education could be respected in a highly interactive, learner-centered workshop, even in the limited time available. For the Seoul conference, we are taking this model a step further. The Conservation and Preservation Section asked us to co-sponsor a program that again would have a "train-the-trainer" focus, designed to help librarians learn how to teach their staff good preservation practice and how to educate the public about preservation. Given a longer program allotment, we have incorporated juried papers as well as a hands-on workshop session. In the latter, selected presenters will demonstrate techniques and address questions in small group settings that will allow for intensive, individualized learning. We believe that we can again prove that a relatively short program can be used to stimulate active learning and transfer of new understandings and skills to participants' workplaces. We hope that we can inspire other IFLA units to follow our example in the future, and that conference attendees will emulate the model when they plan CPD events in their home countries

Perhaps our least successful endeavor since gaining section status is our electronic discussion list, cpdwl@infoserv.inist.fr. It has not become the dynamic exchange of views, information, and advice about continuing professional development that we had envisioned. Despite a healthy membership of over 400, we cannot seem to get much discussion going. One idea for invigorating communication is to have one of us who is a member of other e-lists devoted to education scan those for interesting items to forward to the CPDWL list. This would widen the connections among people with a common interest in CPD, spread information, and eventually perhaps spark discussion on cpdwl@infoserv.inist.fr. Any volunteers?

Other activities of the Section include two projects funded by IFLA, one to promulgate quality guidelines for CPD and the other to develop an international database of CPD providers. The guidelines are nearly ready for approval by the CPDWL Standing Committee, and the database is still in a formative stage.

A dormant project that merits re-visiting is the care and feeding of *Free CPD Resources on the Internet*, developed by Gwyneth Morgan for our Oslo

satellite conference (see the October 2005 newsletter, pp.16-17, and go to <<http://www.hebdenconsultants.co.uk/oslo.html>>). Participants in this workshop in Oslo were invited to expand this compilation by adding resources from their various countries, but as far as I know, this has not happened. Here is another opportunity for one of our members to make a significant contribution—any volunteers?

All of these efforts support, as stated in our mission,

... an international community of practice for practitioners and researchers who are interested in and/or responsible for providing delivery systems and improving the quality of continuing professional development and workplace learning

Overall, we can say with confidence that we are a healthy organization that is making a significant contribution, yet much remains to be done. Please pitch in and help by volunteering for one of our projects, recruiting members, or sharing your experience through our e-list or future newsletters.

Jana Varlejs
varlejs@scils.rutgers.edu

Speaking of membership, this is how we're tracking:

Category	March 2005	March 2006
Personal Affiliate	14	16
National Associations	13	11
Institutions	18	28
Total	45	55

We're up 22% in total membership numbers, increases in all categories except for a small decline in National Associations. (Note from Ed)

[Also from Jana, 8/4/06 – an email re the preliminary program for Seoul: “Note our Standing Committee meetings, Saturday Aug 19, 8:30-11:20, and Friday, Aug 25, 14:30-17:20. Our joint program with Preservation and Conservation is on Monday Aug 21, 13:45-18:00. Hope to see you all there!”]

Reports and Features

Obituary: Anne Clyde, international librarian and personal friend – from Blanche Woolls

Dr. Anne Clyde, Professor in the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of Iceland, truly represented international librarianship in all its aspects. She held faculty appointments on three continents, Australia, North America, and Europe. She consulted all over the

world, most recently in Africa and in the former Eastern Bloc countries. She was an exceptional researcher and a prolific writer.

She is represented in most of the proceedings of the Continuing Professional Education Roundtable and the CPDWL Section.

She held degrees from the University of Sydney and James Cook University in North Queensland. She was an Associate in the Australian Library and Information Association, and a Fellow in CILIP in Great Britain.

Anne was special to those who knew her, each in our own way. One query from her is still in my message box, a tribute to how quickly she responded to messages, requests for information.

Anne was a Renaissance person. Her work in IFLA was not just with the CPDWL Section. She moved between our section and her presiding over the School Library Section, writing papers for both. Her papers were the ones that required very little editing. They were to the topic and full of good research with thorough coverage.

My very personal loss will be those social moments, dinner with others in CPDWL at a beer garden in Oslo, and a glass of wine at some point wherever we met, our last one in the lobby of the Radisson in Oslo.

She will be sorely missed by all who knew her, personally, professionally, and through her publications and consulting work.

Blanche Woolls

Bibliography: The works of Anne Clyde collated by Paul Genoni

While not perhaps including everything that Anne published, this bibliography gives a good indication of the extent and range of her contribution to our professional literature. Book reviews and small regular columns she wrote for two journals – *Emergency Librarian* in the mid 90s and *Teacher Librarian* in recent years, have not been included.

