Preparing for New and Changing Roles in Research Libraries – the Need for Continuing Professional Development

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ABSTRACT

It is expected that library staff are qualified to offer high quality services to users visiting the physical library. Likewise, it is expected that they have substantial knowledge and skills needed for developing and maintaining electronic services and for dissemination of relevant services and facilities requested by the web-user. Serving remote library users calls for additional competencies, such as marketing, branding and communications skills in the electronic environment as well as knowledge of measuring and evaluation of the use of electronic services. It is a challenge to the staff to match particular needs and demands from different user groups, but also to library management staff to ensure that the competencies and skills are available in the organisation to match the needs of the user – wherever s/he might be located. Competencies are, in this context, defined as the combination of knowledge and experience that make the individual able to take the right actions in the daily working environment.

What education and training needs emerge from the changing roles and new tasks? How might we identify the needs for continuing professional development? And how can we maintain and update skills and competencies acquired maybe 25 years ago? These are key questions – not only to be addressed to library managers, but also to be considered carefully by those institutions responsible for continuing education and professional development of library staff.

THE NORDIC CONTEXT

The hybrid library, as it is developing today, combines the physical and the net-based library. The physical research library means the classical library: the collections, the study place for students and researchers, where the staff takes care of collection development and management, and serves the users with all kinds of materials and reference and enquiry services. An increasing amount of effort and resources in research libraries are, however, being spent on the provision of access to electronic resources and services. Today's challenges are content management, creation of institutional repositories, copyright negotiations, licence agreements and digital rights management. Qualified guesses from directors of Danish research libraries are that 50-65% of total staff resources go into net-based activities. The trend is similar in many of the larger public libraries. Previous working tasks, such as lending routines, are carried out as self-service, acquisition of new material is outsourced, etc.

Library staff is heavily involved in projects on developing e-services, creation of subject portals and gateways, and to customise access to e-resources to the individual faculty, to the individual researcher and student or to other target groups, but what influence do electronic library materials have on library loans and usage? Library statistics from Danish research libraries from 2004 show that 66% of library loans were 'down-loads' (print-outs of e-journal articles) and it is estimated that the use of electronic resources in Denmark's Electronic Research Library (DEFF) will increase by 25% per year during the next couple of years.

Research libraries are closely connected to their parent educational institutions. In the Nordic countries, universities are facing many challenges: the changing population of students (from elite to mass education), knowledge production in new forms (i.e. Open Archives); the demands for life long learning, and globalisation. These changes impact the ability of libraries to be an active player in knowledge production. Libraries have to create interfaces to the global knowledge system, tailored to the individual educational institution - the task is to import and create knowledge, to make knowledge available and provide information sources for the individual.

How might the development of the hybrid library and the change of tasks and roles of libraries influence performance planning for the entire staff? This is a key question - not only to be addressed to library managers, but also to be considered by those institutions responsible for continuing education and professional development of library staff. What kind of training programmes will we have to develop to support the challenges of the staff?

Core skills of librarians are still relevant - if not more relevant - in electronic information provision. These core skills include information handling, training and facilitating, evaluation and customer service. Core skills as cataloguing, classification (knowledge organisation), information retrieval, reference work and user education are fully applicable

in an electronic context and all have a place in facilitating the effective use of internet in a changing information environment.

EMERGING ROLES AND COMPETENCIES OF LIBRARIANS

Corrall has conducted a very rich literature study on the developing roles of librarians (Corrall, 2005). She refers to an American survey conducted in 2001, in which 947 academic, school and public librarians identified the most significant roles of librarians for the next five years as follows:

- instructing users in the navigation and evaluation of print and digital information;

- directing users to appropriate information resources;

- evaluating and purchasing resources for collection development;

- organising and cataloguing resources;

- creating programmes and services for under-served communities;

- creating new guides and/or navigational tools for electronic resources;

- archiving and digital preservation.

Except for the term 'digital' - like many other studies - it focuses on traditional roles of library staff only. Today, it is expected that library staff are capable of offering high quality services to the users who are visiting the physical library. Likewise, it is expected that they have sufficient knowledge and skills needed for developing and maintaining electronic services and for making available relevant services and facilities demanded by the web-user. Collection development and maintenance is as important as before, but in this context, new and revised strategies for e-resources acquisition have to be set up in the individual library, matching the user's needs and expectations. Libraries have to join consortia and other "buying clubs" and skills in contract negations are emerging.

