Role of Libraries and life-long learning in universities

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Abstract: The paper highlights the role of academic libraries in promoting and developing information skills of students in modern automated and hybrid libraries and their role in developing a knowledge society. It defines information literacy and major information literacy skills required by students. The paper explains information literacy initiatives in India particularly the role of agricultural universities in imparting information literacy courses embedded into course curriculum. It discusses the information literacy programs of Indian universities and basic models of teaching information skills by subject librarians at some Indian universities. The article also mentions difficulties into incorporating IL across the curriculum.

Keywords: libraries, lifelong learning, resource management, universities.

INTRODUCTION

A library is an organized collection of sources of information and similar resources, made accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing. It provides physical or digital access to material, and may be a physical building or room, or a virtual space, or both.[1] A library's collection can include books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, maps, prints, documents, microform, CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, Blu-ray Discs, e-books, audiobooks, databases, and other formats. Libraries range in size from a few shelves of books to several million items. In the 6th century, at the very close of the Classical period, the great libraries of the Mediterranean world remained those of Constantinople and Alexandria.

A library is organized for use and maintained by a public body, an institution, a corporation, or a private individual. Public and institutional collections and services may be intended for use by people who choose not to—or cannot afford to—purchase an extensive collection themselves, who need material no individual can reasonably be expected to have, or who require professional assistance with their research. In addition to providing materials, libraries also provide the services of librarians who are experts at finding and organizing information and at interpreting information needs. Libraries often provide quiet areas for studying, and they also often offer common areas to facilitate group study and collaboration. Libraries often provide public facilities for access to their electronic resources and the Internet. Modern libraries are increasingly being redefined as places to get unrestricted access to information in many formats and from many sources. They are extending services beyond the physical walls of a building, by providing material accessible by electronic means, and by providing the assistance of librarians in navigating and analyzing very large amounts of information with a variety of digital tools.

 The economic potential of highly valued research is now evident as national economies shift to a dependence on knowledge and knowledge-based skills. Publicly funded universities are being drawn into national economic agendas in ways that are new to them and that challenge many traditional academic values. Research libraries, supporting research with a growing range of new and a shrinking number of traditional services, are also being drawn in, though in widely varying ways. This report is provided as a companion to the Key Perspectives review, and provides a summary of the key findings of the study, with some context for the recent increase in library involvement in research assessment, and recommendations for research libraries. We asked Key Perspectives to carry out research in the Netherlands, Ireland, the UK, Denmark and Australia. These countries were chosen because we were aware that in four of them (the Netherlands, the UK, Denmark and Australia) there were existing national research assessment regimes that involved some element of assessment of "research outputs." Such outputs are managed in their externally published form (mainly as journal articles and monographs) by libraries, while their internally published form is increasingly also of relevance to libraries as they develop institutional repositories of research output, both for open access and to meet various institutional output requirements. In the case of Ireland, which has no existing assessment

regime, our interest was in the libraries' involvement in the forms of assessment that may exist internally within universities, and in their anticipation of a national system that might later be imposed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From the 15th century in central and northern Italy, libraries of humanists and their enlightened patrons provided a nucleus around which an "academy" of scholars congregated in each Italian city of consequence. Malatesta Novello, lord of Cesena, founded the Malatestiana Library. Cosimo de Medici in Florence established his own collection, which formed the basis of the Laurentian Library. In Rome, the papal collections were brought together by Pope Nicholas V, in separate Greek and Latin libraries, and housed by Pope Sixtus IV, who consigned the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana to the care of his librarian, the humanist Bartolomeo Platina in February 1475.

In the 16th century Sixtus V bisected Bramante's Cortile del Belvedere with a cross-wing to house the Apostolic Library in suitable magnificence. The 16th and 17th centuries saw other privately endowed libraries assembled in Rome: the Vallicelliana, formed from the books of Saint Filippo Neri, with other distinguished libraries such as that of Cesare Baronio, the Biblioteca Angelica founded by the Augustinian Angelo Rocca, which was the only truly public library in Counter-Reformation Rome; the Biblioteca Alessandrina with which Pope Alexander VII endowed the University of Rome; the Biblioteca Casanatense of the Cardinal Girolamo Casanate; and finally the Biblioteca Corsiniana founded by the bibliophile Clement XII Corsini and his nephew Cardinal Neri Corsini, still housed in Palazzo Corsini in via della Lungara. The Republic of Venice patronized the foundation of the Biblioteca Marciana, based on the library of Cardinal Basilios Bessarion. In Milan Cardinal Federico Borromeo founded the Biblioteca Ambrosiana.

