

A CASE STUDY OF HIGHER-LEVEL LIBRARY TECHNICIANS

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Abstract

Prior to award restructuring in universities, library technicians only had the opportunity to progress to the senior library technician Grade 3 level in academic libraries. Award restructuring placed such library technicians at Higher Education Worker (HEW) Level 5. It also provided them with the opportunity to make a case for reclassification at a higher level or to apply for positions at higher levels. The aim of this study was to examine the career progression and practice of library technicians who were operating at HEW6 or above in academic libraries as case studies, and to examine the role of those library technicians vis-a-vis the library industry competency standards. The study sought to identify and therefore substantiate the ability of library technicians to function effectively at higher levels than was normally expected. The design of the study was informed by case study research and focussed on a small number of library technicians in order to gain an understanding of how they had achieved their career progression, and of the activities and processes they were involved in. The data were collected using observation and interviews, and from secondary sources such as job descriptions and curriculum vitae. The observation and interview data were analysed and allocated thematic labels, and used as the basis to the report. The study also articulated the participants' experience of arriving at and being in their positions, their continuing professional development, their future aspirations, and the implications of their appointments. The study findings are considered and discussed in light of the literature review, library competency standards, and the newly-developed national curriculum for library technicians.

Introduction

The Australian Library and Information Association's (ALIA) Dunn & Wilson Scholarship made this study possible. In applying for the scholarship, I outlined the following aims of the study which were:

- To examine the career progression and practice of library technicians who operated at Higher Education Worker Level 6 (HEW6) or above in academic libraries as case studies; and
- To examine the role of those library technicians vis-a-vis the industry competency standards which were the basis to the development of the national curriculum.

There had been few studies on the role of library technicians in Australia and certainly none on those who worked at higher than traditional levels. It had been only since the reclassification of positions arising out of award restructuring, that such positions have been made available to library technicians. The study focused on three library technicians: Wilma Bancroft, co-ordinator of the interlibrary loans unit/HEW6 at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur Library (who actually left the position shortly after the interview stage of the study); John Simmons, manager, Orders/HEW6 and Sandra Woods, manager, serials/HEW7 at the University of Melbourne Library. The study set out to identify and therefore to substantiate the ability of library technicians to function effectively at higher levels than was normally accepted.

I suggested that the case studies could be used to inform the education and development of library technicians and provide exemplars for career path options. I also proposed that there could be realisation [by administrators] of the potential of library technicians to function effectively at a higher level and thereby the opportunity to free up professional staff to operate at an even higher level as befits their education. The latter could impact on human resource planning in library and information services and the rationalisation of task allocation could result in greater fulfilment for both library technicians and librarians. The study included: a literature search and review; observation and interviews of the participants and thematic analysis of same; description and analysis of the role of the practitioners; and a discussion of industry competency standards and the national curriculum.

Literature review

It was interesting to look back to an analysis of library technician tasks in 1983/84 and five year predictions of those tasks. The analysis was performed as a means by which syllabus implications for courses could be considered. The tasks were:

Write job descriptions as requested by Librarian... train nonprofessional and junior para-professional staff... write simple investigatory reports... monitor environment in relation to appropriate occupational health standards... [and] participate in systems analysis. Syllabus implications [were]... that library technicians will be increasingly responsible for the supervision of junior para-professional staff... Included basic supervision - a unit existing in TAFE network as it met the requirements of the tasks and sub-tasks. (Smeaton, 1984, p34)

Since that time there have been many developments in library and information services not the least of which has been that of education of library technicians. Such education has provided them with the potential to be efficient and effective library paraprofessionals, however, the opportunity to practice accordingly has not always been forthcoming. The literature concerning underutilisation of library technicians and its effects on their morale,

together with that of addressing the need to harness their potential in order to free up professional staff for more appropriate duties, has been reviewed in order to provide a background for the case studies.

It would seem that underutilisation may arise out of a general undervaluing of the role of library technicians. Kreitz and Ogden (1990) reported 'a 'deep resentment' by paraprofessionals of the professional staff's treatment of them' (p298). In their study, they had experienced great difficulty in allocating the professional or paraprofessional label to library tasks and suggested that their 'difficulty ... parallels the problems faced by the profession in trying to define what it is that each class of library employee does that makes it unique and thus rewarded differentially' (p301). Evans (1993) commented on the misunderstanding of some librarians 'about the way library technicians can and should be used, and a lack of desire ... to provide a working environment that will challenge them and benefit the employing organisation' (p112). Clayden (1993), however, in commenting on the future of library technicians in cataloguing in Australian libraries, believed that her 'view of a future in which technicians skills are more fully utilized has already arrived' in special libraries (p180). Thornber (1993) identified 'technological advances; budgetary constraints; award restructuring; and educational and employer emphasis on the managerial skills of librarians' as the reasons for the delegation of some tasks which had previously been viewed as belonging to the librarian as (p9).

In a survey of library technicians in academic and state libraries in all Australian states and territories, Chambers (1993) found that those 'in supervisory positions were responsible for the attainment of team targets ... [which] were set by librarians' (p21-22). These were senior library technicians operating at what was equivalent to the HEW5 position and they were responsible for work flows and task allocation, staff training and supervision. Chambers also found that library technicians 'did not want to usurp the role of librarians, but they were ... keen to develop and extend their skills in all areas of the library ... [including] supervisory and management skills' because they were optimistic about the possibility of 'moving into management and supervisory positions in the future' (p23).

Senior library technicians at the State Library of New South Wales could be viewed as equivalent to the HEW5 level in academic libraries, and Crook, when talking about the imminent appointment of the first appointees in 1983, spelt out the very high expectations of them which Scott (1993) neatly paraphrased as: 'a thorough understanding of, and a high degree of competence in, a broad range of technical processes; organisational understanding; the ability to manage change; communication skills; leadership qualities; decision making skills; problem solving skills; action planning skills; goal setting skills; and competence in training others' (p96). Ten years later, when writing about the future for library technicians at the State Library of New South Wales, Coffey (1993) pointed out that 'in the area of human development and organisational change, their [senior library technicians] development needs are identical to [those of] senior librarians: awareness of organisational issues and dynamics; leading diverse and multicultural groups; counselling and grievance resolution; contributing to branch strategic planning; planning and organising work flows; project implementation; and working cooperatively with other team leaders and other branches of the Library' (p63). It may well be that some would consider those expectations to be higher than those normally associated with Level 5 positions.

Cherrett (1993) found it 'quite extraordinary' considering their education, that there were very few library technicians working in the serials departments of university libraries (p16). In commenting on the capability of library technicians to accept higher responsibilities, Cherrett also stated that she could identify 'no significant reason why library technicians under the

direction of professional staff, could not administer a serials section/department in a large library' (p18-19). Cherrett believed that the allocation of such responsibilities to library technicians would result in librarians being freed to take up higher-level administrative duties because they would be 'assured that the duties were being performed by well trained, competent staff' (p19).

