Research Article

Changing Librarianship in the Collaborative Era:
A Case Study from New Zealand

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Abstract

Purpose: To consider changing roles of academic librarians in particular the role of subject liaison librarians in the 21st century education. The aim is to stimulate debate on changing roles of librarians, to suggest possibilities and encourage others to envisage librarians and the change process in multiple ways.

Design/methodology/approach: Self-review to the researcher is a process through which library roles and services evaluate the effectiveness of what they do, with the aim of improving the quality of their library practice. "Self-review as a form of 'practical philosophy' whereby the philosophical values that underpin the practice of both the individuals and the teaching team as a collective, are examined through a process of reflection and dialogue" (Grey, 2010).

Findings: The researcher does not wish to form any fixed generalisations about librarians' roles, instead seek to problematize and discuss an approach that was completed in a context to make visible the understandings and interpretations of those immediately involved in the process.

Practical Implications: It is presumed to be significant as the article is a form of self-review; based on the philosophical and values of those directly involved in the service, and so reviews the implementation of philosophy, rather than measuring behaviour against a set of externally defined criteria.

Originality/value: This approach contends that evaluation of self- review should consist of a process of meaning making, rather than just the assessment of practice, whereby external behaviour is modified by first examining the underlying values on which it is based.

Keywords: Information technology, Liaison librarian, collection development, information literacy, research support, collaboration.

Paper Type: Descriptive paper and personal reflections.

1. Introduction: The main purpose of this paper is to share experiences and thoughts on liaison librarians in order to legitimate that there are many ways of envisaging the changing roles of liaison librarians and the changes over time. The purpose is not to say that what liaison librarian's role is, rather, to stimulate debate on it, to encourage reflection on views held, to consider other possibilities and to appreciate the many ways in which the changing environment or roles of liaison librarians can be conceptualised.

The purpose of this descriptive paper is to get work-to-date into perspectives, experiences and review direction. This fits well with belief, based on experiences, that the benefit of research is the growth of the researcher in terms of the intellectual interactions. Throughout the involvement in librarianship, the researcher have always been optimistic. The researcher have seen the changes and the changing trends in the libraries and the role of the librarians in this academic world.

The understandings and thoughts about librarianship has changed over the years. As a student and as a young librarian the researcher assumed that once librarianship was just issuing books and magazines and taking them back from the people, after their use of these items. Over the years working in the academic library field and pursuing higher studies in library and information science, as a matured librarian, the researcher have learnt that it is not just issuing books or magazines, or that we the librarians are sheer gate keepers for library materials, rather, there are

more than that. In the present days, the role of the librarian has changed across the years depending on which types of organisation s/he works with. Like, Academic, Public or Specific libraries. Right from the beginning, the researcher started her professional career as an academic librarian. The researcher has listed some of the roles of the academic librarians which have evolved during the past, present and in the future.

2. Methodology: Data regarding present study was obtained from literature/content analysis, professional conversations with library faculty and personal reflections.

3. Research Statement: To share experiences and thoughts on liaison librarians in order to legitimise the views, that there are many ways of envisaging the changing roles of liaison librarians and such changes undergo changes over time.

4. Aims and Objectives: The aim is to stimulate debate on changing roles of librarians, not to provide answers, to suggest possibilities and encourage others to envisage librarians and the change process in multiple ways. Objectives of the present study are:
a) To know how the roles of the librarians are changing in the 21st Century.
b) To share some experiences and reflections about the roles of the library staff.