The 17th and 18th centuries include what is known as a golden age of libraries; during this some of the more important libraries were founded in Europe. Francis Trigge Chained Library of St. Wulfram's Church, Grantham, Lincolnshire was founded in 1598 by the rector of nearby Welbourne. Thomas Bodley founded the Bodleian Library, which was open to the "whole republic of the learned", Norwich City library was established in 1608 and the British Library was established in 1753. Chetham's Library in Manchester, which claims to be the oldest public library in the English-speaking world, opened in 1653. Other early town libraries of the UK include those of Ipswich (1612), Bristol (founded in 1613 and opened in 1615), and Leicester (1632). Shrewsbury School also opened its library to townsfolk. The Mazarine Library and the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève were founded in Paris, the Austrian National Library in Vienna, the National Central Library in Florence, the Prussian State Library in Berlin, the Załuski Library in Warsaw and the M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library in St Petersburg.

At the start of the 18th century, libraries were becoming increasingly public and were more frequently lending libraries. The 18th century saw the switch from closed parochial libraries to lending libraries. Before this time, public libraries were parochial in nature and libraries frequently chained their books to desks. Libraries also were not uniformly open to the public.

Even though the British Museum existed at this time and contained over 50,000 books, the national library was not open to the public, or even to a majority of the population. Access to the Museum depended on passes, of which there was sometimes a waiting period of three to four weeks. Moreover, the library was not open to browsing. Once a pass to the library had been issued, the reader was taken on a tour of the library. Many readers complained that the tour was much too short.

The first national libraries had their origins in the royal collections of the sovereign or some other supreme body of the state.

One of the first plans for a national library was devised by the Welsh mathematician John Dee, who in 1556 presented Mary I of England with a visionary plan for the preservation of old books, manuscripts and records and the founding of a national library, but his proposal was not taken up.

The first true national library was founded in 1753 as part of the British Museum. This new institution was the first of a new kind of museum – national, belonging to neither church nor king, freely open to the public and aiming to collect everything.[85] The museum's foundations lay in the will of the physician and naturalist Sir Hans Sloane, who gathered an enviable collection of curiosities over his lifetime which he bequeathed to the nation for £20,000.

Sloane's collection included some 40,000 printed books and 7,000 manuscripts, as well as prints and drawings. The British Museum Act 1753 also incorporated the Cotton library and the Harleian library. These were joined in 1757 by the Royal Library, assembled by various British monarchs.

In France, the first national library was the Bibliothèque Mazarine, which evolved from its origin as a royal library founded at the Louvre Palace by Charles V in 1368. The appointment of Jacques Auguste de Thou as librarian in the 17th century, initiated a period of development that made it the largest and richest collection of books in the world. The library opened to the public in 1692, under the administration of Abbé Louvois, Minister Louvois's son. Abbé Louvois was succeeded by the Abbé Bignon, or Bignon II as he was termed, who instituted a complete reform of the library's system. Catalogues were made which appeared from 1739–53 in 11 volumes. The collections increased steadily by purchase and gift to the outbreak of the French Revolution, at which time it was in grave danger of partial or total destruction, but owing to the activities of Antoine-Augustin Renouard and Joseph Van Praet it suffered no injury.

The library's collections swelled to over 300,000 volumes during the radical phase of the French Revolution when the private libraries of aristocrats and clergy were seized. After the establishment of the French First Republic in September 1792, "the Assembly declared the Bibliotheque du Roi to be national property and the institution was renamed the Bibliothèque Nationale. After four centuries of control by the Crown, this great library now became the property of the French people.

LIFELONG LEARNING AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Lifelong learning is being recognized by traditional colleges and universities as valid in addition to degree attainment. Some learning is accomplished in segments or interest categories and can still be valuable to the individual and community. The economic impact of educational institutions at all levels will continue to be significant into the future as formal courses of study continue and interest-based subjects are pursued. The institutions produce educated citizens who buy goods and services in the community and the education facilities and personnel generate economic activity during the operations and institutional activities. Similar to health facilities, educational institutions are among the top employers in many cities and towns of the world. Whether brick-and-mortar institutions or on-line schools, there is a great economic impact worldwide from learning, including lifelong learning, for all age groups. The lifelong learners, including persons with academic or professional credentials, tend to find higher-paying occupations, leaving monetary, cultural, and entrepreneural impressions on communities, according to educator Cassandra B. Whyte.