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Book Reviews

Coping with continual change – change management in SLIS. Reviewed by Ian Smith

**Coping with continual change – change management in SLIS:
proceedings of the European Association for Library and Information
Education and Research (EUCLID) and the Association for Library and**

Information Science Education (ALISE) joint conference, Potsdam, Germany, 31 July - 1 August 2003 / edited by Linda Ashcroft. Bradford: Emerald, 2005. vi, 175 p. ISBN: 1845441567 (pbk)

Potsdam, Germany was the setting for a joint conference of European Association for Library and Information Education and Research (EUCLID) and the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) which immediately preceded the 203 IFLA World Library & Information Congress in Berlin.

This volume collects the twenty-one papers presented at this conference and in doing so presents a valuable collation of perspectives on the challenges and changes currently faced by Library and Information Science (LIS) educators. The sub-themes of the conference were diverse including: student expectations and capabilities; pressures for curricular changes; institutional change and its impact on SLIS; the effectiveness of distance learning; the impact of new competitors for SLIS, and; the relationship between schools of library and information science and the field of practice. These themes are all reflected in this volume of Proceedings – the papers presenting a mix of broad reflections on issues facing LIS educators, more closely focussed discussions of pedagogical method and curriculum design, modes of organisation and delivery of LIS education, and examination of issues professional practice and professional development.

It is difficult when reviewing a collection of conference papers such as these to single out particular papers while failing to mention others. Notwithstanding this, brief mention of several papers in this collection will serve to illustrate more fully the range of topics covered in this volume. Setting the conference keynote in his paper *Whither library education?* (Gorman) advances the thesis that there exists a crisis in library education, this crisis varying in severity from country to country, which requires either a new or a resuscitated model of LIS education – one which will meet the demands of libraries and librarianship in the years to come. Gorman expresses particular concerns with the integration of traditional library studies with information science curricula – disciplines which he regards as, at best, peripheral to professional library work and, at worst, inimical to it. Gorman's solution is to narrow the gap between what is taught in LIS schools and what is being practiced in libraries. Gorman's paper thus sets the backdrop for the remainder of the papers in the Proceedings which pick up and examine the detail of many of the issues touched on in the key-note paper. The key-note theme – curriculum issues – is further examined from several different perspectives with a strong emphasis on the rapidly expanding role of e-learning and web based learning and the overall impact on LIS curricula of rapid advances in IT. From the *Research Lab to the Classroom: Just-in-time Delivery* (Turner), for example, examines the potential for just-in-time delivery of material in order to keep course in dynamically changing areas of the curriculum as up to date as possible. *Change Implications Related to Electronic Educational Resources*, (Ashcroft and Watts) examines the impact of rapidly expanding online electronic resources on several areas of LIS curriculum including collection development, user education and the technological skills required of LIS

graduates. Several of the papers examine curriculum changes in the context of national policy trends, for example Curricular Changes in Restructuring Library and Information Education in Ukraine (Sheyko) Educational Situation in Library and Information Science in Latvia (Gudakovska & Holma) and Change and innovation in European LIS education (Virkus & Wood). In Curricular changes and core skills for information professionals? (Urbanija & Juznic) the authors address what they describe as the oldest question regarding education – how to organise the curriculum to give students the best possible training. Professional practice and professional development forms another prime focus in these Proceedings. Professional values in Norwegian librarianship (Vaagan & Holm) presents preliminary results of a survey of Norwegian librarians, contrasting these results with trends in other countries, while Developing diverse professional leaders (Turock) argues the importance of professional leadership and the role played by SLIS in developing such leadership. Continuing education of librarians in Croatia: problems and prospects (Horvat) presents an interesting discussion of attempts to establish and embed a consistent approach to continuing education for librarians in Croatia

Both the content and the production of the Proceedings is of high quality. All of the conference papers are well and clearly written and they demonstrate sound scholarship. The editing and proof reading is of a generally high standard (although a small number of typographical errors were detected). Many of the conference papers included statistical tables and/or charts and these are clearly reproduced and well integrated with the text. The layout – Emerald's standard two-column-per-page format – is attractive and easy to read. Each paper has a listing of keywords and a short abstract – both of these useful in gaining an overview of each conference paper and helpful in searching for commonly themed papers. The Proceedings are organised alphabetically, by author's name. Grouping of the paper around the broad conference themes would have been useful to the reader who wishes to explore particular topical threads.

