Successful models of CPDWL at the University of the West Indies, Mona

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Meeting: **125 —** *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as a strategy to build strong libraries and library associations* **— Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning Section with Management of Library Associations**

Abstract:

Continued Professional Development and Workplace Learning (CPDWL) is considered as continually building on your knowledge base and capabilities throughout your professional life. At The University of the West Indies, Mona Library (CPDWL) focuses on continually enhancing the skills, abilities, and proficiency of its workers to provide efficient and effective services to its clientele both locally and internationally. These feats are accomplished through implementing innovative projects and channeling diversification of honed professionals within the library association and international affiliations

During the process of putting together this paper investigation were done to determine whether a staff development policy existed at the University of the West Indies, Main Library. It was discovered that a written policy for continued professional development was not in place. My persistence lead me to find out what was been done in terms of CPDWL at the Main library and the literature that had preceded my investigation globally.

The literature revealed that in order to practice continued professional development and workplace learning there must be a fundamental framework in place which categorically states the rules and regulations which must be adhere to in order to accomplish set goals. With the library not having a written development policy, it relies on the broader UWI policy as stated in the strategic plan of 2005 to 2012 which focus on designing and developing interventions to meet identified needs in order to promote growth and empowerment of staff within the University.

Introducing CPDWL in the library is a tedious task in light of consistent budget cuts over the years. In 2010 the government's allocation to the University of the West Indies, Mona campus was cut by approximately twenty-five percent (25%) which is estimated at roughly

J$1 billion (Williams, 2010). This action inadvertently affected the allocations to the library and despite this shortfall in funding the library professionals must continue to demonstrate their relevance and maintain their commitment to the university community and board of management.

The advancement of technology has gravely threatened the very foundation that the library profession has relied on for many decades. This comes at the backdrop of free downloads, virtual online version of entire books, free databases, and free open access to entire catalogues among a plethora of other challenges that must be faced by the information professionals. It is with these threats in mind that the necessary steps are taken to relinquish, reclaim and realized that we have the power, specialized knowledge, skills and expertise that are pre-requisites to navigating through information gateways.

The module utilized by the library to ensure and produce efficient and effective continued professional development at the workplace is the Training Administration Module, this module focus on administration of training in order to provide quick, accurate and facilitating information in the area of librarianship and development. This module looks at in-house training of the library staff and facilitates training for the implementation of relevant and innovative programs. The library in affiliation and cooperation facilitates the presence of international facilitator who provides current and updated programs which relates to library instructions.

The University of the West Indies, Mona introduced the Faculty of Law in August 2009. Librarians within the library environment had to be educated and sensitized in relation to accessing law resources such as law journals, law databases, case law, constitutional law among an array of law literature and in the same arena familiarized themselves with such materials to be better able to provide law students with relevant, current, adequate and on time information. In the same breath the need also arises for training in using these law resources. This resulted in the collaboration between the law librarian from the Main Library and the law librarian from the Norman Manley Law School for a smooth transition.

As mentioned before, with no written staff development policy in place for the library, the library takes advantage of the University staff development initiatives and in the process cease every opportunity to ensure that continued professional development in the workplace are identified for various types of in-house and external training. Training of professional staff takes place especially to introduce new initiatives or project for which all the requisite expertise is not available in-house.

International affiliation/fellowship is one avenue through which staff can continue to develop professionally. Participating in fellowship such as the Jay Jordan IFLA/OCLC Early Career Development Fellowship Program can boost morale for young persons entering the library profession. This program highlights and provides the opportunity to experience library operations and management, global cooperative librarianship, consortium and also issued and strategies dealing with information technologies and how they impact on libraries and the challenges they face on a daily basis. Upon completion of this fellowship the recipient returns to their respective library where they share their experience with other members of the library staff and translate their knowledge into life long career achievement and offer support and contribute to their work and environment.

Another model that can be use to assist in professional development is the Library Sandbox. According to Fedko and Matheson (2006) librarians and instructors can use assignments to pinpoint students in need of remedial instruction instead of delivering an hour-long session introductory library skills lecture to students many of whom may already have been introduced to the library. This approach allows librarians more time to deliver advanced information literacy (IL) seminars and develop stronger relationships with faculty members to encourage for-credit IL courses where they do not exist. All this can be achieved via a Library Sandbox.

The Library Sandbox is the pet name for the WebCT module currently being piloted in several of Carleton University undergraduates' courses. The Sandbox module includes a variety of guides which takes undergraduates through the research process from choosing a topic and using the library to writing and creating a bibliography. Each guide is linked to a help page which quickly provides students with information on who to consult for assistance with library research, writing techniques, and study skills. While this process is taking place continued development of the librarian skills are enhanced and perfected for future endeavours.