Emerging skills in the electronic information environment are communication, negotiation and collaboration. Collaboration on 'Ask a Librarian' virtual reference services, such as the Danish Biblioteksvagten (a consortium with participation from 44 public libraries and 13 academic libraries working in turns) have demonstrated that the ability to co-operate virtually across institutions and the ability to accumulate experiences and knowledge sharing are important personal skills.

Marketing, branding and communication skills are important additional competencies amongst library staff in the physical library. Serving remote library users calls, however, for additional competencies in using suitable techniques for meeting the user in the electronic environment, such as direct marketing, chat, communication via SMS and weblogs, writing to the Web and Web design.

In order to meet the needs and expectations of the remote library user, knowledge of measuring and evaluation of the use of electronic services (usability testing) is important. Do we know who the users really are? Do we know what they expect and whether they are satisfied with the services provided by the library or not?

Buying access to electronic library materials is very expensive, but mandatory. Journals, directories, textbooks, newspapers, music, sheet music and other materials are being digitised and made available in e-formats. A key issue in collection management for libraries is therefore to monitor the budget for e-resources to have it spent cost-effectively. Use statistics and performance management for electronic journals are some of the highly relevant issues that library staff is facing right now.

It is a challenge for the staff to match the particular needs and demands of different user groups and for library management staff to ensure that the competencies and skills in the organisation are able to match the needs of the user - wherever s/he might be located.

DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

Competencies are, in this context, defined as the combined theoretical knowledge and practical experience that makes the individual able and willing to take the right decisions in the daily working environment. This definition is important, because it emphasises that competencies are not equal to professional formal qualifications only. The figure below shows a general model of the interrelation between human resources and behaviour - and explains why continuing professional development and training is important for the further development of organisations.
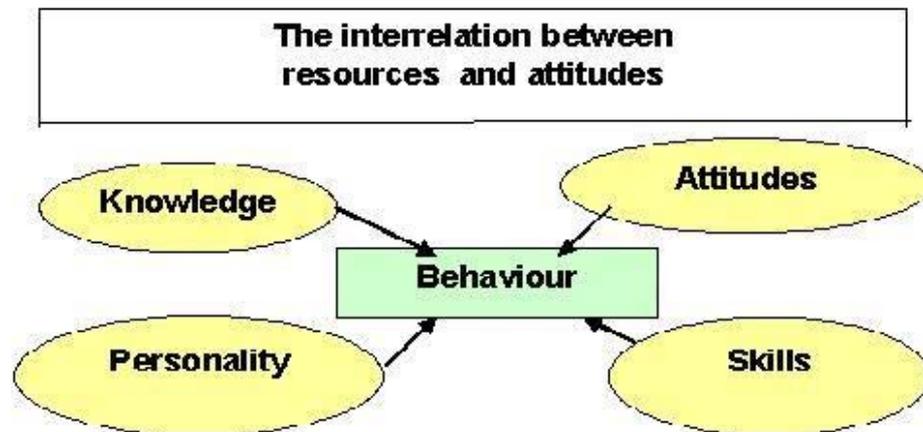
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN A DANISH CONTEXT

The Royal School of Library and Information Science (RSLIS) states in its performance contract with the Ministry of Culture 2003-2006, that we aim to consolidate the school in its position as the most important institution for continuing education and training within LIS and related areas relevant for library development. Further the contract says that (a part of) our training courses should underpin the aim of strategic library development as expressed in the Danish Library Act from 2000, which has a paragraph on national strategies for development of new competencies in public libraries.

On an annual basis, we offer for all kinds of library staff a selection of approximately 200 different training courses and seminars in addition to formal continuing education, such as our Master Programme in Library and Information Science. Each semester, some 30-40 new course titles are introduced - often developed on suggestions from libraries. Topics from training courses published in our course catalogues are used as a basis for tailoring courses, seminars, workshops or talks for individual libraries, organisations or interest groups.

The Department of Continuing Education and Consultancy invites all the academic staff from RSLIS (approximately 70 full time staff) to participate in our activities. Further specialists from practice with special subject knowledge and freelance consultants are involved in the training.

In order to stimulate new skills and competencies, RSLIS offer a selection of opportunities:

New knowledge: a Master of Library Science Programme as a postgraduate programme for those with a degree in LIS or an equivalent background. It leads to the award of the qualification of MLISc. This programme is taught in English. It comprises 4 modules and one special subject module. Each module is of one semester's duration, corresponding to 30 ECTS. The 4 modules are:

- Information seeking and information retrieval theories.

- Knowledge organisation.

- Knowledge management.

- Dissertation, which can include cultural mediation, children's culture and library management.