5. Roles of the Library Staff: The globalisation and information technology developments are influencing the tertiary education. These have impacted on the libraries in general and impacted on the roles of the librarians in specific. Librarians have to develop a vision for the future of libraries, to embrace the opportunities and battle the threats, to work towards the common good of all students. To succeed in the new roles, librarians should prepare to visualise the new roles ahead of new developments. To achieve this, librarians should engage and collaborate with academics, Information Technology specialists and online learning specialists to assure that they are equipped to provide relevant and innovative methods at the point of need (Harle, 2009; Keiser, 2010; Vandenabeele, 2008). "Our jobs are shifting from doing what we have always done very well, to always being on the outlook for new opportunities to serve an unmet need, which will advance teaching, learning, service and research," says Mathews (2012, p.2). To be prepared for the future and be ready for new opportunities, many librarians and information professionals will re-envision their roles and define new opportunities. Thus librarians are not only affiliated with the above roles, but also persons that make a difference in the user's perspectives, ideas and facilitating in the knowledge creation among library users.

Librarians need to assess their own abilities in the changing environment and they should be able to act as independent, lifelong learners to support one of the aims or missions of the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2007). Lifelong learning is not only just accumulating knowledge, but is based on the ability to learn from the experiences, and be able to innovate and adapt quickly to change. This articulates a challenge to librarians to offer support to students as lifelong learners. Librarians need to recognise the value of user needs and to investigate, and explore the understanding of the library as a social and cultural place. By identifying and understanding how library environments may influence and shape the student users' learning in the library, librarians are better placed to minimise negative consequences when designing learning experiences with such environments.

Researchers like Crowley (1994), Osunkunle (2008) and Ina (2004) mentioned that librarians are expected to deal with the needs of the digital divide, the information poor and the illiterate, between rich and the poor, the haves and have-nots, demanding business-related needs and survival needs, wireless access and internet connections and a lack of basic electricity supplies, librarians must secure their future roles and positions within the academic environment. Students entering universities, sometimes referred to as the "Google Generation", expect information to be at their fingertips and often believe all information is (or should be) "free." These young people have never

known a world without the Internet and many of them are not aware of the costs of library-sponsored content (Joint Information Systems Committee, 2008).

Freire (1972) had recognised that ignorance and poverty are not simply conditions that victimised the users, but were caused by interrelated contexts of economic, social, and political domination. Liberation pedagogy created a new and powerful self-awareness in individuals, who began to examine critically the social situation in which they lived and worked. This critical examination often empowered the initiative to change the conditions that oppressed them. Thus librarians need to examine and be aware of the situations and changing conditions of the marginalised library users at all times.

According to Devine, (2014) & St. John, (2012) the most astonishing variance in function of families are differed by income, social class, ethnicity and religion, neighbourhood and region, number of members, the kinship, patterns of authority and affection, life-style, the balance of happiness and unhappiness of the people. Therefore, librarians must secure their future roles and positions (Ina, 2004), particularly by helping the young and mature students, for those who could not afford their own personal computers or laptops or internet access at home due to their socioeconomic conditions or their familial constrains.

6. Librarians' Role as Collection Developers: As the library users become more diverse, it is increasingly important to reallocate funds in order to supplement resources to support them (Martin, 1994). Most academic libraries quickly recognize the need for developing collections that support diverse users. As organizations might continue to support diversity, though, it will become even more important to reach out to the wider group of the international student community and also beyond collections and also increase diversity in terms of staffing and programming in order that such users to truly feel they are a part of the community (Martin, 1994). One of the greatest challenges for librarians from diverse cultures is the need to understand the cultural values of students and at times their cultural backgrounds are equally, if not more, important than their other educational qualifications.

It is a challenge for librarians to achieve the goal of having a library with a diverse collection by not offending and acceptable to other groups of library users. It is also possible that some librarians try to maintain the collection by degree of intuition and knowledge and even by recommended readings provided to them by academic staff.

Māori, Pasifika and some Asian cultures have a tradition of transmitting information from one person to another person orally, but not in printed format. Development of appropriate non-book collections that recognize and support cultures at academic and public libraries particularly suited to the needs of Māori, Pasifika and Asian students in various languages for traditional songs, and stories of their cultures encourages them to stay longer in the library environments and also engage with library resources.