There are several established contexts for lifelong learning beyond traditional "brick and mortar" schooling:

- Home schooling involves learning to learn or the development of informal learning patterns

- Waldorf education which teaches children to love learning for its own sake .

- Adult education or the acquisition of formal qualifications or work and leisure skills later in life

- Continuing education which often describes extension or not-for-credit courses offered by higher education institutions

- Knowledge work which includes professional development and on-the-job training

- Personal learning environments or self-directed learning using a range of sources and tools including online applications

E-learning is available at most colleges and universities or to individuals learning independently. There are even online courses being offered for free by many institutions.

One new (2008 and beyond) expression of lifelong learning is the Massive Open Online Course (a MOOC), in which a teacher or team offers a syllabus and some direction for the participation of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of learners. Most MOOCs do not offer typical "credit" for courses taken, which is why they are interesting and useful examples of lifelong learning.

It is often considered learning that occurs after the formal education years of childhood (where learning is instructor driven - pedagogical) and into adulthood (where the learning is individually driven - andragogical). It is sought out naturally through life experiences as the learner seeks to gain knowledge for professional or personal reasons. 'Knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it'. The concept of lifelong learning has become of vital importance with the emergence of new technologies that change how we receive and gather information, collaborate with others, and communicate. As technology rapidly changes individuals must adapt and learn to meet everyday demands. The emergence of

Web 2.0 technologies has great potential to support lifelong learning endeavors, allowing for informal, just-in-time, day-to-day learning.[10] Constant change is emerging as the new normal. In order to survive and thrive, organizations and individuals must be able to adjust, and enhance their knowledge and skills to meet evolving needs. This means the most important thing someone can learn is how to learn. An understanding of web 2.0 tools is critical to keeping up with a changing world and the information explosion. The professions in particular are recognizing the importance of developing practitioners to be lifelong learners. Nowadays, formal training is only a beginning; knowledge is accumulating at such a fast rate that one must continue to learn to be effective (Williams, 2001). Indeed, most professions mandate that their members continue learning in order to maintain their license to practice. (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Having said this, what are the characteristics or skills that a lifelong learner will need to develop. Reflective learning and critical thinking can help a learner to become more self-reliant through learning how to learn, thus making them better able to direct, manage, and control their own learning process (Candy, 1990). Sipe (1995) studied experimentally '"open" teachers and found that they valued self directed learning, collaboration, reflection, and challenge; risk taking in their learning was seen as an opportunity, not a threat. Dunlap and Grabinger (2003) make the case that in order to prepare students in higher education to be lifelong learners, we must develop their capacity for self direction, metacognition awareness, and a disposition toward learning.

ORGANISATION OF LEARNING

A wide variety of models of education are now in use with an equally wide terminology. In this section we summarise the main ways in which learning is organised, recognising that there are many overlaps and many variations in the way courses are organised.

Distance learning

Unlike `open learning' distance education can be very selective in its student intake, in particular at university and professional levels. Keegan[47] identifies the following elements:

- Separation of teacher and learner, which distinguishes it from face-to-face lecturing

- Influence of an educational organisation, which distinguishes it from private study

- Provision of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from or even initiate dialogue

- Possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialisation purposes

- Participation in an industrialised form of education which, if accepted, contains the genus of radical separation of distance education from other forms.

To these may be added the adoption of information and communications technologies. It is already noticeable that a wide range of distance learning courses are available on the Internet, and the internationalisation of higher education is gaining momentum from this source.

Franchised courses

Franchised courses are traditional higher education courses but delivered away from the parent university, usually at a college of further education. The parent institution retains responsibility for validating and reviewing the courses, and students are registered by the franchiser. The franchisee (i.e. the local college) has responsibility for running and managing the courses, including responsibility for providing adequate library resources to students and staff. The course may involve elements of distance learning, including specially prepared materials, but frequently the learning methods are identical to those employed in traditional mainstream higher education (i.e. lectures, tutorials, essays, projects etc.). Not infrequently, only the first year of a three or four year degree course is franchised and students join the main in-house cohort for the remainder of their course. Research on franchised and other partnership courses between higher and further education shows that they are aimed at students who tend to be local, mature, need to study part-time, have been under-achievers, have caring responsibilities and financial difficulties Between 1991-2 and 1992-3 the number of franchised students increased from 10,000 to 35,000.