The potential for enhancement of the librarian's role was supported by the literature. Weihs (1986) predicted that library technicians would catalogue whereas librarians 'would shift to the design of information systems and specialized information' (p304-5). Eskoz (1990) expressed the 'belief that professional librarians still spend too much time in routine cataloguing that could be delegated to high-level paraprofessionals under supervision' and that 'a professional background should enable the catalog librarian to see the larger whole; to evaluate priorities; to make wise, long-range decisions; and to acknowledge the importance of sometimes tedious details of quality cataloguing' (p391). Thornber (1993), in commenting on the delegation of tasks to paraprofessionals in special libraries, stated that there seemed to be a perception 'that to achieve higher professional or academic status, [librarians] have had to relinquish the more repetitive and technically oriented tasks' (p9). Crook (1993) anticipated that work in library and information services would 'become progressively more demanding and more fulfilling for both professionals and paraprofessionals, and that the professionals will finally recognise that they can only find their place in the sun with paraprofessionals by their side as equal players in the team' (p1). More recently, Rider (1996) suggested that 'to meet the needs of the 21st century, libraries will want to maximise the potential of all library staff to develop new roles and contribute successfully to the mission and goals of the future library' (p31). According to Oberg (1992) this will contribute to what library technicians want: 'respect, trust, collegiality, just compensation, and a future - in short, a career and not just a job' (p107).

The development of national competency standards for libraries in keeping with the national education and training agenda, and the subsequent and almost immediate effort to develop a national curriculum for library technicians based on those standards, with the support of ALIA, could be seen to reflect a parallel recognition by the library and information community of the importance of the role of library technicians. Doyle (1995) wrote that 'competency standards can help educators and trainers to: match education and training to industry needs; provide better career advice to individuals; and identify gaps in existing training and show industry and learners the benefits of providing and undertaking training' (p17). Further, Williamson and White (1996) wrote that 'Competency standards are ... means by which industry expresses its education and training requirements... industries are able to make explicit statements to education and training providers about the skills and knowledge they require from people in the workplace' (p3-4). Bowden and Masters (1995) appeared to support this approach in that they 'have found it useful to develop a conceptual model of the relationship between observable practice and underlying capacities which make competent practice possible' (p155).

The national curriculum has been developed from the library industry competency standards and offers students the opportunity to exit at levels 3 and 5 within the Australian Standards Framework (ASF). Students are provided with a number of modules associated with a management/supervisory role. Graduates exiting at Level 3, that is with a certificate, have participated in modules on managing self, managing operations-change, managing an information agency, and occupational health and safety; a total of 140 hours. Those exiting at the diploma level (ASF5) have participated in further modules on managing effective work relations, work team communication, dealing with conflict, and a further occupational health

and safety module; over 100 hours. Thereby the diplomate has experienced over 240 hours of educational input on management/supervisory related subjects which equates to almost one fifth of the total course of 1360 hours.

The literature review mainly supported the view that library technicians are underutilised, however, there were some optimistic comments about their increased utilisation in the areas of cataloguing and supervision. Whereas it was revealed that some senior library technicians had been operating at a higher level for over a decade at the State Library of NSW, there was concern at the lack of opportunity for higher-level functioning in the serials departments of academic libraries. Although there was some evidence of librarians having released technical tasks to library technicians there was much more comment, usually from librarians, of the need to do so in order to achieve library services of high standard. The literature revealed the importance of competency standards to the linking of education and practice and outlined the associated underpinning framework used in the development of the TAFE national curriculum. Quirk (1994) stated that competence is 'a stage of development of learning leading to expertise' (p15) and supported this by a citation from Benner (1984) who 'in her study of the development of expertise in nursing, makes use of the Dreyfus model, which identifies five stages of proficiency...: novice; advanced beginner; competent; proficient; expert'.

Method

Introduction

The design of this study is informed by case study research. Yin (1993) stated that case study research was 'an appropriate research method ... when trying to attribute causal relationships' and that the main reason for using the case study 'is when your investigation must cover both a particular phenomenon and the context within which the phenomenon is occurring' (p31). These criteria certainly fitted my intent to investigate the relationship between library technicians and higher-level library worker positions within the context of various services within the academic library. In keeping with the case study approach, I identified concrete examples of higher-level practice, and brought together observation and discussion to describe the higher-level functioning of the library technicians under study.

Case studies are not necessarily defined by the research methods used but by the interest placed in particular cases and what can be learned from them. My evidence arose from observation and interviews of the participants, and supporting documentation and thereby fitted Yin's (1993) suggestion that 'the important aspect of case study data collection is the use of multiple sources of evidence - converging on the same set of issues' (p32).

Wolcott (1994) stated that the 'greater problem for first-time qualitative researchers is not how to get the data but how to figure out what to do with' it (p9). He went on to state that 'analysis refers quite specifically and narrowly to systematic procedures followed in order to identify essential features and relationships' (p24) and I decided to take such a systematic approach by identifying themes and sub-themes. I did this with all the data from both the observation and interview phases of the study.

Participants

The participants in the case studies were myself as the researcher, at times observer/interviewer, and three participant-practitioners. I purposefully selected the participants from a small list of known practitioners operating at a higher level. I was interested in gaining an understanding of the participants, what had contributed to their career

progression, and of activities and processes that they were involved in, not in judging or evaluating them.

Data collection

During the observation phase of the study, the participant-observation mode was mainly used in which I (the participant-observer) was engaged in passive participation. I did not interact with others to any great extent, but observed the participants and recorded what occurred, and my major role in any situation involving others was that of 'spectator'. I found it useful to take on an 'in training' stance in which I concentrated on what I saw and heard as if I would be called upon to replicate it later. I made a particular effort to note everything. When participants were involved in process activities, I sometimes required further information and therefore raised questions at the time. Sometimes the participants felt the need to inform me about what they were doing or to give me some background detail; this in fact contributed to the richness of the data.

I certainly made every effort to avoid intrusion into the situations studied. I asked the participants to inform other staff prior to my visit about the purpose of the visit. I believed this would serve to prevent undue interest in my presence within any particular situation. I asked that no special preparations were made for my visit and that no attempts were made to set up special situations; I just wanted to observe and record typical work days.

I requested secondary sources that I thought would be helpful in verifying details (such as correct titles), in corroborating information and as supportive evidence. I was provided with curriculum vitae, a diary of activities for a month, two position descriptions and one job evaluation, organizational charts, annual reports, strategic plans and other documentation such as action plans, forms, and brochures which the participants had compiled and which they considered useful to the study.

During the observation phase of the study I spent a total of nine hours spread over one and a half days with each participant. The aim of the observation was to identify their duties, interactions with other staff, and level of functioning. I used that initial data analysis of the observational phase on which to decide my approach to the interviews which were held four months later. In fact the observational data plus the secondary sources was so rich with information about the roles and levels of functioning of the participants that I decided to mainly focus the interviews on: their experience of getting into the position; their experience of being in the position; their Continuing Professional Development (CPD); how they viewed the future for themselves and for the position; and the implications of their being in the position. The interviews lasted between one and three hours.

Data management

I personally typed up the observational data and fully transcribed the interview conversations. This process was very useful because it assisted me in identifying some of the themes. I then highlighted what I considered to be important issues and allocated a thematic label after which I assigned labels to thematic groupings. Those groupings provided the structure for the descriptions below.