Changes in the linguistic and cultural composition of library users, with the increased sophistication of information technology, require new approaches to the development of library collections and the provision of user focused services. Librarians need to create opportunities for user needs that reflect cultural awareness or adapting services to meet the needs of diverse users.

The most important area in a diverse cultural environment is the development of appropriate collections that recognise and support the diverse users (Amituana'i-Toloa, 2013). The unpredictability of budgeting for libraries is a final variable to collection development librarians. The library budget in academic libraries keeps changing depending upon the Equivalent full time students. Whereas in Public libraries (in New Zealand), the budget depends on local government funding. In Public libraries, diversity initiatives regarding collections should focus on relevant topics to the diverse users of that particular library as seen in Auckland, e.g. Mount Roskill Public libraries, and the focus on the changing demographic needs of library users. In the Manukau region, as many users have low socioeconomic status, when compared to Aucklanders (Rashbrooke, 2013), so it is the job of the subject liaison librarians to balance the collection to provide multiple points of view to diverse users of the communities.

According to Amituana'i-Toloa (2013) quite often Māori, Pasifika and Asian group users, are labelled as they do not know how to use the collection, they do not know how to behave in the library environments, they do not know how to approach the librarian and ask questions during the library information literacy classes. They are labelled as *negative users of the library* (Amituana'i-Toloa, 2013; Carroll, 1990). Liaison librarians in their role as information providers, constantly battle with such attitudes and approaches, struggle to provide information from all possible points of view. Effective collection development within an academic library can be viewed as a combination of courses that are being offered at the university. This reflects on academic library related to that organization. A balanced collection depends upon the subject liaison librarians and it is considered as a major challenge to both academic and public libraries. The goal for subject liaison librarians is to develop and provide equilibrium of diverse perspectives and ideologies. This supports the concepts of intellectual freedom and freedom to read.

Empirical evidence argues that representation of people of colour in textbooks has increased during the preceding ten years (Milne, 2009) but the majority of textbooks are still homogeneously white and most textbooks with depictions of people of colour still promote white characters as the primary protagonists. Resources and cultural practices will, through a colour-blind approach where cultural knowledge, language and practices are limited and everything is perverse from a white colour base (Milne, 2009). While some libraries and librarians advocating for multicultural education struggled for positive and accurate representations of women and people of colour, other groups fought to be made more visible in the curriculum (Chapman & Grant, 2010). The collection development activities, related to diversity and to well establish ethnic studies programs, are also prominent. Attention to diverse perspectives in the acquisition of materials for the collections became a focus area for subject librarians (Aryal, 2011; Ina, 2004).

Library materials and their access are intended to reflect the range of perspectives, influences, and possibilities that are managed in ways to optimise the intention. At the same time there are financial constraints on purchases and licensing, as well as users' preferences, technological challenges, and other mitigating factors. Subject liaison librarians face this continuously and struggle to reconcile the freedom of information or access with the constraints, attempting to enhance the freedom and diminish the constraints.

Building a diverse and multicultural collection is an increasing priority for all types of libraries, but academic libraries have been particular active in this area. While increasing focus on multiculturalism in education, it is important that librarians focus on developing collections of New Zealand award winners, along with other award winning collections from across the world. In doing so the liaison librarians should have appreciation for other diverse cultures. At academic libraries the library users have an opportunity to recommend the titles to the library for purchase. A diverse or multicultural collection depends on the individual subject liaison librarian charged with developing the collection. By examining the cultural backgrounds of ethnic users, liaison librarians are more able to investigate how to meet user needs.

It is possible, indeed necessary, to challenge the status quo and bring about humanizing institutional, social, political and educational, change (Freire, 1972, 2000). Critical theorists ask such questions as: who controls the libraries and what are their motives? How are library resources allocated and who benefits from this allocation? Who makes the policies for the library and who benefits from these policies? Who determines the goals and expectations of collection development in libraries? What is the nature of the allocation of library funding in terms of race, ethnicity, language, class, and gender? What powers do libraries and librarians have over the library process? How is the library going to facilitate the library collection for diverse cultural users?