RSLIS offers in addition a part-time Masters Programme for librarians with at least 2 years of practical working experience. The Masters programme has been very successful for librarians who want to have formal continuing education in LIS. RSLIS is, of course, not the only Danish provider of continuing education of relevance for library staff. Programmes offered by Danish universities such as Masters degrees in Public Management, Public Administration and in Public Policy, have attracted quite a few librarians.

During the last couple of years, the majority of Danish public library directors have updated their formal qualifications in professional management. Since public administration becomes ever more complicated, a large scale programme was set up to offer a Diploma Degree in library management with financial support from the state.

In RSLIS, training courses are developed in order to cover the following needs:

- New practical skills (qualifications and personal skills).

- Updating practical skills (qualifications and personal skills).

- New inspiration.

- 'Hot topics' - orientation on ongoing policy and legal issues.

- Development of the organisation

    – the individual staff member,

    – the team / the unit,

    – the management level,

    – the entire organisation.

The current development needs of the hybrid library as mentioned above are supported by the first three categories of training courses.

Governmental policy issues often generate 'hot topics' by changes in laws and regulations. For instance, when the Danish Minister of Culture proposed that all public libraries should install net filters to protect children from pornography or when the government decided on a radical change of the local authority structure (a decline from some 270 municipalities to 98 from 2007). This kind of change in local governance means that libraries have to merge and set up new structures for IT, management and work processes. In RSLIS we aim to pick up and influence that kind of library issue - typically in seminars and conferences. Library organisations such as the Danish Library Association (DBF) and The Danish Research Library Association (DFDF) will of course offer conferences on 'hot topics' of relevance for their members - but with more emphasis on the political and practical perspective.

During the last couple of years an increasing number of training courses have dealt with organisational behaviour. RSLIS organises practical training, seminars and workshops focusing on organisational development, which has been one of the most demanded topics. Typical themes are: scenario planning, establishment of common values, cooperation issues, conflict handling, motivation, coaching, stress management, team building and senior staff. Popular themes on the further development of the individual are: self-management, efficient work planning and how to get new ideas.

NEW RECRUITMENT: COMPETENCIES: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

On new recruitment, library directors want staff with a deep (and broad) theoretical educational background, combined with strong personal and social competencies. What do these demands indicate and how will they influence existing staff and recruiting policy?

A research project carried out in 2002 in the Queensland University of Technology in Australia aimed to identify and examine skills and knowledge essential for the successful library and information professional in the twenty-first

century. This study considers the dual dimension of discipline knowledge and personal attributes, or generic capabilities.

Discipline knowledge includes, in addition to relevant subject knowledge, also career planning skills and ability to do research in LIS.

Generic capabilities include personal attitudes, such as being capable of lifelong learning, teamwork, communication, project management, critical thinking, problem solving, business acumen and self-management.

In the UK in 2002 the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) presented a set of professional information skills and generic capabilities based on analysis of job descriptions, interviews and research reports.

Professional information skills:

- Knowledge management: information architecture, ICT skills, technical (traditional) skills.

- Subject expertise: collection management; collection description, technical (traditional) skills.

- Information technology: design, application, systems, user support (problem solving).

- Service development: user information, survey, service impact analysis, planning and evaluation, promotion and marketing.

Generic skills:

- Project management: people management, research skills, bids and proposals.

- Critical skills: thinking, analysis, problem solving, research.

- Leadership: generic management, communication skills, strategic management, people skills, financial skills.

- Promotion and marketing: presentation skills.

A study amongst 53 US library directors of academic libraries provides us with an interesting profile for recruitment of new staff for the libraries at the start of the 21st century (Bridges, 2003). When expressing their wishes on the educational background of new staff it is interesting to note that they are demanding a solid broad education - not a specific one. Personal skills and attitudes as expressed in the figure below were considered more important than professional qualifications.

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
- a solid broad education - knowledge of technology 'the ability to tell the difference between new technology and necessary technology'	- customer service skills - teaching skills - creativity - ability to market library services - interpersonal ability - drive to learn - communication skills - ability to think conceptually	- intellectual curiosity - risk taking - sense of humour - optimism & enthusiasm - flexibility - confidence - empathy - patience - assertiveness - tolerance for change

The Danish library directors demand similar recruitment profiles and the new profile of their future staff will focus on personal skills, such as the ability to advise, to structure, to communicate, to teach and to market library services.

Since library managers are not in a position to replace all existing staff with new staff, we have to ensure access to the training and development that underpins the profile of a librarian today, and focus on personal skills and attitudes in addition to updating professional skills and competencies.