Case study

Background information

The University of Melbourne (1995) undertook 'teaching and research programmes for some 30,000 students, supported by almost 5,500 staff' covering a wide range of disciplines (p1). The libraries consisted of the Baillieu Library, which mainly covered the humanities and social sciences, and seventeen (17) branch libraries covering science and technology, law,

music and education. The collections were comprised of over 2.1 million volumes and in addition to supporting the University's research and teaching programmes, there was a commitment to meeting regional and national needs. The establishment of the Library comprised 270 specialist and support staff. Both positions in the study were in the information resources division which was 'responsible for ordering, acquiring, accessioning, cataloguing and the physical preparation of library material' (p1). There were approximately 100 staff in the division whose aim was to ensure material availability and access for patrons. The orders section enhanced the Library's service by maximising buying effectiveness of the book vote and by ensuring that procedures were as efficient and flexible as resources allowed. The sixteen staff of the orders section comprised two HEW4s, one HEW3, and thirteen HEW2s. (integration with the Bibliographic Searching Section (BSS) had increased the staff to 25 supervised by John and the BSS head). The serials section supported the university objectives of research and teaching by maximising buying effectiveness and enhancing accessibility by ensuring that serials and periodicals were available in the shortest time. The serials collection comprised 18,000 titles. The section was responsible for all aspects of serials processing apart from cataloguing which was handled by the cataloguing sections. The position description (1993) stated that staff also contributed to divisional objectives and to library-wide activities such as 'strategic planning, service management, orientation tours and in-service staff development' (p2). In addition to the manager, the serials section comprised one HEW5, two HEW3/4s, eight HEW2s and casual staff.

The mission of the University of Western Sydney (UWS), Macarthur stated in the collection development policy (1995a) was 'To provide excellence in higher education, research and associated community service within South-Western Sydney' (p1) and library's activities were directed towards supporting that mission. In 1994, the collection was made up of 225,479 monographs, current subscriptions totalled 3,024, and there were 58 staff. The library goal relevant to the Interlibrary Loans Unit was that of supporting 'research by providing access to materials' (p1) and the collection development policy (1995b) also indicated a commitment to developing the distributed national collection and emphasised the importance of cooperative relations with other libraries. The interlibrary loans unit supported the library's goal of 'providing the means to deliver needed resources to research staff and students' and the concept of access, by the library to the collections of other libraries, mentioned in the draft strategic plan (1996). The unit establishment comprised Wilma and one permanent Assistant Library Technician (ALT). The information desk and loans plus the casual pool provided a total of eleven staff, from assistant library technician to library technician level, for a total of fourteen hours. In addition, loans discharged books returned from interlibrary loan and did some checking whereas the stack services were involved in some retrieval functions.

Position information

Whereas the observation period focussed on Sandra's work in the INNOPAC implementation team, the other aspects of the study mainly focused on her work in the serials manager position. Her position in the implementation team was at the same (HEW7) level and was closely associated with and thereby drew upon her serials manager expertise.

The serials manager was responsible for the effective functioning of the section, and for the provision of a direct enquiry service to users. The position also had to provide input to divisional goals and plans as well as involvement in library-wide planning and service initiatives. The main responsibilities of the position were: to maintain an efficient, fully operational serials section; to manage the budgetary responsibilities of the serials allocation; to maximise the personnel resources available in the section; to assist in communication

within the division and the library; to assist in the provision of direct service to users; and to contribute to library service objectives. For a more detailed description see Appendix A.

Sandra did not have a position description statement for the work she did in regard to INNOPAC implementation work, however, her primary function as a member of the implementation team was to be responsible for setting up parameters for the serials and acquisitions modules and to work with the acquisitions and serials working groups to achieve same. Sandra was also to assess and evaluate work flows, plan work involved in entering manual data onto the system, prepare and deliver training in relation to the acquisitions and serials modules, and to document the agreed processes. Sandra was a member of the serials and acquisitions committees, the technical committee, and convenor of the labels committee.

John as the orders manager was responsible for the effective management of the section, for leadership and direction and for input to divisional and library strategic planning goals. His primary responsibilities were complex problem solving tasks and planning the effective expenditure of the monograph budget. The main responsibilities of the position were: to maintain an efficient, fully operational orders section; to manage the budgetary responsibilities of the monograph allocation; to maximise the personnel resources available in the section; to assist in communication across the division and the library; and to contribute to the library's mission and service goals. For a more detailed description see Appendix B.

The minimum training level or qualifications needed to perform the basic requirements of the position for both the orders and serials managers positions were eligibility for professional membership of ALIA and at least four years subsequent relevant experience; or completion of a degree and at least four years subsequent relevant experience; or completion of associate diploma (library & information studies) or other relevant qualification with at least six years relevant work experience; or extensive experience and management expertise; or an equivalent combination of relevant experience and/or education/training. Other essential criteria were: interpersonal skills including group leadership; problem solving skills; ability to implement and manage change; ability to prioritise and maximise resources. A desirable for the Serials Manager position was a working knowledge of ABN, AACR2 and Dewey decimal classification.

Wilma's curriculum vitae below was mainly based on her contribution to a job evaluation process which resulted in the reclassification of her position for HEW5 to 6. There was no documented position description available for the interlibrary loans unit co-ordinator's job, however, the *Sydney Morning Herald* (1996) advertisement for the position, following Wilma's resignation outlined essential criteria as: 'Eligible for professional membership of ALIA, or library technician membership of ALIA plus significant relevant experience; high level information technology skills; organisational ability; excellent communication and interpersonal skills; awareness of and commitment to teamwork; commitment to quality service' (p5E). A desirable was 'reference or inter-library loan experience in an academic library'.

Observation data

Observation of John, Sandra and Wilma revealed some similarities and some differences. One major difference was in the actual focus of the work. Whereas John's work was management oriented, Sandra's was project/facilitation oriented, and Wilma's was task oriented.

John

John was mainly involved with management of the service and staff, and management of a project. Aspects of his management of the staff included support and facilitation that was demanded by the self management model which he had developed. Prior to a combined meeting, staff referred to him about the integration of the orders section with the bibliographic searching section. He supplied them with essential information such as a floor plan and also gave them some input about alternatives for organisation, 'we're set up by supplier ... they're set up by funds' and about the running of a meeting 'best discussion will come by letting it all blend ... look at strengths, people, roles'. John also suggested that there might be a need for a reasonably immediate follow up meeting to address any unresolved issues. Staff asked if he and the other section head had any preferred model to which John replied: 'I hope you will work it out at your level'. Further, he also gave the staff some essential information which they required for their preplanning in relation to the changeover to the INNOPAC system: they thought they could accession in the following week and he told them they could but that they had to edit the list. This information led to some confusion and John took on a more directive approach which facilitated a more logical outline of the process and the staff's realisation that they could carry out the procedure. This intervention revealed that John was ultimately in control of activities as did a staff question, 'Will you want us to add items that we accession?' and a later comment 'It's after 4pm you could leave' to staff in a group talking outside his office; although no one actually left I think it was an indication that John continually monitored their activities. Conversely his willingness for staff to solve their own problems was evident: staff queried a flow chart in relation to data entry for INNOPAC and John suggested that they review it.

The impact of the above and previous discussions with John was reflected in a document which a member of staff had prepared for a combined meeting. It outlined the reasons for inviting certain participants and for developing a structure based on a self management philosophy; it addressed negative perceptions held by some staff; it spelt out John's role in relation to the integration; it made suggestions for strategies to be used to move forward both in relation to the integration of the sections and the changeover to the INNOPAC system. This document clearly reflected John's development of sectional staff to a self managing group John commented that he used to organise blitzes to clear backlogs but the staff took it over, and also that when staff shared a problem he usually gave it back to them to solve.

