

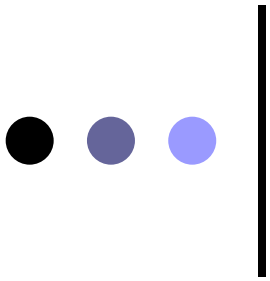
Different approaches:
common conclusions.

The skills debate of the
21st century

Biddy Fisher, Sheffield Hallam University

Gillian Hallam, Queensland University of Technology

Helen Partridge, Queensland University of Technology



“It takes an extraordinary worker to become a successful professional librarian in the 21st century”

(Lovato-Gassman, 2003)



Overview

- What knowledge and skills are required by the information professional in the 21st century?
- 2 research projects:
 - Australia (QUT)
 - United Kingdom (CILIP)
- The importance of workforce planning
- The need for a collaborative approach to education and professional development



Different approaches: common conclusions Part One

Dr Gillian Hallam

Senior Lecturer

Queensland University of Technology



The librarian of the future is perhaps a professional who will no longer bear the name librarian.

It is a professional who encompasses a set of standards and values that operate smoothly and seamlessly in a technology driven environment.

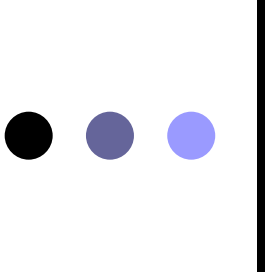
It is a professional who has a clear understanding of and appreciation for the traditions of librarianship.

It is a professional who is multifaceted and multitasked.

It is a professional with the characteristics of willingness to change; varied experience in training and background; adaptability to a quickly changing environment; 'shareability' between disciplines; and commitment.

It is, finally, a professional we will not recognise as a librarian in the usual sense. If we do, then we have failed to evolve.

(Salter, 2003)

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- What are the implications of this statement for workforce planning?
 - This willingness to change and evolve impacts on:
 - the education of the beginning professional
 - the continuing professional development of library workers
 - The need to focus on career-long growth in a dynamic and vibrant industry



Initiatives in two countries

- United Kingdom – employment focus
 - Merger of the Library Association and the Institute of Information Scientists in April 2002, to form CILIP
 - Impetus for a research project to develop an agreed framework of skills
 - Analysis of employment advertisements in the press and via CILIP recruitment pages
- Australia – education focus
 - Queensland University of Technology LIS course
 - Teaching and learning research project
 - Curriculum development
- Different approaches: common conclusions



QUT study

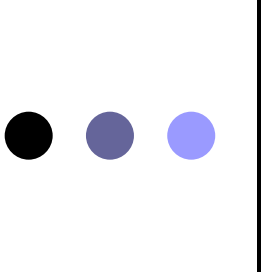
- Discipline knowledge:
 - Subject-specific knowledge
 - Subject matter expertise
 - Content knowledge
- Generic capabilities:
 - Transferable skills
 - Key competencies
 - Graduate attributes



Methodology

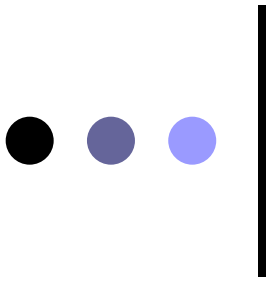
- Literature review
- Study of LIS curricula
- Lists of knowledge areas and skills
- Focus groups
 - SE Queensland
 - All LIS sectors
 - Range of career levels and ages
- Survey
- *Are these the skills and knowledge required by the library and information professional for the 21st century?*

The Double Helix :
A Personal Account of the Discovery of the Structure of
[the Information Professional's] DNA



The DNA of the library and information professional

- Two intertwined strands of discipline knowledge and generic capabilities
- Individual areas of knowledge and skills = 'genes'
- Genetically, we are all different
- What aspects of the genetic makeup are distinctive for different LIS professionals?
- The genetic makeup of individual professionals depends on the formal qualifications, work experience, professional development and the role they perform
- More exploration is required...



The direct outcome of the QUT research study was the development of the new Master of Information Management course



Different approaches: common conclusions Part Two

Biddy Fisher MLib FCLIP
Head of Information Services
Sheffield Hallam University



Taking responsibility 1

The Individual

- Motivation of self
 - Growth and development
 - Qualifications & Experience
- Preparedness for development
 - Engagement
 - Skills
 - Competencies



Taking responsibility The Educator

- Curriculum developments
 - Collaboration with employers
 - Reading the market place
- Standards
 - Quality assessments
 - Relevance
- Awards



Taking responsibility: Professional Bodies

- Accreditation of courses
 - Certification
 - Professional standards
- Educational & Professional qualifications
 - CPD
- Advocacy
 - Collaboration
 - Communication/consultation



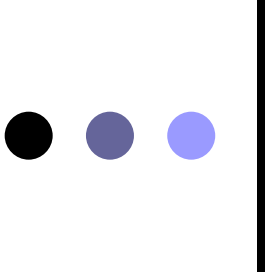
Taking responsibility: The Employer

- Development & Training
 - CPD
 - Appraisal
- Experience
 - Evidence based practice
- Opportunity
 - Flexible
 - Diversity



What skills are needed?

- Leadership & Management
 - Excellence in service provision
- Project Management
 - Delivering on time to budget within constraints
- Technical/traditional
 - Technological developments need expert skills to work



The role of the professional body

- Making Professional qualifications relevant
 - Certification
 - CPD
 - Flexible routes
- The body of professional knowledge
 - Discipline knowledge



Conclusions

- Requirement to review positions
- Self
- Organisation
- Skill set
- Routes to competent professional
- Relevance
- The voyage to discovery!



References

Lovato-Gassman, B. (2003). Librarians in the 21st century.
In: K. Bridges (ed.) *Expectations of librarians in the 21st century*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Salter, A. (2003). Wanted – new creations: dinosaurs need not apply. In: K. Bridges (ed.) *Expectations of librarians in the 21st century*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.