As is encapsulated by the title of this volume, coping with continual change is a challenge facing both schools of LIS and the profession more broadly. While these Proceedings understandably reflect the European and North American focus of EUCLID and ALISE and the perspectives of the LIS educators from those countries of those regions, this geographic restriction does not limit the relevance of these conference papers to LIS educators and professionals world-wide. The Proceedings provide an important overview of reflections and reactions to the key challenges currently faced by all those in the LIS profession. As such, the Proceedings are recommended – particularly to LIS educators – and also to any in the profession who are interested in current issues of professional education and professional practice.

Ian Smith. La Trobe University Library, Australia.

Serials in the park. Reviewed by Ian Johnson

FRENCH, P.S., and WORTHING, R., editors. *Serials in the park: proceedings of the North American Serials Interest Group, Inc. 18th annual conference, June 26-29, 2003, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon.* Binghamton, New York: The Haworth Information press. ISBN 0-7890-2565-5. US \$34.95

These proceedings had previously appeared as 2 double issues of *The Serials Librarian*, and by the time this volume appeared in September 2004, in such a rapidly changing field, much of its content was probably beginning to look a little like 'old news.' One paper is indeed old. It was delivered at the 2002 conference but omitted from those proceedings!

The main interest for the readers of the *CPDWL Newsletter* lies in the reports of several workshops on the changing role of staff and the training required for work with serials collections. However, a close reading of some of the other papers would bring to attention other new skills or emphases that underpin successful management of these collections e.g. financial acumen and numeracy. The range and complexity of the field implicitly highlights the challenges for Schools of Librarianship and Information Sciences and for the profession as a whole in preparing staff for specialist areas of work, when this is just one of many specialisms, and the specialists are probably employed in small numbers in most organisations.

Sometimes, librarians' limited awareness of the publishing business shows through, while some of the more perceptive contributions come from publishers and agents who have taken the trouble to understand the whole field, and not just their part of it.

There were several papers in which the need for changes not only in librarians' roles but also their perceptions of their roles were emphasised. One speaker urged librarians to take control of the technology and make the technology do what they need it to do. Another argued that they should begin to act as more pro-active customers, telling the publishers what they want and demanding that they get it.

Generally, these proceedings contain much of the usual stuff that one would expect to find in recent conferences on serials: acquisition policies, cataloguing, preservation, and open access. A few of the papers have only a tenuous connection with serials work, but are nonetheless interesting. One for example describes the evolution of the New Zealand National Information Strategy; another offered guidance on how to secure a tenured position – and implicitly encouraged serials librarians to add to the flood of professional literature!

The volume is a mixture of original papers and reports of presentations. This Group is to be commended for accepting that many conference presenters do not have the time/inclination/skill to prepare a substantive paper, and will turn

up with nothing more than a PowerPoint presentation. All too often, that means that any useful insights that they convey are lost to everyone but the conference delegates. Other groups have attempted to deal with this by making audio or video recordings available but the recent trend has been to put the PowerPoint presentations on the Web. That is no substitute for the substance of the presentation, and the reports here are worth the effort made by the rapporteurs, whether they were working from audio recordings or written notes. This is a practice that should be encouraged.

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Feature Article

***Library Assistants – are they undervalued?* by Judith Field** judithlib@optusnet.com.au

Paper Given at the 6th World Conference on Continuing Professional Development & Workplace Learning for the Library and Information Professions *Continuing Professional Development – Preparing for New Roles in Libraries: A Voyage of Discovery*. 11-13 August 2005, Oslo University College, Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science Oslo, Norway

This paper is concerned with the importance of library assistants and the desirability of providing certified training for this level of library staff.

Background

Four years ago I took on the task of developing a Basic Certificate II/III Library course for a Community College in rural New South Wales. As a result of teaching and assessing at this preliminary level, I have become increasingly passionate about acknowledging the importance of library assistants and their skills and would like to share some observations and concerns about staff training at this level.

To prepare this paper I surfed the Net and found much more information on library assistants than I had expected, from early 20th century to the present day. I have been amazed at the wealth of material I have been able to access, just using Google as my launch pad. I sat in Lismore and information on library assistants from all round the world appeared on my screen. Only a few years ago I would have had to rely on much more primitive, time consuming and costly methods, and not found such wide ranging sources.

Incidentally I also found it interesting that many of my locally based perceptions, regarding the strengths and weaknesses of competency standards in general and library assistant training in particular, were replicated in the literature by those with far more experience and expertise than myself.

Terminology.