John was also responsible for a project to get equipment and software out to the branch libraries in preparation for the launch of the INNOPAC system. He had been asked to manage the project about a week prior to my visit and this had been confirmed on the previous day; everything had to be in place by the end of the week. John had delegated the actual work to two members of staff, one of whom had computer expertise and another who had a great deal of anxiety about working with computers. John spent some time talking to them to make sure they were clear about what was required and informing them about what he was doing. John also liaised by phone with some branch libraries about the equipment they would receive and about sending an e-mail out to inform everyone. He was open to alternatives and could even see the value of some 'if the Division want to do something extra ...[they] may see something we haven't noticed'. John had composed a notice for readers; based on minutes of the circulation committee meeting and consultation about procedures with a member of the implementation team. John had used what he called a 'positive interventionist' approach to its construction and it certainly very clearly informed the users what they could and could not do as from mid-December and the impact of the changeover on loan information. He had to await approval from the signatory before organising printing and distribution. John maintained contact with staff to ensure that everything was proceeding well. In addition to his

project management skills, John clearly took into account staff development issues [the involvement of someone with computer anxiety] and the importance of liaison.

John had an appointment with a member of staff to discuss her application for another job. He asked her to outline the position she was applying for and then suggested she ask for a position description. John got her to reflect upon her supervisory skills and audiovisual collections and he suggested she do some research by talking to audiovisual staff within Baillieu Library. He also suggested talking to a member of staff from a small branch library to gain information about lending services in a similar environment to the position she was applying for. He systematically went through essential criteria with her and suggested revision of her curriculum vitae to emphasise what she had done in relation to those criteria. He suggested that she consider her weak areas and said that he would be interested to hear about same. John also emphasised the importance of seeing the position supervisor prior to the interview. This discourse revealed John's awareness of the selection process, his detailed knowledge of staff within his Section, and his interest in their growth. This was further evidenced in a sensitive interaction with another member of staff who had had a great deal of computer anxiety and whom John had counselled through to the point where she was willing to work on those issues: whilst applying for leave John raised the fact that they would be considering more computer skills when she returned and she responded positively to his suggestion. At a more basic level he was involved in skills sharing when he informed staff how to send an e-mail.

John's obvious respect for his staff was apparent in the above interactions as it was when he commented on a group interaction outside his office: 'it's a long time since [I've] seen [such interaction] - it's nice'.

John was involved with financial matters in relation to the acquisition of materials. He had some interactions with his supervisor in regard to the clearing of funds by the end of the financial year and organised for a member of the Administrative Services Section (ASS) to provide him with a cash balance; he also informed her that he was going to assess the organisation of accounts at the beginning of the following year. John was obviously aware of the fact that INNOPAC would provide better accounts reporting information for everyone who needed it including staff in branch libraries. He had more interactions with ASS about payment of invoices and comments revealed an awareness of real schedules and his willingness to operate according to same, for example the university's accounting system had a different closing date to that of the library. John informed me that he put into effect a twelve month cancellation policy because he had found out from reading the manual that the previous automated system would not cancel under approximately two thousand days and this resulted in a skewed picture of what was committed. He would determine what was required to continue this strategy on INNOPAC. John commented that he used checking of invoices to monitor for problems and addressed same when they arose. A staff member presented an invoice for authorisation of payment and John checked that the amount was correct before signing it; his interaction with that staff member revealed his knowledge of the recording system. John indicated an awareness of the need to continually monitor supplier activities and had in fact put into place a strategy for keeping a major supplier 'honest': he occasionally used a smaller supplier and had informed the major supplier of that strategy. The latter responded by offering a discount which they maintained despite the fact that John continued to use the other supplier. This indicated that not only was John involved in the basic processing of invoices and the maintenance of records but he had put in place a strategy that ensured the best possible use of funds.

Different aspects of John's involvement in orders were observed. He followed up a phone call about an order by asking someone to type it up. He sent an e-mail thanking a supplier for sorting out an order; John believed it was important for him to maintain personal contact with suppliers and to give thanks when they were due. He dealt with orders including a problem order and followed this up with required action to facilitate the agreed-to fast track. He assessed the INNOPAC system's acquisition plus create list capabilities. He discussed the strategies for changeover from the LIB to INNOPAC system. He gave some thought to the selection of a member of staff for delegation to the INNOPAC implementation team for data entry of fund and vendor codes and then subsequently went through an in-depth introduction of that person in order to provide them with sufficient information to perform the task. He had a discussion with the leader of the INNOPAC implementation team about various codes, worksheets and the difficulties associated with understanding them and tricks learnt from others. John identified the need for the INNOPAC procedures manual to be updated and indexed. Throughout all of these tasks and interactions, John's understanding of acquisition systems, both manual and automated, and human resource management issues were very evident.

Sandra

Meetings, liaison, data entry, planning and documentation were the major aspects that I observed of Sandra's work.

Sandra was intensely involved with the finalisation of a draft activity plan for the implementation of the INNOPAC serials module. The plan was a very detailed timetable from November 1995 to January 1998 covering the training of staff, human resources, equipment, occupational health and safety issues, data entry, and the changeover from a manual to an automated system. Sandra consulted with a member of staff in a branch library about an issue which she thought would affect branch libraries and she met with the acting serials manager to discuss the document which was also to be used as a basis for discussion with staff about their respective roles in the serials section. Sandra made some adjustments to the plan based on that discussion. They discussed their roles and decided that it was appropriate for Sandra to lead the implementation project in the serials section. They then discussed the agenda for the meeting with staff which was to be held on the following day. Throughout this interaction it was very evident that Sandra had a clear grasp of both the serials and the system issues involved in the changeover.

At the meeting in the serials section to discuss the activity plan, Sandra spoke about the two systems (manual and INNOPAC) running in parallel and acknowledged the staff's achievement in cleaning up records before automation. She informed them that she would be the project leader in relation to serials data entry. Sandra emphasised that the data entry activities must not get in the way of client services. She was also very clear about the acting serials manager continuing in that position, as she would be working with the director of management services, and was enthusiastic about future developments involving the new (INNOPAC) system. She spoke of the need for a flexible approach to training needs and said she would set up a system for recording ideas in relation to work flows. She gave staff ample opportunity to ask questions about the timetable and about the new system, and to contribute to problem solving, for example how to handle certain titles. Sandra also informed them that priorities might change as the implementation proceeded and therefore timetabling would have to change. Before the meeting closed, Sandra checked that everyone had a clear idea of what was going to happen. Throughout this meeting, Sandra demonstrated her commitment to staff involvement in the implementation process.

Sandra made copious notes about relevant issues in relation to worksheets and timetabling at the meeting of the system technical committee (which comprised Library-wide representation plus the INNOPAC implementation team), She gave some input in response to questions about worksheets. Sandra had worked with the team leader in preparing a discussion paper about record templates in the INNOPAC system which was presented by the team leader. This paper outlined the purpose of templates, listed the type of records, posed some of the questions that needed to be addressed, outlined work flow considerations, and made recommendations for future action. Sandra was to be involved in some follow up to make policy recommendations to the technical committee regarding number of templates, content and standards. Sandra provided feedback about the first meeting of the labels committee which she chaired and which was representative of all campuses and relevant areas of the library. Sandra stated that advice and samples were being sought from suppliers and from another university library, and that the work should be completed by the end of January. Again this input (discussion paper and feedback from meeting) indicated that Sandra had a clear grasp of the INNOPAC system and of library procedures. Immediately after the meeting Sandra followed through on a request from the meeting that she find out the dates of the long vacation.