7. Librarians' Role as Information Literacy Educators: Since 2001 the political mantra in New Zealand education has been 'lifelong learning'. By providing information literacy to students to support young people to become confident, creative, connected, and actively involved, lifelong learners are the aims of education (New Zealand, Ministry of Education, 2007) are carried out. The purpose of academic librarians has changed significantly with increased teaching roles in teaching

information literacy to library students at all tiers, and with more liaison with the academic staff. The key role of subject librarians in academic libraries has an influence on both technological and pedagogical developments that have transformed the information arena (Arya, 2011; Ina, 2004; Simmons & Corrall, 2011). As research librarians, it is their duty to assist their own local community in terms of research support in this digital age.

Librarians are not constrained by being assigned to any particular classrooms; they have the potential to be learning leaders with the ability to make connections with every student in the university environment irrespective of the students' culture, languages (Loertscher, 2006) and their demographic conditions.

8. Librarians' role as Research Supporters: As research librarians, it is their responsibility not only to serve their own local community well, but to collaborate with other libraries and with publishers, scientists, scholars, and other authors, to shape a new environment of knowledge sharing in the digital age. Liaison librarians' should be able to support faculties in preserving and archiving their research outputs and developing digital library collections like Scholarly Commons or University Repositories.

The Librarian's main job or responsibility is to provide specialised information to their students in a single click to fulfil the fourth law of library and information science of Ranganathan's five laws of library science; that is "Save the time of the reader/users" (Vaidya, 2009). In other words, the job of a librarian has become very important in the changing library environment (Aryal, 2011) and librarians are experts at information navigation, finding the "right" information in a particular situation with a minimum of time or money spent. In recent years, Open Access is the new initiative, where librarians need to inform to the students and researchers about the use and benefits of Open Access. Open Access is a form of publishing that makes research freely available on the internet with no password to access materials like journal articles or subscription barriers and it is a growing worldwide movement.

9. Library Assistants Role: In recent times, many universities like Auckland University of Technology, Victoria University in New Zealand and many universities in Australia have changed the role of library assistants. They are trailing the role of library assistants in terms of helping at the library help desk with basic research queries, along with assisting lending queries. This gives more time to the subject liaison librarians to concentrate on their specific roles as collection developers, library information literacy educators, research supporters to the academic staff and also as data curators and managers. Liaison librarians are also providing more help to the academic staff in supporting their research and the publication process and also in storing their research data. The available literature was and still is shallow with regard to the workings of library assistant arrangements at the library help desk, how they are formed, what makes them thrive, and how to sustain them in their present role at the help desk.

10. Personal Reflections: Subject liaison librarians must ask themselves for whom and on whose behalf they are working. The more conscious and committed to their role they are, the more they understand that their role as liaison librarians requires them to take small risks at their work places. The researcher could not and should not make value judgements about other cultures who are using the library environments. After immigrating to New Zealand, in 1999 the researcher is open to different cultures, and this sense of openness has helped to learn a great deal as a liaison librarian, and it helped to think and rethink the researcher's opinions, which are necessarily – transferrable to other cultures.

Over the past 10 years due to the nature of role as an education liaison librarian, every bi-weekly the researcher need to go Auckland University of Technology South Campus library in Manukau region. The researcher have observed how the students learn at the library information literacy workshops that provided. The information literacy workshop seems to help the students build their confidence and assists them in becoming lifelong learners. Brown, Murphy and Nanny (2003, as cited in, Simmons & Corrall, 2011) have argued that many students are "techno-savvy", but lack the necessary information literacy skills.

