Nature or Nature?
Case Study Perspectives on Developing a Team of Passionate Instruction Librarians at the Li Ka Shing Library, Singapore Management University (SMU)

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Head, Learning Services & Research Librarian
Contextualisation: Programmes

- Matriculation: Library Orientation
- In-Class Sessions
- Thematic Sessions
- Research Consultations
- Individual/Small Group Facilitation
  - Student Initiated with Research Librarian
- Subject or Topic Related
  - Research Librarian Initiated
- Course Related
  - Research Librarian and Faculty Collaboration
- Mass Library Training (Compulsory)
  - Library Initiated
# Road Map for Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Programmes/Activities</th>
<th>Teaching Approaches /Tools/Skills</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 0    | Matriculation: Library Orientation [Duration: 1 hour] | • Lecture, Presentations, Hands-On, Video, eLearning  
• Instructional Design Skills,  
• Information Searching and Retrieval Skills,  
• Communication Skills,  
• Classroom Management Skills,  
• IT skills including new software;  
• Promotion and Marketing Skills,  
• Social Media Knowledge and Skills |
| 1 - 7| In-Class Sessions  
[Duration: Vary depends on faculty collaboration]  
Academic Writing [Duration: 1.5 hours]  
Research Consultations  
[Duration: Typically 1 hour] | |
| 8 - 11| Thematic Training [Duration: 1 hour]  
Research Consultations [Duration: Typically 1 hour] | |
| 12 - 14| Research Consultations  
[Duration: Typically 1 hour] | • Small Group Discussions, Facilitation,  
• Hands-On Information Searching and Retrieval Skills,  
• Communication Skills |
<p>| 15   | Exams | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>No. of Students Receiving Some Form of Instruction</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April to March</td>
<td>Faculty Collaborations</td>
<td>Library Initiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/2011</td>
<td>4,927 (261 sessions)</td>
<td>3,633 (201 sessions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>3,432</td>
<td>4,235</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Feedback:
Trainer Preparedness Responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree
Feedback: Delivery of Content

- **Strongly Agree**
- **Agree**
- **Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
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Mining Qualitative Feedback

- It packed slightly too much information
- It was a little dry
- There is not enough time to brainstorm or think of ideas. It would be more useful if we can do it before lesson and bring our mind map to class
- It would have been better if the instructors provided handouts on what to type in the fields when searching for an article in the database
- The class was distracted and unfocused
- Maybe can provide a printed step by step instruction
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment/Feedback</th>
<th>Identifying Themes/Topics for Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It packed slightly too much information</td>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe can provide a printed step by step instruction</td>
<td>Learning Materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>It was a little dry</td>
<td>Delivery Techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is not enough time to brainstorm or think of ideas. It would be more useful if we can do it before lesson and bring our mindmap to class.</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's not necessary to attend the session, since all information is covered in the research guides</td>
<td>Managing Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The class was distracted and unfocused</td>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The boolean method is overly emphasized</td>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were videos to enhance though provoking ideas about the topic of research the trainer was engaging and helpful</td>
<td>Use of Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would have been better if the instructors provided handouts on what to type in the fields when searching for an article in the database</td>
<td>Learning Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting and fun delivery</td>
<td>Positive Delivery Techniques</td>
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</table>
This is a similar practice used by LaGuardia (1993: 60-61) where “team members do informal “debriefings” after each presentation, discussing how the class went, what worked, what bombed.” Interestingly, even though LaGuardia wrote this article in 1993, it is a common but effective communication technique used today and the author believes many other instruction teams worldwide still do this. There is a lot of laughter during the ‘debrief’ and this becomes cathartic session as it provides again, that ‘safe environment’ for the team members to seek help, solutions and support.

Everyone is given a voice and everyone’s voice is heard at the TCM.
CPD Interventions

• Conference Attendance and Sharing Platform
  – The Learning Circle
  The Learning Circle has also been used for sharing of professional readings, trends and best practices from site visits, or teaching other staff a new social media application.

• Internal Collaboration: Faculty and Other Key Departments
  – Embedded Librarian
  – Invited to attended lectures
  – Courses offered by Centre for Teaching Excellence
  – Teaching Innovation Week
CPD Interventions

• External Training and ‘Outsourcing Professional Development

Partello (2005: 115) passionately remarked and highlighted, “Whether librarians teach outside the library or not, we need to learn to teach. We should know about learning theories, including multiple intelligences, and how to construct a class so that we reach learners of all abilities. Too many of us focus on what we think is important and not what the students need. We cram too much information into 50- or 80-minute sessions and don’t allow time for students to reflect and retain the information.”
• Institute of Adult Learning (IAL)
  – Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ): Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment
  – 6 Competency Units
    • Interpret the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification Framework
    • Apply Adult Learning Principles and Codes of Ethics relating to Training
    • Design and Develop a WSQ Facilitated or On-the-Job Training Programme
    • Prepare and Facilitate a Classroom Training Programme or Prepare and Conduct a On-the-Job Training Programme
    • Develop a Competency-based Assessment
    • Conduct a Competency-based Assessment
- **Expertise development (ED):** Activities that will help to upgrade and improve the skills and knowledge of practitioners.

- **Industry Knowledge Development (ID):** Activities that keep the practitioner informed of current developments in the information industry.

- **Personal Development (PD):** Activities that help the practitioner improve on his work productivity, personal management skills and general knowledge.
So how do librarians teach asks LaGuardia (1993)?

She describes the situation practically as being, ‘usually in trial by fire’.

Elaborating this further she describes the process as being fast paced where the instruction librarian is required to package a class and ‘pack and go’ to deliver the instruction. Most times using ‘instinct’, seizing the opportunity by setting aside the frills and the luxury of time to develop ‘perfect’ instructional designed programmes. But how long does it take? In the typical, solo-act “trial by fire school”, probably years. (LaGuardia, 1993: 54-55).

But in today’s context, it has become on-the-job
At the Li Ka Shing Library all candidates are required to do a 30-45 minute presentation
Conclusion: Unity in Diversity

- ‘Safe environment’ of trust and care

- LaGuardia’s (1993:58) approach of team cohesiveness and teamwork.

- Culture and work ethic: helping and this has transcended to training and co-training activities.

- Hallmark of success amongst the Instructional team members who exude a sense of passion and make training and teaching less burdensome as they are willing to share and transfer knowledge.

- Co-training being a holistic beneficial learning experience for not only the trainer but also the students and faculty.
• Do Both

• What I learnt at Harvard’s Leadership Institute for Senior Academic Librarians [LIAL11]

“Get off the dance floor and take in the view from the balcony”
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http://researchguides.smu.edu.sg/profile/rajenmunoo
References