Sandra was involved in activities related to data entry in order to customise the INNOPAC system for the library's use: planning for the entry of leading articles therefore she asked another member of staff to check the paperwork beforehand; identifying what was needed and who could provide information about the frequency of serials. At one point Sandra could not get to where she needed to be in the INNOPAC system therefore she called upon her supervisor. This revealed a willingness to acknowledge her own limitations and to ask for assistance. They both tried to replicate the problem and failed therefore Sandra immediately sent an e-mail to the INNOPAC consultant.

Sandra also met with a member of staff from the serials section about binding and asked her to compile a list of questions for the INNOPAC trainer which would also be used during the training sessions for library staff.

Sandra made a presentation to staff from branch libraries with the aims of: sharing information about progress in relation to the INNOPAC system; starting them thinking about work flows; and introducing them to the serials and acquisitions modules. Sandra emphasised that it was only an introductory session and that there would be more detailed training later. She presented nineteen overheads to support her presentation in which she informed them about the structure and organisation of INNOPAC with an emphasis on files, records, fields and codes. Finally, Sandra presented the activity plan on an overhead and discussed the implications. Throughout the presentation she was open to questions and revealed a flexibility in that she was not firmly committed to any particular approach or strategy. For example, when asked whether they would close roneos, Sandra said it was up to them, however, she did advise that they not duplicate work and that they held on to roneo cards for control purposes until they were sure that all information was in the holdings field of the INNOPAC record. When closing the session, Sandra said they could contact her by e-mail about any questions arising. Sandra was well prepared for the session, was very clear about its aim and maintained her clarity throughout; she was obviously well versed in the principles of good presentation.

Wilma

Wilma was mainly involved with data entry tasks and supervisory matters throughout the observation stage of the study.

Wilma demonstrated an awareness of staff needs in regard to use of equipment and use of software. She was also alert to the need for staff to have resources such as equipment as they required same. Wilma also demonstrated her sense of accountability in relation to the cost of acquiring items on interlibrary loan by seeking out less costly means.

Wilma obviously viewed staff development as a responsibility. She expressed pleasure about the full time staff member going to courses because it contributed to her abilities within the section. She also showed great interest when interacting with a part-time member of staff about her application for another job.

Wilma spoke about the positive effect of establishing good rapport with clients and demonstrated the importance by talking about the request in hand where the academic had provided her with additional information in order to facilitate access. She was very responsive to client requests in that she took immediate action such as confirming an extension of a loan for an academic. Also, when someone presented to the unit office looking for a book which was supposed to be held at the circulation desk, Wilma escorted them to the desk, looked around and on not finding same said she would follow it up; she did so immediately and found out that the book had been returned to the lending library because the expiry date had lapsed. She then informed the academic and asked if she wanted the book re-requested; quality principles in action!

Wilma's memory for detail was apparent when a member of staff named an undergraduate student who had made requests; she immediately referred to a list which informed her that person had been given special permission.

Evidence of Wilma's service standards and monitoring was apparent in her comment during data entry on the fact that a particular library was providing better service; at one time she had avoided using that library because supply was too slow or their standard response had been 'unable to supply'. Also when doing statistics, which was a major activity during the visit due to a request from her manager, Wilma compared months and stated that August was the heaviest month. She also realised that the total statistics were down and on checking identified that she had not entered the figure for one month. Wilma stated that whilst processing statistics she tended to identify problems which indicated mistakes made by staff and which she followed up with them, for example she identified that someone had recalled an item then had sent it out again to the same person. Wilma also had to respond to a request from the accounts department for clarification of the system for ordering Interlibrary loans vouchers; she was responsible for the control of same and later in the day the ALT pointed out that more were needed.

Wilma was also involved in a problem solving activity for the interlibrary loans section in a different campus library: she ascertained that a book had been sent out in the wrong name and staff were then able to locate it.

Wilma carried out activities related to the development of the interlibrary loans system. Whilst processing a returned book she realised the strap was missing therefore rang the library concerned; also decided that as this frequently happened there was a place for a proforma letter and wrote herself a note to do this. She informed me that she had also put together a proforma letter which facilitated the ordering of articles from another campus and that she had instituted and developed a control system using the straps which had a barcode label attached and request number added; the book title was in the data base with the request number plus date due whereas the barcode was on the circulation system. Wilma also commented that she had tried to network Interlibrary loans requests but this had caused

problems and she intended reinstalling the software when the library got its own server. Whilst working on computer she identified that access to certain software would be improved if another programme group was minimized therefore called upon Systems staff to deal with same. She had previously suggested to her administrator that it would be beneficial for a proposal to be made for a longer loan period from a major library. All of this would seem to demonstrate that Wilma is always looking at ways of improving service delivery and efficiency.

Wilma spent a major proportion of her work in supervising staff. She checked another person's paperwork and then asked them to do photocopying; also reminded them of the need to record statistics. She received someone's search results. She checked why a member of staff from a different section had not arrived to work in the Unit. When they did present, Wilma gave them a list of chores to do including checking photocopies, and preparing material for dispatch. She got staff to check requested items against the Library's holdings, to enter requests on the data base, to sort requests for filing, and she spoke about her intention of teaching someone else to enter other information on the data base because it was a lower level task which she found extremely boring. She interacted with staff to clarify whether an item was held and pointed out the financial implications of making an Interlibrary loans request for a held item. Wilma also performed administrative tasks such as forwarding time sheets. The supervisory demands made on Wilma during my observation of her work was even more extensive than those I've listed and not only did she handle these competently she also seemed to be thinking ahead and required the same of others, for example she asked the full time staff member what she would be doing in the afternoon and stated that if she could let her know then Wilma could inform someone else what was required of them. In addition, whilst completing her own tasks Wilma obviously was very aware of what else was occurring and when work/issues needed to be attended to. Another aspect of Wilma's supervisory style that was evidenced was when leaving the building during a fire drill she was talking to staff about their roles and responsibilities. Also, having returned to the building Wilma commented to me about her awareness that as their supervisor, she felt responsible for the care of those staff.

Although only a small permanent team of staff comprising Wilma and one other, Wilma's contribution to that team was demonstrated in the tasks she achieved during my visit and in the task sharing (entering data onto computer) and information sharing ('telnetting not possible at end of week because of microwave hookup') that they were both involved in. Also, the ALT asked Wilma to perform a search for a request which she did. Wilma demonstrated a willingness, in fact a keenness, to accept ideas for change/improvement from the ALT. She stated that they both reflected upon procedures, especially if a problem arose, to assess how a re-occurrence could be prevented. For example, previously Wilma would have been able to see that a book had been returned and the date of return thereby saving time when the client (mentioned above) could not find her book at the circulation desk, however, they had ceased entering that data. On revisiting the issue and reflecting upon same, they decided to re-institute such data entry. Sometimes information sharing between Wilma and the ALT also resulted in decision making and problem solving; this was evidenced while they were both working on data entry in relation to statistics. Wilma and the ALT generally shared the day-to-day tasks, however, if any problems were experienced, for example not enough information in a request, that was referred to Wilma in the first instance because of her higher-level problem solving/analytical ability.

Similar to Sandra, when Wilma checked e-mail she was selective about what she dealt with. This related to what tasks she had decided to do, for example she printed off e-mail requests from academics because she intended to process them immediately.

