

Chapter 7

Personnel Development

Librarians can best use their time to teach students and faculty how to locate, evaluate, and use information. They should refocus their work to train individuals in information searching and use, rather than on just source location and retrieval. However, the instructional role imposes a challenge: librarians need to train themselves to look for opportunities to learn or enhance their learning facilitation skills.

Need for instructional librarian role (Goldfarb, E. K., as cited in Stripling, 1999). New pedagogical methods used at schools and universities require librarians to play an active part in the learning processes. Therefore librarians ought to:

- Take the new roles as knowledge and instructional facilitators
- Provide essential expertise on a) accessing information, b) selecting information resources, and c) facilitating the use of information in the learning process (Kuhlthau, as cited in Stripling, 1999)
- Learn and teach new information formats (linear and non-linear)
- Facilitate non-traditional or constantly changing points of access as information media and resources evolve

Librarians' self-growth (Goldfarb, E. K., as cited in Stripling, 1999). Professional growth of librarians depends on self-learning processes and actions. They need to:

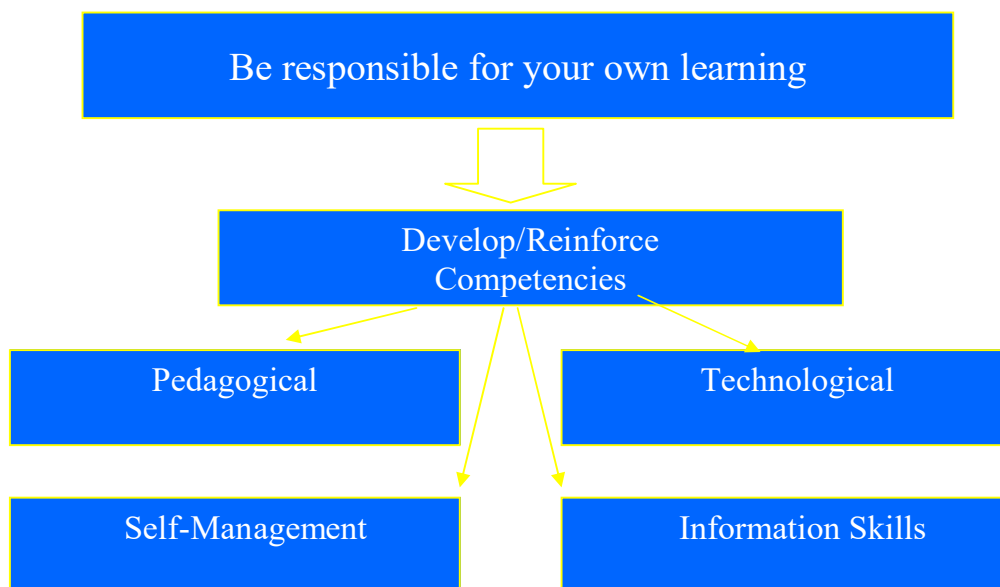
- Develop their own information literacy skill
- Develop the ability to facilitate learning and to teach critical thinking and inquiry
- Be responsible for their own learning, and their own technological skills
- Receive constant library training, a crucial form of learning new skills and concepts
- Participate in professional organizations, attend conferences, and purchase technical literature
- Allow adequate time for opportunities to collaborate with peers, have/give ongoing support, and offer/receive task-related curriculum advice

Institutional training. The library needs to provide the proper training according to its means. A program to enhance or develop teaching skills can include the following:

- Comprehensive training program for whole library team, including the staff
- The program can be divided into separate sessions for basic, medium and advanced training
- Suggested timeframe for workshops and courses that take place over more than one year

- Include at least four types of courses: pedagogical, technological, self-management, and information-related competencies:
 - The pedagogical component of the program should include topics on how to create a course, instructional design, assessment and evaluation, class communication, conflict and group management, among other basic teaching skills
 - The technological training should include courses on office software, course management, web software design, and equipment management
 - Under self-management, the program must include time management, planning, motivational workshops, and general management
 - The information-related training should make librarians proficient in the tools and information resources available in the library as well as on the Internet, including search engines, databases, and electronic publications, among other information content available within or outside of the library.

Figure 7. Personnel Development



Distance learning and e-learning. The task of facilitating IL to several groups of learners is more easily attained when distance and e-learning are used. This could be a solution to the limited number of librarians or information professionals in the library. IL professionals need to master new education and training modalities that employ networks, and especially the Internet, as virtual classrooms, instead of traditional physical classrooms. Librarians can interact with their students online, such that the student may complete his/her research and assignments from home, the office, or anywhere there is access to a computer and telecommunications networks, and similarly the librarian may undertake his/her tutorial work wherever there is access to a computer.

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