Before proceeding any further I must open that proverbial 'can of worms' and discuss terminology. There are so many terms used to describe those who work in libraries but do not have a professional library qualification. To quote the ALA in their 'Overview of Library Support Staff' "What to call support staff is as perplexing a problem as pinning down a job description".ⁱ

Terminology

- IFLA guidelines for Public Libraries
 - Qualified librarians
 - Library assistants
 - Specialist staff
 - Support staff (caretakers, cleaners, drivers, security)
- Encarta article (online)
 - Non professional support staff - used for those doing technician and library assistant level work
- CILIP President 2002
 - Paraprofessionals
 - Support staff
 - Non professionals
 - Unqualified staff

Above are examples from a variety of sources which give some idea of the varying definitions of Support Staff. (CILIP President Sheila Corral, during a speech at a Members Presentation, was listing terms that she had found for Library Assistants)^{ii iii iv} I have found a similar range in my research and it seems that attempts to settle on a universally accepted term have not been successful. I will use the term Library Assistant, saving Paraprofessional for those who have Technician level training. However I occasionally use the over-riding generic title Support Staff to encompass all staff other than recognized academic 'professionals'.

Concerns

My original proposal listed a number of concerns, which you can see listed here. I will refer to them in the course of this presentation, using Australian examples wherever possible.

Concerns

- Library Assistants are front line personnel but not given enough 'Big Picture' information
- Skills traditionally unacknowledged by any structured, formal and national recognition
- Library profession supports training but seems to do little to promote it
- Some Library Technician level paraprofessionals feel threatened by those below being certified
- Industry based competency training is relatively new and not fully understood by many library professionals; procedures too complicated, cumbersome and jargonistic

Why are library assistants so important?

In 1949 Erret McDiarmid considered that libraries needed at least as many support staff as they need librarians, and that the "almost complete neglect" of training non professional workers was "dangerous to the future of librarianship" (p. 232) ^v

50 years later ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels, addressing delegates at the 2003 Congress on Professional Education, voiced the same concern. "We need to stop ignoring our support staff; instead, we need to train them, we need to recognize them. because it's the right thing for the Association, for our libraries, and for our communities." ^{vi}

At the same meeting Kathleen Weibel from Chicago Public Library, echoed his words. "How can we be responsible to our users.....if we don't think seriously about over half the people who work in libraries? It's as if these people didn't exist." ^{vii}

Fiels estimates that there are 140,000 librarians and 300,000 other library workers in US. This gives a ratio of 2 support staff for every librarian and I believe that ratio is much higher in other countries. Some support staff are already trained and certified as library technicians, paraprofessionals or whatever other term describes that level of attainment; others are purely clerical or office staff. However that still leaves many library assistants, who have some kind of contact with the library's clientele. These are the people with whom this session is concerned.

At a recent Presentation night one of my students chose to talk on 'The value of Library Assistants'. I would like to share some of her remarks with you. "The library assistant is a cog on the wheel that makes a library run smoothly. Although in terms of status we may be at the bottom of the ladder, remember a car does not run very well without first gear.. For a library to run smoothly a functional team is required. The library assistant is an integral and necessary part of that team, indeed in many cases forming the spine of the library" {That

last metaphor reflects that Kerrie is a qualified nurse anxious to make a career change}

A Chief Librarian can be dynamic with an inspiring Mission Statement and a desire to provide the best possible service for the library users. However this goal may never be achieved if 'first contact' counter staff are not welcoming and well informed. It is most important for every member of staff to understand all aspects of their library service - procedures, policies and personnel – and become familiar with the community or clientele they serve. With this institutional knowledge Front Line staff are able to give assistance themselves or pass the enquirer to an appropriate colleague.

Here we should also acknowledge that in smaller libraries or library service points the Library Assistant may be the only member of staff available. Many of my positions have been in one or two person libraries where, as a qualified librarian, I had to do shelving, circulation and inter library loans, as well as acquisitions, budgeting, training and in-depth reference queries for academics, vets and architects. Conversely library assistants can be required to take on professional tasks and responsibilities on a regular basis. Ann Woodsworth in discussing the status of library assistants points out that "in smaller units they are often included in problem-solving and decision-making and are respected for their expertise and knowledge." ^{viii}

Why should formal certification be introduced for library assistants?

Formal certification acknowledges practical experience or training while ensuring that this is backed up by evidence of 'underpinning knowledge'. Here is a listing of some of the major advantages.

Certification: Advantages

- Skills at every level of staffing recognised.
- National certification portable and transferable.
- Current skills can be recognised and areas for further training immediately identifiable.
- Training increases personal self esteem and confidence

All levels of staff skills should be recognized – this will prevent the 'taken for granted' syndrome. Time and again in my literature search I came across phrases that emphasized the importance of recognizing and respecting the role of the library assistant. The desirability of a portable and transferable certificate, enabling training to start at one job and continue in another system on the other side of the continent is really important in a large country like

Australia. Nationally recognised training documentation is desirable when libraries are administered by local or state authorities. Current skills can be recognized by a new employer and areas for further training are also immediately identifiable. Training increases personal self esteem and confidence, and allows the library assistant to understand that they are a small but important member of the library 'Team'.