The distinction between *knowledge, skills* and *attitudes* is illustrated by an example from a workshop organised by the IFLA Section on Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning (CPDWL) held in Buenos Aires in August 2004 on *Skills for Information Literacy Instruction*. The participants in this workshop identified at least 35 different skills and techniques, which they considered relevant for the library staff involved in information literacy training. No order of priority was given. It might seem overwhelming for those librarians who are going to teach next week to meet all these suggested competencies. In the following section, I have tried to use the three categories (*knowledge, skills* and *attitudes*) to classify all the suggestions from the workshop - this exercise elucidated where formal continuing education is required and which new skills and attitudes can be acquired by training courses and in-house training. The need for knowledge as a backbone for information literacy training expressed in the workshop shows that librarians in this context are working on new ground and want competencies in topics, which are traditionally a part of schoolteachers' curricula.

Knowledge included foundations in areas such as: Philosophy of teaching.

- information literacy concepts;

- teaching styles and learning styles, learner-centred teaching;

- principles (active learning, case study methods, collaborative learning, peer critique and feedback, problem-based learning);

- evaluation (formative and summative methods).[1]

Skills included practical areas such as: Planning instruction (goals and objectives - lesson plan and outlines).

- presentation skills;

- asking and answering questions;

- managing time;

- discussion management;

- starting the session - handling questions;

- tools: handouts - presentation software -web pages - learning management systems;

- evaluation: evaluating your teaching, assessing student learning, evaluating a program.[2]

Personal Skills and Social Competencies are a combination of skills, which can easily be obtained by training courses, and skills and attitudes that are more linked to individual personality. These include:

- potential partners (getting in contact - agreeing on collaboration);

- connecting with students;

- voice and body language;

- creating a learning environment;

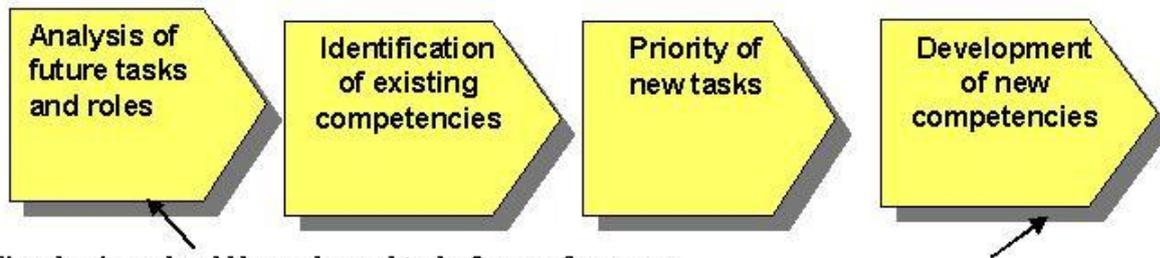- resolving difficult situations.[3]

In RSLIS we cover a good part of the above-mentioned themes. A semester in our MLIS programme deals with the theoretical foundation for teaching information literacy, which today is also included in the RSLIS BSc. curriculum and assumes that *teaching and instruction skills will be a natural part of the librarian's job*. Training courses in themes mentioned under skills have been set up and taught with assistance from external teachers with pedagogical background, actors and journalists.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

There are still some important aspects to ponder. How does staff maintain competencies that may have been acquired a long time ago? In many Danish libraries, some staff has been employed for more than 25 years and the average age is 50+. Also, how do we add new competencies at the speed demanded by the users' preferences and behaviour?

Library managers have to be forward looking and concentrate actively on competence development. It is not enough to dispatch the staff to yet another continuing education course or a conference. In order to undertake successful staff performance planning, it is necessary to start with an analysis of future tasks and roles of the research library and go through the four steps outlined in the figure below.

The outcome of participation in formal continuing education is of course quite simple to measure - a new degree. The outcome of training courses, conferences and seminars might be of very high value for the individual.[4] For the entire organisation, however, it depends on the procedures for follow up and knowledge sharing - and many library directors still have a job to do in this area. Training courses organised locally for the entire staff or a department are shown to have a measurable impact and stimulate new activities and changes of attitude.

In Danish libraries, a variety of different methods are used for continuing professional development and training. We have, unfortunately, no research looking into which methods provide the most efficient results for training library staff.

FROM FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO WORKPLACE LEARNING

Broadening the concept of continuing professional education to that of continuing professional development (CPD) and workplace learning (WL) has been acknowledged by IFLA in accepting the new section CPDWL in 2003. This concept takes in all aspects of a professional's role, and recognises that education is only one of the ways in which individuals continue to learn and develop as professionals throughout their working careers and their professional lives. The concept of 'workplace learning' signifies the inclusion of different kinds of development activities, both the formal and less formalised, and includes such activities as work-based mentoring[5] and coaching. Beckett and Hager provide a detailed introduction to the concept and practice of workplace learning (Beckett & Hager, 2002).