Another significant task that Wilma was involved in was that of dealing with requests. She downloaded the ILANET requests to the local database and after creating a file of 'requests out' sent them via the modem. She then printed off requests for non-ILANET libraries using the data base and attached them to fax forms which had been printed in one run. Wilma was also involved in searching library holdings and responding to and following up phone requests, which included a fast track. Although searching on ABN was not in Wilma's duty statement, she did it regularly because the work would not have been achieved otherwise. During the process of dealing with requests and of searching, Wilma seemed to be very efficient in many of her actions and particularly knowledgeable and skilled in dealing with the computerised aspects of her work. When Wilma became frustrated by slow access to a network, she commented that she usually found other work to do while she waited and may have occasionally used the time to read an article.

Wilma's willingness to co-operate with other libraries was demonstrated: in her response to a library which wanted to check holdings; in making an effort to provide requested information where possible; in her suggestion that another library fax a request; and in her keenness to offer a responsive service, for example she told an enquirer that their request was sent out less than 24 hours after its receipt.

Interview

Introduction

After considering the observation material, I identified five themes as important for elaboration by the participants during the interview process: their experience of getting into the position; their experience of being in the position; their continuing professional development (CPD); how they viewed the future for themselves and for the position; and the implications of their being in the position. These plus the subthemes identified from the analysis of interview data are outlined in [table 1](#). Duplication of some information previously given may be apparent; this is purposeful in that the interviews revealed what the participants themselves considered important to their being in the position.

Experience of getting into the position

Career path

Two of the participants referred right back to early career decisions. John spoke of having a very early interest and that work in libraries became 'a firm career option probably when I was at secondary school'. Sandra decided on leaving school that she wanted to work in libraries and was successful in getting a position as a junior library assistant at the University of Melbourne where she was placed in the serials section. John helped out in the school library and his contact with the librarian led to her and her husband's support and mentorship of young John. Her husband, who was also a librarian, offered John his first job as a storeman at Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Central Library, then after a couple of years pressured him to move on.

John emphasised that he never had a planned career path, and therefore that he 'arrived by accident' into the Level 6 position; 'I didn't plan to be here, I'm just here'. Wilma said that she 'fell into the position' because no one wanted to be in the acting position and the manager asked if she would take it on. Sandra focused her working life 'more towards the managing -

the training and supervision areas' and actually consciously worked out what skills she would require to get into the position.

Work experience

Work experience was obviously an aspect of their experience of getting into the position for all participants. Sandra progressed to junior library assistant grade two then to library officer and finally to acting serials librarian before actually being appointed to the position. Along the way in addition to developing skills, she demonstrated her capabilities and training and supervisory potential. John spoke of his work at the Institute of Education (formerly the Melbourne College of Advanced Education) particularly in the acquisitions section where he was for five years, and the lending services section where he worked for twelve years. John stated that he ended up being the supervisor of lending services 'by virtue of the fact that I was there for a long time plus I could do that sort of thing - I was very focused on the staff and very good at customer service'. In addition to supervisory experience, John gained planning and project management experience in that position. Wilma spoke of her experience both at Sutherland Public Library where she had worked in many areas and her secondment to the position during which she developed an automated system to facilitate the handling, controlling and reporting of interlibrary loans.

Mentors and role models

Everyone spoke of the contribution of mentors and role models. Sandra pointed out that the serials librarian knew she had particular interests in training and supervision and supported her to develop skills. This was very important to Sandra who said she 'would have got nowhere' without such encouragement. She also spoke of a very supportive divisional head who 'always made herself available' for advice. Sandra's mentors also supported her creativity, to take risks and to learn from any mistakes. In addition to the contribution of John's early mentors mentioned previously, after John left CSIRO the librarian continued to provide mentorship and was keen to see John develop a career as a librarian. He was very supportive as was the university librarian and it was her support which resulted in John doing the library technician qualification. John believes that the university librarian and the divisional head had both recognised his ability; they certainly had been very encouraging. Wilma spoke more globally about the supportive environment at Sutherland Public Library where the librarians were very positive towards library technicians and where they were offered every opportunity to grow and develop. Wilma also mentioned one significant role model with whom she worked closely, a library technician and a very positive person who did the professional qualification not 'to become a librarian but to become a better [library] technician'. John identified that his 'management style has come out of modelling myself on people who present a certain way': there was his first supervisor who always made himself accessible to staff; and there was a youth group leader and his own father from whom he learnt the skills and qualities of leadership. Sandra emphasised the importance to her of the serial librarian's modelling behaviour of encouraging staff, of being calm, of being people oriented and decisive, 'she was empathic but she was tough at times ... and I learnt that from her in that there are some hard decisions that have to be made that people don't like'. By modelling herself on others, Sandra had also developed the ability to consider what she and/or the staff did in relation to the achievement of sectional goals. Sandra could not identify any mentors/role models while doing the library technician course whereas John said he found some teachers were very encouraging and gave very good feedback.

Library technician qualification

Wilma was emphatic about the importance of the library technician qualification to her appointment, 'I wouldn't have got the [library] technician's position in the first place if I didn't

have the qualification'. Also, she spoke of using information that she had gained during the course in assessing the interlibrary loan system which was in place when she was seconded, 'I knew there had to be a better way'. Wilma was able to identify that both she and the ALT who was doing the course had a higher hit rate, when searching, than other staff and that it might have been related to the analytical skills [developed as a result of the course] which they brought to the task: 'looking at whether a mistake had been made in the request'; 'considering other search strategies'. Sandra very definitely thought that doing the library technician course gave her a higher awareness of what was required in improving her work processes and in discussions with other staff, for example knowledge of cataloguing facilitated discussions with serials cataloguers. Sandra believed that the information gained during the course had the potential to empower library technicians. John believed that having the library technician qualification contributed and that it 'best trains staff for processing work ... because the style of teaching and the way of learning is supplemented by practical experience'. He saw the course as being a way of refining and formalising what he'd learnt through his work experience. In the main, however, John did not take the qualification into account when considering his development but related this more to having worked in the culture of the Institute of Education where a person's ability was far more important than their qualifications.

Personal qualities

Showing herself as being quick to learn when she was doing cataloguing and then being able to develop the ILL service when in the Acting position, Wilma considered to be factors in her getting the HEW5 position. In addition, she identified the importance to career progression of having confidence in one's self and one's abilities. John also talked of the importance of his believing in what he did and of having shared values with his colleagues; of being surrounded by people who supported one another and believed in a cooperative effort. Sandra emphasised her interest in training, which she viewed as 'the crux of an organisation', and in quality service which led her into a managerial role. She also identified the contribution made by library managers in providing her with opportunities for development. Her secondment to the INNOPAC implementation project team was an example of such opportunity.

Pre-appointment events

Wilma experienced being appointed to the Interlibrary loans position at HEW Level 5 and a re-evaluation of that position which resulted in it becoming a Level 6 position. The re-evaluation process included her completion of a complex form followed by discussion about same with her supervisor; they agreed that the position warranted upgrading to a Level 6. Wilma said that everyone was surprised by this because Level 5 was traditionally seen to be the level for base grade librarians and senior library technicians and anything higher than that was considered to be at librarian level. Sandra experienced being in the acting position where immediately upon appointment she was required to bring the work group together as a team and to appoint people to vacant positions. An essential aspect of her team building skills was Sandra's ability to select the right staff, those who could not only do the work but would fit in with the work group.