I would like to share a personal example with you here. One of my students was already working as a casual assistant at a 3 person branch of a small Regional Library Service and used that for her assessable Work Experience. Her Branch Librarian was impressed with the difference the Certificate training made, perceiving greater confidence and more enthusiasm and interest in her employee. The student herself explained how she understood and enjoyed her job more, now she could place herself and her activities in the overall service structure and in the wider 'library world'. She understood better not just **what** she was doing but **why**.

Competency based training in Australia

My course was based on the requirements of the Australian Library Industry 'National Training Package' first endorsed a decade ago. This training system has an emphasis on workplace training and assessment, but also has a component that allows for recognition of prior learning or experience. It can be taught in the workplace, by course work, or using a combination of these methods. Flexibility, portability and various methods of delivery which can be adapted to suit local needs are all important elements in this new way of training.

Methods of training in Australia

- 'On the job' Traineeships using independent contracted assessors
- Training programme taught and assessed by librarians who have Competency Training certificates
- Commercial provider conducting sessions for LA's working in different types of libraries in Canberra
- Online distance education course
- Adult Community College – classes and work experience

On the job training

Richmond Tweed Regional Library is one of the first public libraries in NSW to introduce a Trainee programme which employs school leavers for a 2-year contract. During that time they are assessed for Certificate III Units by an independent contracted Assessor, who uses evidence collected from work supervisors, work diaries and written assignments. These traineeships are

fully funded by Richmond Tweed Library itself with no Government monies being received. One of the first trainees is now a permanent member of staff and four more are at various stages of training.

Another NSW Country Public Library ran a programme at Certificate II level for their own staff, taught and assessed by librarians who had completed a Competency Training course. Funding was provided by a Federal Government programme for Existing Worker Traineeships.

Commercial Providers

Docmatrix is a commercial provider conducting training sessions for library assistants who are already working in educational, special and public libraries in Canberra and Sydney. They use a combination of classes and individual workplace assessment, which enables the training to reflect the needs of any particular institution. Their clients include the National Library of Australia who recently trained 5 already experienced Document Supply support staff in Certificates II and III.^{ix}

Capra Ryan operates a distance education course from their base near Brisbane, Queensland using on line teaching and local contracted assessors. This allows isolated workers to upgrade their skills even though they are disadvantaged by location. They teach all Library Assistant levels and have over 250 students, in all states of Australia and a few in China. This course is completely on-line, but very interactive with other students and tutors, so the students don't feel that they are going it alone.

Educational Institutions

TAFE Colleges in a number of Australian States offer full or part time courses for Certificate III – IV level candidates, integrating with the Diploma (Library Technician) course if desired. My own classes, run by the local Adult Community College, have students who are working as casuals in local libraries, others with previous library experience and some with none. I teach mainly in 'face to face' sessions, which are backed up by assignments, projects and library visits. All students also have to do concurrent practical work on a weekly basis and their detailed Work Diaries count as a major part of their final assessments.

My aim is to teach the basic concepts, principles and practices encountered in libraries in the formal classes, while always emphasising that each library service will be unique as it strives to service its particular clientele. Although it is difficult in a small regional city, I try to get work experience placements in different types of libraries, and encourage students to choose 2 contrasting services for their practical work. This varying experience is invaluable when discussing particular topics in class – my comments on the basic concepts of Acquisitions can be illustrated by examples of how this is actually carried out in a Primary School and a University Library. I can use the students' current experience to reinforce the premise that individual library procedures differ for a variety of reasons but the basic concepts remain constant.

PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTING COMPETENCY TRAINING

I have no problem with the way competency based training works in theory. My concerns are with practicalities.

Complexity of competency training and assessment

Industry based competency training is a relatively new concept in the Australian Library industry. An overview of the Library Industry Training Package can be found at the National Training Information Service (NTIS) website at <http://www.ntis.gov.au/> and an example of an individual unit at the following URL

<http://www.ntis.gov.au/cgi-bin/waxhtml/~ntis2/unit.wxh?page=80&inputRef=34303&sCalledFrom=pkg>

One of the advantages of using a prescribed formulaic structure is that it enables trainers to use modules from any training package. The new Australian Library Certificate III has imported units on Customer Service, Occupational Health and Safety, and Business Technology and Certificate IV has included units on Work Teams and Computing Packages.