My suggestions of methods for continuing professional development below are not in priority order or exclusive.

Suggested external activities for continuing professional development:

- Participation in projects across institutions/ across sectors.
- Participation in professional networks /interest groups (personal and virtual).
- Participation in formal continuing education programmes.

- Participation in external training courses (including distance education).

- Participation in conferences and seminars.

- Study visits.

- Job exchange.

- Preparing a talk for professional meetings.

- Writing a paper for publication.

- Preparing and teaching a course for library professionals.

- Establishment of new formal partnerships.

Suggested in-house activities for continuing professional development:

- In-house training / instruction by colleagues:

- Knowledge exchange with colleagues.

- Action learning / learning by doing.

- Job rotation.

- Reading professional literature.

- Testing new products / services.

- Mentoring programmes.

- Supervision.

- Benchmarking.

- Trial and error.
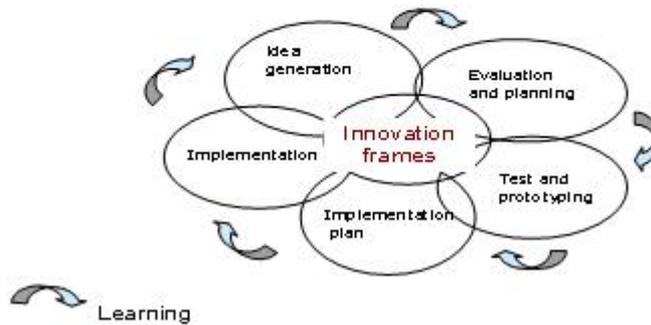
- Good management.

RESOURCES NEEDED

When planning for new skills and competencies it is necessary to take into account that sufficient resources should be made available within the institution. Participation in formal continuing education programmes, training courses and professional conferences requires separate budget allocations. Participation in external networks for knowledge exchange and conducting projects with colleagues from other libraries and across sectors seems to be very valuable for developing new competencies. Well-known in-house initiatives as listed above will also be usual for achieving new skills.

In the IFLA Section on Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning (CPDWL) there is an ongoing work on developing a set of recommended guidelines for continuing education. In this context we have been discussing the difficult issue: What is the minimum of resources needed for continuing education?

It is probably not possible to give a definitive answer to this question. I have asked a sample of Danish research library directors about their average resource allocation for continuing education and training. On this basis, I recommend the following figures: 10% of staff working hours as a minimum for training and professional development (external + internal activities). In terms of budget, 25-30% of the total budget should be allocated as a minimum for the development of new services. When considering the validity of this estimate, it is important to keep in mind that the figures reflect the state of development of Danish libraries - with decades of library automation experience, a well-functioning national coordination strategy and strong state support for library development - and not least library staff

in all kind of libraries with a professional LIS education and continuing education programmes of a very high standard.

The seven circles of innovation – An innovation Management Model, 2005

Three categories which reflect key dimensions in an organisation's innovation capacity		
Innovation frames - strategy, culture and competencies	**Innovation processes – from idea to implementation**	**Innovation results – "return on innovation"**
- Innovative attitude - customers - knowledge - analysis - Strategic focus - direction - communication - Culture and structure - attitudes - competencies - learning	- Management - support - Project management - steering - motivation - Work process - cooperation - clear goals	- Loans - Visitors - Quality - User satisfaction - Image

NOTES

1 .New competencies by participation in formal continuing education, such as Masters Programmes in Learning and Teaching.

2. New competencies by participation in courses, professional interest groups, learning by doing.

3. New competencies by participation in courses, professional interest groups, learning by doing.

4 .Methods for measuring the effects (outcome) of training new skills and competences (including the 'personal and social skills') exist, but are not frequently used by Danish libraries

5. For an example on work-based mentoring in the Karolinska Institutets Bibliotek, see: Haglund, 2004.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

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CILIP - Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals. http://www.cilip.org.uk/default.cilip

DBF – The Danish Library Association. http://www.dbf.dk/

DFDF - The Danish Research Library Association. http://www.dfdf.dk/

DEFF - Denmark's Electronic Research Library. http://www.deff.dk/default.aspx?lang=english

CPDWL - IFLA Section on Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning. http://www.ifla.org/VII/s43/

IFLA - International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. http://www.ifla.org/

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