Experience of being in the position

Reactions to appointment

Everyone had different experiences in relation to the reactions of others to their appointment. Wilma said there were a few comments which she could have been offended by but they were fairly general, however, there was one particular comment by someone who said that if they were a supervisor they would fill all Level 6 positions with graduate librarians; they did not, however, have anything against library technicians. Wilma could not give much credence to

their comments because she was doing the work at the level it was re- evaluated at, and doing it well; 'that's why the position went up because it developed while I was in it'. John had been warned that there might be some negative reactions to his appointment, however, he only experienced one from a librarian who had previously indicated their non-acceptance of library technicians in the work place. John experienced some negativity from peers who saw him as advancing 'because I knew the right people' which he found annoying. He was also aware of some resistance to his ideas and he believed that colleagues thought that he didn't know what he was talking about and some who thought he was empire building. He was aware of a general lack of confidence in his ability to do the job: 'I had a procession of people who told me that they'd either done the job or been acquisitions librarian somewhere else and if I needed help just to give them a call'. John also experienced some pressure to comply, with people insisting on giving him advice about how things should be done. Despite there being a very public reaction to Sandra's appointment, she was not fussed by same because 'as far as I was concerned I had the [management] skills and they obviously chose the right person' for the position.

Position development

John spoke about the development of the acquisitions manager's position: he was appointed to the position at Level 6 and after approximately a year, he approached the division head about the fact he was doing the same things as the other section heads who were at Level 7 and that there was a need for equity in salary. She actually supported him but because there was a review of the management structure being carried out a temporary arrangement of a personal loading to the bottom of Level 7 was organised.

Sandra said she had been trained in the INNOPAC circulation module to provide her with a broader overview of the system which was crucial to her work on the implementation team.

Personal qualities

A number of personal qualities and abilities were identified mainly by John when talking about his experience of being in the position. He spoke about his willingness to take risks, for example telling the divisional head that he wanted to work directly with the other two sectional heads and didn't want her to be involved. This had developed to the point where the divisional head wanted them to work things out at their own level in the first instance. John believed that he was willing to take risks firstly because he was confident in his ability, secondly because he did not have overall responsibility, and thirdly because he had the support of the divisional head. John spoke about his greatest weakness being the lack of professional knowledge in the area of acquisitions; 'there's so much detail [that] I don't know off the top of my head ... it's professional detailed knowledge' that he had to look up such as who certain suppliers were. John referred to such knowledge as 'the professional nuts and bolts of librarianship' and he believed that lack of such knowledge affected his relationships in that he felt very insecure when talking to knowledgeable staff, 'I always feel that I'm about to be found out'; he dealt with this problem usually by being open about gaps in his knowledge. In John's opinion those who had been around for a long time had a lot of historical knowledge and he believed that was seen as 'a way of displaying how good you are at your job'. He also believed that having such knowledge served to prevent repetition of mistakes. Paradoxically, John operated on the basis that he did not have to be expert in all areas; that it was important to acknowledge his limitations and to call on those, often others within the section, who had such expertise. For example, John stated he was limited in his computer knowledge but he was aware of members of staff within the section who were very skilled and would turn to them as required. Such awareness of himself was also evident in John stating that he trusted himself and that his responses to staff would be appropriate; he

would not lose his temper when staff made mistakes. John also spoke about his willingness to share problems, to ask for assistance when thinking through a process in order to counteract his tendency to jump essential steps.

All of the participants spoke about reflecting on their practice. Wilma spoke of her need to think about how the work was done in order to achieve the most efficient service, 'to cut corners wherever we possibly can just to get [loans] out'. Sandra spoke of her reflection on the best way of achieving aims and carrying out procedures. John spoke about reflecting upon what was being done and the best way of achieving it and his involvement of staff in the reflective process by getting them to consider other ways of doing things. He saw his ability to reflect as important to service improvement: by considering and recommending changes to work flows, he had been able to facilitate reduced pressure on over-burdened staff.

Also, there was the ability to analyse, for example John spoke of the importance of considering supplier details such as numbers of delivery problems, 'the amount of money spent on fixing problems is inordinate to the amount of time in putting stuff through' and of deciding to pay more money to achieve less problems.

Work relations

Other work factors which were covered included work relations. The theme of work relationships was only minimally identified as a specific in the experience of being in the job. Wilma did not have many library technician peers and her main interaction outside the Unit was with the supervisor of the Loans staff who allocated support staff to Interlibrary Loans. Wilma described her relationship with the staff in the Unit as very good, 'we've got a good working team'. Wilma also admitted that she had not acted according to the inferred guidelines that one should not have friendships with subordinates. She believed that it was important that 'a supervisor should lead by example' and that this together with her willingness to socialise with them had in fact contributed to the cohesion of the team. John spoke of the fact that most of his working relationships involve 'quite a deal of humour' because he believed that humour facilitated the willingness to consider what one was doing especially 'to look at things you are doing wrong'. He also spoke about the importance of his work relations in terms of his needing 'those personal connections at work' in order to know where he stood and how he should approach issues. John identified cooperation as being an important aspect of his experience especially cooperation with other section heads to develop services and to provide staff in order to get rid of backlogs or to get urgent work done. He seemed to be particularly committed to breaking down the barriers between sections and had been involved in a cooperative multiskilling effort. He was involved with some section heads in ignoring traditional boundaries for example copy cataloguing staff were going to train some of his staff. John and the other section heads were not waiting for the restructuring plan [arising out of a review] but were leading the way. Sandra also identified her involvement in a multiskilling project which required cooperation between divisions and resulted in information services staff working in the serials section.

Values and beliefs

Although the values and beliefs of the participants implicitly underpinned many of the themes previously described, there were some which were more explicitly articulated. For example, John was worried about the idea of 'being professional for the sake of it' and thought some staff used it as a power issue which could get in the way of relationships. He also believed in the power of language, 'the language of how we work is so important', and spoke of how he negotiated with the self management team not to 'get bogged down in the formality' of meetings when someone suggested the need to have the minutes signed. John said he consciously used language to break down barriers when necessary and sometimes to

assert his position as manager and get staff to listen to him because he had to get something moving. I identified other beliefs which were obviously important to John's management style: that section leaders were paid to accept responsibility for a certain amount of independent judgement; that he was 'not better than a pool of 25 people'; that managing upwards was the only way; and that he had to support and nurture his staff, all of which impacted on his leadership of the self management team. Sandra's belief in the importance of training to work practice and staff development impacted not only on her own practice but on the plans for her career.

Management aspects

It was not surprising that a major theme during the interviews was that of 'management' and was shared by all participants. John expressed interest in human resources management as that aspect of his work that challenged and interested him the most and this was reflected in his having structured his job with a personnel focus. He described that aspect as reactive: 'people come up and ... need to ask ... it may be procedural ...it may be policy, it may be personal' and the importance of his attending to same, 'if people don't have that chance to discuss those issues ... I don't think they'll work the way they need to'. John also acknowledged his skill in judging and understanding people's abilities and that this was important to his allocating the right person to a task, not only for efficiency's sake but because lack of effectiveness may indicate that a person did not like doing a task. The main human resource management issues that Wilma had to address were related to co-ordination and quality control: she had eleven casual staff, from other departments, inputting fourteen hours which of course created enormous training demands and very close monitoring. Wilma also spoke of the supervisory aspects of her work such as staff discipline and in the example she gave she had motivated the person to change by linking the behaviour to her future career 'OK you're bored ... but you want to leave here - how are you going to get a good report' and that staff member had obviously heard Wilma's interest in her future because she returned soon after to discuss same with Wilma. Sandra identified the importance of resource management to the implementation of changes in order to deal with backlogs. She also spoke of the importance of participative management; she very much saw herself as part of the work group who had a leadership role which included facilitation, helping the staff to develop decision making skills, and team building. Sandra demonstrated her effectiveness in this role: 'I think about 90% of our strategic plan' was achieved.