However using the same structure for every Training Package regardless of industry type has led to a rather unwieldy format, into which it is often hard to fit library training requirements. (Other industries may have similar problems – in trying to make it universal, it suits no one!) Using the same method of assessing for ‘Changing a car tyre’ and proving competence in the ‘concepts of cataloguing or classification’ is a tall order. It can easily be used for the more practical and easily measured work (and many library tasks fit into this category) but becomes difficult for more cerebral skills. Although meant to help consistency, the repetitious and cumbersome nature of the module presentation works to deter potential trainers, including the librarians who should be encouraged to use competency standards for their in-house training plans.

A very small Australian survey conducted in 2001 indicated that 93% of librarians surveyed were aware of library competency standards and many used them for job specifications and identifying training needs.^x However I’m not so sure that the standards are widely used for actual in-house training and assessment. I believe that many librarians do not fully understand the complexities of using the training packages for staff skill assessments. Assessment procedures are too complicated, cumbersome and jargonistic, so this new concept is put into the too hard basket and any training continues with already proven methods.

I helped my students understand the basic structure of the training package, and the expectations laid down by the competency board, by working through one complete unit description. Then I gave them a condensed list of assessment skills for the other units, with access to the complete training package for reference.

Competency assessment: a new learning method

Another hurdle, which must be overcome before competency training becomes universally accepted, is the fact that it uses a relatively new concept of demonstrating achievement.

Assessment based/work based training is a concept more familiar to Trade industry workers, than those in the Library and Information Services industry. Even the use of the word Industry may make older Librarians unhappy and they will insist that theirs is a Profession not an Industry! They are used to passing or failing, they want ticks and crosses and marks out of 20, and have difficulty adapting to this new learning technique.

The continual assessment and the 'competent or not yet competent', 'have another go' method of training /assessing would be more familiar to school leavers and younger members of staff.

Practical problems of distance and finance

If on the job training is to be encouraged, the structure needs to be understood by those setting up and providing the training – namely often the overworked, maybe stressed or otherwise preoccupied library manager. Contracted experienced trainers can provide an alternative to in-house training, but this can be very expensive and may need a number of staff off at same time (even with internal training this can pose a problem).

I can use my recent experiences as an example here. I decided not to hold classes at Certificate III level this year, as only a few of my past students have been able to find even part-time or casual work in the Northern Rivers and it seemed pointless to add to the number of frustrated would-be library assistants.

However some of these students have been keen for me to offer a Certificate IV course and I tried very hard to do so this year. We had no luck attracting library assistants working in local schools, but did have enthusiastic interest from two small regional libraries at Casino and Grafton. The Library Managers were very keen but logistically with small staff, no money to pay for replacements and distances to be travelled, arrangements proved to be impossible. There are many library assistants in rural and outer urban areas in Australia for whom the best option appears to be enrolment in on-line certification training. However it is imperative that such students get plenty of feed back and encouragement both from long distance tutors and the local librarian, together with the ability to connect with other students via chat rooms, email, teleconferencing etc.

This brings me to two other related concerns.

Attitude of library professionals to library assistant training

My literature search found a number of articles that discussed attitudes to library assistants, indicating that quite often professionals and paraprofessionals don't yet consider valuable the work done by support staff.

In an article entitled "The plight of library assistants" Anne Woodsworth hopes that "with flattening organizations, technology and team-oriented management as levellers,..hierarchical organizations would crumble and with them would go the caste systems and attitudes".^{xi} However that has not always happened.

I know Librarians who feel extremely threatened by Library Technicians breathing down their necks. Now there are Library Technicians in the same position vis-à-vis Library Assistants. My own experience, of being accosted at the meat counter of the local supermarket by an 'uninformed' library technician who accused me of belittling her qualification by issuing certificates to assistants with far less training, is not apparently an isolated incident. I have come across anecdotal and written examples of similar instances of misunderstanding by previously qualified library staff both in Australia and overseas.

Here is just one example from Larry Oberg. "The rapidly changing library workplace has created tension, even resentment among support staff. Paraprofessionals see themselves performing the tasks they have watched librarians perform for years [and] ...new tasks created by automation, but for less money and lower status"^{xii}

We need to combat this animosity and fear. I believe one reason that these unfortunate situations are happening is because the relationship between past and present courses and methods of training has not been clearly delineated. We should recognize strengths of all levels of staff and provide pathways or (to use latest jargon) 'career ladders' for those who want to climb. However staff who choose to, or have to, stay at the assistant level should be deemed to have earned appropriate respect, and a national certification that recognizes their skills helps to do just that.

Maybe our Professional Associations should circulate to all their members a 'Librarians guide to Competency Assessment', without the jargon, together with an explanation of the relationship between new and old qualifications. This, together with a programme to promote the value of support staff and the desirability of their certification, would go a long way to ensuring that we have a profession that values the contribution of every library worker and encourages mutual support, not suspicion.