Open learning

A 1991 EC paper on open and distance learning in Europe defined open learning as "any form of learning which includes elements of flexibility which make it more accessible to students than courses traditionally provided in centres of education and training. This flexibility arises variously from the content of the course and the way in which it is structured, the place of provision, the mode, medium or timing of its delivery, the pace at which the student proceeds, or the forms of special support available and the types of assessment offered (including credit for experiential learning). Very often the "openness" is achieved, in part at least, by the use of new information and communication media".

Thus the open learner is usually studying in order to achieve a recognised qualification and often uses materials which have been specially prepared for this purpose and which do not depend on tutor support. The "course" does not require attendance at formal classes or at an institution, does not assume previous qualifications nor does it impose any time-scale for its completion.

Work-based learning

The recent EC White Paper on teaching and learning[51] identified two main areas where higher education has a role to play in work-based learning:

* Reintroducing the merits of a broad base of knowledge.
* Building up employability.

The Paper acknowledges the fact the higher education cannot stand alone in the learning society, but must work with others to achieve the above aims.

Work based learning can be incorporated into:

* Sandwich courses
* Employment-based learning programmes
* Joint education and industry initiatives
* Continuing professional development programmes

The University for Industry will almost certainly lead to a considerable expansion in work-based learning: we consider this initiative in Chapter 5.

Sandwich Courses

Sandwich courses were developed in the 1960s, and include a lengthy period of work placement mid-way through a (usually full-time) university course. Sandwich courses have strong links with higher education and employment, as the placement is an essential part of the overall qualification.

Many vocational degree courses also include a short period of work placement, often at the end of the first or second year depending on the length of the course. This is seen as an important element of the course as it prepares students for entry into the workforce, while still in a learning environment.

Employment-Based Learning Programmes

This type of learning does not necessarily have any obvious links to traditional higher education institutions. Organisations can offer learning in the form of in-house training, external privately run courses and conferences run by relevant professional bodies. However, the introduction of Credit Accumulation & Transfer (CAT) Schemes and modularised courses which were developed in the 1980s have seen a continued involvement of higher education Institutions and the work-force through partnerships with local organisations such as the Training Enterprise Councils (TECs).

The development of NVQs has been influential in securing the recognition of occupational learning and it is hoped that this will continue to achieve "improvements in workplace competence of personnel at all levels..." [52]. Evidence of competence is another outcome of work-based learning, which can go towards the achievement of NVQ standards, themselves competence based. There are however, a number of issues surrounding the assessment of such competencies, and also the recognition of awards such as the NVQ compared to other recognised qualifications. Co-operation between relevant parties i.e. education providers, professional bodies and employers, may be the only way to overcome deficiencies in the quality of NVQs and their assessment. The whole issue of competence-based assessment remains a topic of lively debate.

One example of work-based learning is the Employee Development Schemes started in the Ford Company in 1989 as EDAP (the Employee Development and Assistance Programme). These schemes have had a remarkable growth. They offer employees opportunities to undertake learning activities of their own choice voluntarily, normally in their own time, but with financial help from the employer. Training and Enterprise Councils and Industrial Training Organisations may also give financial help in the early stages. The Department for Education and Employment advocates these, principally for smaller employers: "Experience suggests that these schemes bring business benefits and are very successful in promoting a culture of learning in employment ..."

Joint Education and Industry Initiatives

A number of programmes have been developed which have allowed universities to link education to the workplace, and thus give students the chance to acquire skills which could be useful in their working lives. Examples are:

- PICKUP (Professional Industrial and Commercial Updating)

- EHE (Enterprise in Higher Education)

- Discipline Networks, the successors to EHE

- IGDS (Integrated Graduate Development Scheme)

- CAEL (Council for the Advancement of Experimental Learning) Programs- US model, works on the theory of "learning by doing".

- CLEO (Compact for Lifelong Educational Opportunities) - US model provides career information. and inventories, lifelong learning experiences, degree information. etc.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, the author have tried to bring together some of the key issues for academic libraries which arise from the development of lifelong learning. In so doing we have been aware of the need to tread a fine line between the need for bread and butter, traditional services to be made available (remembering that when the Dearing Review asked students what their priority was, the answer was "more relevant, or a wider range of books in the library") and the exciting prospects for transforming the role of libraries and librarians in the networked environment.

The situation of agricultural universities in India is different, as these universities had their roots from American land grant pattern universities. Teaching library or user education had been integrated into the course curriculums. However, these courses now require more refinement, owing to the growth of electronic information and the internet besides, the changing socio economic and educational demographics. It is also just not sufficient for the users to be able to use the libraries and the information they provide. They must be information literate with skills to be able to identify, locate and use all kinds of information as per their need even after leaving the university.

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