Conferences, seminars and workshops assist librarians in sharing new adventures, discussed issues, challenges and solutions while honing their skills, knowledge and competencies. These sessions can be considered as a means of marketing library services and to be more receptive and adapt to the needs of their clients. Through these sessions librarians can acquire and develop innovative ways to provide services and introduce new ideas into their curriculum and in the same breath set the foundation for lasting relationship in cooperative consortium, sharing of housed resources and lay the groundwork for a broad social networking as well as solving problems affecting libraries and their association and also to ensure consistencies and uniformity in resolution across the profession.

Challenges/Issues

Exploring the literature surrounding the library profession I have come to the conclusion that most institutions seems to target the library for slashing their allocation at some point in their annual review of cost savings strategies. Inadequate funding constantly poses a threat to developmental purposes. Hence the library has to deploy creative ways of bridging this gap in their budget. Evans mentioned in the World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services "Librarians are the professional of librarianship', we diagnose information needs, prescribe library services to meet these needs, and build and operate libraries to provide that service. Yet one of the disadvantages of limited resources is that workers are not equipped with the necessary tools they need to perform required duties to provide these services. While some profession reinforced the need for ongoing education and maintaining competencies, persons sometimes become complacent and remain dormant. They do not seek to undertake ongoing efforts to develop their ability so they can function in a more competitive and advanced environment.

Dependency on external trainers to conduct training sessions often times proved to be time consuming and costly. Human resources personnel often find it difficult to contract experts to deliver these sessions at a mutually agreed time. External courses are expensive and costly but worker must make the sacrifice to alter their schedule to accommodate these training sessions.

Publishing is considered a form of CPD. Publishing is mandated by the University of the West Indies of its academic/professional staff/lecturer. Information professionals are encouraged to write scholarly research papers and conduct academic research which contributes to the development of the institution's input towards its research hub. Librarians are required to publish some form of research paper within the first three years of their contractual agreement. Lack of publishing will affect your promotional capacity and upward mobility. Some academic institutions make it very clear that you must publish at least one paper within a specified time period. Librarians are required to publish to achieve tenure or promotion and it is also considered a means of gaining recognition in the library profession. Publishing requirement can be vastly different from one institution to another. According to Watson, publishing requirement does affect productivity, with practicing librarians contributing more to the literature overall. He also points out that faculty teaching in library and information science programs publish more articles per person. Krause and Sieburth reported an increase in publication productivity by academia librarians over a ten year period (1973-1982), which was attributed to the need to publish, especially on the part of librarians at larger research institutions or where faculty status was granted to librarians. The literature also revealed that sixty percent (60%) of institutions now places greater emphasis on publishing in books or refereed journals, while twenty-four percent believe there is less pressure to publish.

Solutions

We are living in an ever changing environment and therefore we must learn to adapt to changes or be left behind. Finding ways and means of dealing with and keeping abreast of new invention is within our capacity to learn and continue to grow. While some employers have policies in place to continually improve workers skills and knowledge base, professionals must not always rely on employers for continued development but seek opportunity for growth in their specialized or chosen field. Information professionals must continually seek to engage one-self in programs that will enhance academic development and increase quality improvement in the profession. Continued professional development and workplace learning can also take on the form of initial activity groups that support the development of incentives to encourage the use of best practices and collaboration across the library profession, through involvement in local library association and faculty liaison department based committees and groups.

On the other hand, employers should facilitate the involvement of and engage staff in new initiatives and projects from the initial start through to the finish which will encourage workers to share their ideas and offer solutions. This gives them a feeling of accomplishment, belonging and worthiness; this inclusion will also foster better relationships among colleagues and result in more efficient services being offered in their respective job area. Offering short courses to staff will also assist in increasing productivity in the library's working environment as persons will be more equipped to deal with interventions such as the automation and conversion of special collections, preservation, storing and handling of delicate materials and introduction of new systems.

An example of new initiative includes The University of the West Indies, Main Library introduction of the book detection unit called the 3M BookCheck Unit Model 940 Series and the Staff Workstation Model 946. The Security system (at the door) is simply the 3M Security System. This system combines flexibility and style with state of the art technology

to desensitize and re-sensitize Tattle-Tape security strips that were placed in printed materials in the Reserved Book Collection (RBC) and the Law collection in the Main Library to help ensure reliable processing and prevent theft of library materials and provide excellent detection and reliability. In order to acquaint staff to this new system, staff members were schedule to attend training sessions and participate in hands on practice of real live situation with library materials that were previously tagged with tattle-tape.

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