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) concentrates on professionals – as it should because it is a professional body. Nevertheless it was actively involved in the development of the original Training Package.^{xiii} and in the revised syllabus introduced in 2004. Library Technicians are associate members of ALIA and hold a very impressive conference every year. IFLA President Alex Byrne is a keynote speaker at their 2005 conference. His subject – 'IFLA and its three pillars: making a difference globally'.

But there needs to be more active promotion of the benefits of support staff training, which would also recognize the wealth of potential new candidates

for the profession. Such encouragement would reap rewards and keep the profession alive with new blood and new ideas. I believe that certified training/recognition of library assistants' skills not only makes them feel appreciated as an integral and important part of the whole organization, but also encourages staff to become interested enough in the library field to consider moving up the qualification ladder. One of the catalysts that got me thinking about submitting this proposal was a talk about Mentoring given by Mylee Joseph^{xiv} who began work in libraries as a 16 year old Work Experience student. She became a library assistant when she left school with no intention of going further. It was her Librarian who recognised Mylee's potential and encouraged her to study externally. Eventually she rose to become Chief Librarian for a Sydney local authority and has recently been appointed to a Senior position at the State Library of NSW.

International overview

I would now like to share with you a few examples of Library Assistant training from other parts of the world.

Finland *Educational needs of Finnish polytechnic librarians* by Viiri Marjaritta.^{xv} This article reports on a 1998 survey of 27 Finnish polytechnics, which had a response rate of 96%. Librarians, information specialists, directors, library assistants and information service secretaries were surveyed - half had an academic background and the other half had received vocational education. An interesting finding for me was that the differences in needs identified by each group were small and "topics chosen as especially interesting to those in charge of the library services also interested the library assistants".

Viiri also describes how vocational education for library assistants, once available in commercial colleges, has been discontinued and suggests that there is now need for a 'vocational degree programme' for library assistants, using the new, more flexible learning and teaching methods.

Mauritius *Training library assistants in Mauritius* Marie Benoit.^{xvi} A 15 month experimental course for training library assistants was carried out in 1978-9 by the University of Mauritius, with financial help from Canada. The success of this venture led to an ongoing programme.

New Zealand *The frontline librarian: a skills based approach to training* Macleod & McConnell.^{xvii} The Public Library at Dunedin has developed its own competency training programme, involving all Frontline staff – qualified librarians, library assistants, full and part time casuals.

Cuba *ALA-Cuban Libraries-Report to Visit ACURIL*.^{xviii} Cuba has had a training programme for library assistants for over 40 years, conducted both in Havana and in country areas and involving about 400 students at any given time.

Further information

While searching for International examples for this paper I became aware of many organizations for Library Technicians and /or Library Assistants, especially in the US. I have already mentioned an example from Australia. CILIP in UK has an Affiliated Members Group as does the American Library Association. Many US states also have their own Support Staff Groups.

Library Assistant Conferences in US include

- NJALA (New Jersey Association of Library Assistants) has run an Annual 2 day Conference for many years
- This idea was picked up by Illinois who set up the Reaching Forward Conference, managed and presented by Library Assistants, with more than 1200 attendees each year^{xix}

There are also some very impressive websites on the Internet. Here are a few examples.

More Information

- **Website** www.librarysupportstaff.com
- **OnLine Discussion Site**
www.branching-out.net/talkingshop
- **BLOG** www.becomealibrarian.org

Website www.librarysupportstaff.com This American website is a comprehensive compilation of Links to other websites or individual pages within a website. with many sections. It has many sections including 'Support Staff Sites'. 'On the Job Help', 'Education4you' and 'Finding a job'. Its coverage is most impressive and led me quickly to links I may never have found by just surfing.

On-Line Discussion Site www.branching-out.net/talkingshop The Talking Shop discussion group is attached to a UK site which caters to everyone working in reader development. Here is a posted question from Ginny - "What is it really like to work in a library. I don't mean as a professional manager – but to actually do the work. What's good about it, what are the stresses and what are the benefits?"

Blog www.becomealibrarian.org This site includes many interesting profiles of library workers gathered by the Central Jersey Regional Library Cooperative. Also 'Library Supporter – a Weblog dedicated to library support staff' is worth a visit at <http://librarysupporter.blogspot.com>

IFLA and the recognition of support staff

I have a grave admission to share with you. All my working life I never thought much about IFLA. It was just that international body, very important but as far away as the North Pole and just as remote. I think I'm a fairly average intelligent library worker, but I was unaware of IFLA's important work and achievements, until I accompanied my husband to the Berlin Conference – where my eyes were surely opened. I can now appreciate the complexity of this international organisation and the amazing contribution that IFLA has made to librarianship and information services.