Few things became obvious and clearer while delivering and preparing for library information literacy classes. The researcher had to design the library information literacy classes and implement Pasifika (their own) forms of learning styles. The researcher tried to help students to the extent that could, by enforce and re-enforce the concepts and ideas in simple ways, by dealing with one concept at a time and going onto the next concept later. The researcher have learnt that could only help them if the researcher began to understand them better. However, the researcher could not understand them better without understanding their culture, values and beliefs. The researcher has developed over the years, an emotional bondage with the concerned students & staff

Language is one of culture's most immediate, authentic, and concrete expressions. There is a need to appreciate that language is not only an instrument of communication, but also a structure of thinking for human beings. The way one speaks is part of his/her own culture. Language will determine historical and scientific formation, penetrating with its ideology into the users from the very beginning. Those in power are the ones who make other people fall in line. Those who do not have power must achieve it before they can begin to incorporate others into their cultural value system. Those cultural forms and ideologies give rise to the contradictions and struggles that define the lived realities of various societies.

Developing information literacy workshops, embedding these within our learning community, and creating an awareness and appreciation by students is a challenging task for the subject liaison librarians. Students learn differently because of their academic levels, and their cultures, so we create a culture of confident learning and co-operative learning. In addition to these library skill workshops, there has been a room for in depth research consultations for individual sessions by appointment with the subject liaison librarians.

Information Literacy is aimed at life-long learner capabilities and the key competencies to learn, manage self, think, participate and organise information. This contributes to the students' learning and developing responsibilities. Māori, Pasifika, and Asian students learn well in collaborative learning environments, as well as learning independently. The researcher have observed that European students are more comfortable in asking questions in the library information literacy workshops, when compared to Māori, Pasifika and Asian students. They are more inclined to approach the librarian outside the information literacy class, and this may be because of their cultural belief, that students are not supposed to ask questions of their teacher, librarians or obeying and giving respect to elders by not asking questions in front of the other users in the library information literacy classroom. The researcher believe Māori, Pasifika and Asians want the librarian to have subject expertise, have good teaching strategies, and lead the information literacy workshops (Gazula, 2013) and this is same with European and other cultural students too.

Learning experiences, opportunities and connections within the community, and a sense of belonging and understanding are important to students learning. We, the subject liaison librarians are committed to ensure that each student has opportunities that suit their preferred way of learning. The focus of these information literacy workshops is to provide a unique and practical learning experience for students of all ethnic groups which links to our university policies: that everyone should be treated equally and respectfully.

11. Conclusion: Liaison librarians' work together to provide hands-on learning opportunities for all students in the information literacy laboratories. In line with the above argument liaison librarians are looking for more sustainable and manageable pathways for students. Information in this modern age is moving quite rapidly from Desktop computers to Laptops, Tablets, Notebooks and Mobile Devices. We subject liaison librarians need to keep in mind the students' attributes, and their expectations, while delivering information literacy workshops to the users to suit their diverse cultural needs. Education is that terrain where power and politics are given a fundamental expression, since it is where meaning, desire, language, and values engage and respond to the deeper beliefs about the very nature of what it means to be human, to dream, and to name and struggle for a particular future and way of life (Freire, 2000).

Liaison librarians are continually working on tailoring the library information literacy workshops to meet the needs of patrons of all levels and of different ethnic groups, and to embed the information literacy workshops in the curricula, in consultation with the relevant subject academic staff in the universities. At the same time the subject liaison librarians are trying to do collection development which reflects all the diverse cultures of academic users and to reflect the university policies on collection development.

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LIS News

INFLIBNET Centre has Selected "Urkund" Anti-Plagiarism Software

INFLIBNET Centre has selected "Urkund" Anti-Plagiarism software from M/s. eGalactic, Pune through the global tender and access is recommended on 1st August, 2015 onwards. Universities who have signed MoU and eligible for funding from UGC will be getting the software free of cost from INFLIBNET Centre. The accounts will be created on 1st August 2015.

Web: http://goo.gl/0DuwU5