I believe that IFLA can play an important role in raising the issue of support staff training at the international level. It is evident from the literature that there is growing recognition in many countries that library support staff should be valued and trained. There is agreement that future training should eventually provide nationally recognized creditation but with flexible delivery, a variety of pathways to qualification and an emphasis on continual training.

How can IFLA help?

IFLA already has an Advancement of Librarianship Programme which aims to further the library profession, library institutions, and library and information services in developing countries and maybe this is the body who can help to raise the profile of Library Assistants.

UK, Australia and NZ have all introduced competency training based on the same concepts; each learning from the other but 'doing it their own way'. It has been a long evolving process with meetings, reports, trials, and research over many years – in each of these cases the philosophical concept was introduced by national governments and eventually involved the library industry. In Australia there have been many consultations, meetings, reports etc. Anne Hazell's doctorate thesis *Clever and Competent*^{xx} documents international competency movements; training reform agenda in USA, UK, New Zealand and Australia; and projects to develop library industry standards. Over 300 pages record and analyse the amazing amount of work that has been done already, and I am sure there are many other documents around the world describing similar evolutions that my limited searching has not yet accessed.

However developing countries don't have time for that evolving process. Wouldn't it be fantastic if IFLA could bring together all the effort listed above and save other countries from having to 'reinvent the wheel'?

IFLA is in a perfect position to collate information, experiences, problems and their solutions etc from countries like Australia, UK, USA and others where library assistant certification has been introduced. This overview would identify trends, strengths and weaknesses of current programmes. It could be used to advise other countries, especially developing countries, where fewer qualified librarians and paraprofessionals mean that library assistants are running many small libraries. Eventually I would like to see a model competency training programme for Library Assistants (simplified, not simple) recognised and championed by IFLA. Maybe it can be available over the Web, internationally recognised and supported. Any model would have to allow for

local variations, but at least there would provide a foundation to build upon. On-line courses either from local providers or even overseas sources may be the answer for rurally situated library assistants in developing countries, provided they have computer and internet access.

Here is a quote from the previously mentioned article on assistant training in Mauritius: "In developing countries short-term courses are necessary for library assistants.. [who] because of inadequate educational background, economic limitations or geographic isolation are unable to follow professional courses abroad or at home..Even the smaller nations of the world are affected by the information explosion." Benoit also states that "most developing countries [could] set up such a certificate course attuned to the needs of the country concerned, without too much difficulty".

She may well be correct but I believe that, with the 'information explosion' she refers to being so much greater and more complex than she can have imagined 25 years ago, many countries need a helping hand to achieve this.

IFLA's Three Pillars ^{xxi}

IFLA's Three Pillars

- **Society Pillar** - "role and impact of libraries and information services in society"
- **Professional Pillar** - "help libraries and information services to fulfill their purpose and to shape response to the needs of clients in a rapidly changing global environment"
- **Members Pillar** - "work together to make IFLA more vibrant and attractive and beneficial for members throughout the world"

I am interested in IFLA's new model for its operations and see the potential for inclusion of Library Assistants in all 3 Pillar areas.

Society Pillar: ----- "role and impact of libraries and information services in society" IFLA is particularly involved with the World Summit on the Information Society. I respectfully suggest that the longer-term goals in this area will only be achieved in a timely fashion if there are well trained, focused and enthusiastic support staff in every country to join the professionals in their Information Literacy endeavours.

Professional Pillar: ----- "help libraries and information services to fulfil their purpose and to shape response to the needs of clients in a rapidly changing global environment" As above, without valued and trained support staff libraries will not be able to achieve these worthy objectives.

The theme of this Conference is 'Preparing for new and changing roles'. Library worlds everywhere are definitely changing, with more emphasis on

technology, management etc – this means that the front person is more likely to be a Library Assistant/Technician than a Librarian. These staff members need training to be ‘First Contact’ personnel, especially with potential users who may never have entered a library before. I believe there may well be more first time users in the future, as libraries are being promoted as community space, safe havens and non-judgmental institutions.

Members Pillar: ----- “work together to make IFLA more vibrant and attractive and beneficial for members throughout the world”

I would suggest that support for the recognition and training of Library Assistants would be a good project for this goal.

Conclusion

It is my argument that the certified training/recognition of library assistants’ skills not only makes support staff feel appreciated as an integral and important part of the whole organization, but also encourages them to become interested enough in the library field to consider moving up the qualification ladder.

I also believe that just as it is important for Chief Librarians to set an example and create a ‘corporate culture’ that gives recognition and encouragement to every member of staff – so it is important for IFLA to take that role in an international setting and create a similar ‘universal culture’.

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