Self management was a major aspect of John's management style demonstrated by the operation of the work group who had mainly taken John out of the daily operational work of the section. John, like Sandra, played a facilitative role such as suggesting to the group that the best way of integrating the orders and BSS sections would be to intermingle the seating. The work group actually adopted this suggestion but John would have accepted if they had not done so. At times he had lobbied the group in order to get the consideration of an idea. Both he and the work group had been involved in communicating and demonstrating the effectiveness of the self management approach to their peers. John described the effect of those negotiations: 'the bibliographic searching staff had to understand that they actually had responsibilities - they had the ability to make decisions - they had the responsibility that goes with that - and they worked very hard in a fairly short period ... to catch up'. The two work groups had reached the stage of not needing their managers at the meetings and had set up a feedback mechanism. Again demonstrating his facilitative role, John had spoken to them about the need to consider whether they were experiencing any problems associated with having two managers and to inform them. The staff had told John that they did not have any problems with having two managers and he expressed his concern to me that the staff believed they did not require a manager and did not completely understand that he was their

link with management; he was their advocate and representative with management and with other sections. An example of such representation was his having to clarify protocols in relation to Dewey classifications whereby he was able to ascertain what the boundaries were for the staff's contribution to copy cataloguing. In his opinion the self management approach had contributed to making less mistakes; problem sharing with the work group had led to more effective decision making.

Team building was another facet of their work that the participants identified. Wilma spoke of the effort she had to put into developing what she saw as a 'good working team' because not only were there a lot of staff but some of them were difficult. John had spent the first six months in the job focussing on personnel matters, mainly team building. He said that his motivation was his preference to work in a team environment which not only enhanced his abilities but challenged him to do better. In addition to using his team building skills in relation to his own section, John thought he had a responsibility to contribute to the building of the team of Sectional managers. One aspect of team building that all participants were or had been involved in was that related to re-organisation of work flows.

Organisation and planning were also explicitly identified as essential elements of their management by Sandra and John. Sandra had been immediately struck by the need for a strategic plan and had set one in place in order to keep the Section 'moving forward'. She saw achievement of goals as one of the most important positives to being in her position especially because the section's strategic plan was one of the first developed in the Library. John also saw being organised and 'knowing what I've got to do ... the planning side of it' as crucial. Wilma's organisation and planning were implicit in her development of the service; she identified what was required and then planned for and implemented improvements. They were also apparent in her ability to manage, sometimes rapid, change, which she described as 'daunting - I mean there's new systems coming up', and having to decide 'what's the best way to go?'

John's project management expertise seemed to be based on his team building skills especially the ability to gather around him staff who complimented the way he worked. John emphasised his contribution to the management of projects as primarily his ability to select the right people. He also identified an important aspect of his project management skills as his willingness to listen to the problems that staff experience in achieving their tasks and of sometimes accepting responsibility for problem solving. Essentially, John identified his interpersonal skills, especially listening.

Staff development

Staff development issues were high on the agenda for all participants. Multiskilling was seen as essential: John was very keen on a 'complete task' approach whereby the relevant people could complete all tasks involved in both orders and urgent work. Whilst performing the strategic planning process, Sandra had the staff consider the issue of multiskilling, which she saw not only as a means of developing staff but as a sound resource management principle (more than one person could do a particular task) whereby conflict between the different service points would be dealt with by making all staff aware of the demands placed on same. Such conflict had been evident between those doing reader services work and those doing technical services work who all saw their work as being the most important; Sandra's strategy of multiskilling all staff served to dispel those conflicts.

John saw appraisal as an important aspect of staff development and during same focussed more on communications than on specific and detailed critiques. Also, his staff appraisals were based on self-evaluation and he had found that staff were much harder on themselves.

Of course there was a staff development aspect to other themes/subthemes such as cooperation with other sections and subsequent allocation of staff; such allocation not only supported that other section but provided the staff with opportunities for growth.

Service development

Wilma stated that 'it was part of my job to keep informed' in order to develop the service. To achieve this she read a great deal and she networked with interlibrary loan services in other academic libraries, subscribed to e-mail lists, and attended seminars.

Pressures

The experience of pressure (stresses and demands) was identified by all participants. Wilma stated that hers was a very demanding job with a very heavy workload and Sandra said that 'serials [work] has always been highly pressured'. John experienced pressure because he had a 'huge learning curve' and there was so many detailed aspects to the job. He also found the personnel aspects of the job 'very tiring' at times. Sandra also spoke of the stress of the serials manager position being that she 'had to constantly motivate certain people' and 'because of the volume of work coming through ... it's a constant stress'.

Wider contribution

Wilma at one time had been involved in reader education activities and reference desk work, and was disappointed when this ceased because they had provided her with the opportunity to maintain her reader services skills. She had been working on the information desk for at least half a day per week. There had been no parameters for that work therefore she fielded all reference questions and believed that her knowledge of the collection, gained from her work in interlibrary loans, had contributed greatly to her ability to do so. Wilma had often been required to assist clients in their research activities and the librarian on the information desk regularly referred clients to her for assistance with searching. Wilma contributed on a university-wide basis. She was president of the campus branch of the staff association and vice president on the executive of same. Wilma was a grievance advisor for University staff whereby she gave advice in regard to problem solving about grievances with superiors and peers and when required acted as a mediator between the two parties. She was also a member of the staff awards panel which selected nominated individuals or groups who had made outstanding contributions to the university, and allocated grants for projects or professional development activities.

Obviously Sandra's involvement in the INNOPAC implementation team was evidence of the library administration's willingness to acknowledge her ability to contribute beyond the serials section. John's work with the other section heads and his project work evidenced his contribution to the Library and his concern that the divisional head 'missed out on some corridor discussions' [because she was not located in the administrative suite] demonstrated his awareness of and interest in external [to the section] matters. He spoke of his position in the organisation as being analogous to being up a ladder: 'it's not that I'm smarter - I'm just higher up and I can see further' and of how he had 'tried to make the position less focussed on the Section' by working more co-operatively with the other section heads in the division; 'by its very nature that cooperation requires you not to be locked into your own section'.

Support

John stated that his support came from different areas and different levels of the Library, however, primarily the section staff were very supportive; they were immediately responsive when he shared problems with them. He saw other supports outside the section as providing him with a forum for ventilating feelings and discussing issues related to the demands of managing such a large staff group Sandra also primarily identified her support sectional staff

who had wanted to achieve the same goals. Wilma did not identify any support systems, however, said that her immediate supervisor had been at one time.

Constraints

Wilma was the only subject who spoke about the constraints attached to her position. These included being locked into the position: she felt trapped in a very demanding, very specialised job and she was not provided with any opportunities which would in turn provide career alternatives. She was excluded from any project work because she was needed in the Unit; there was never any money for extra staff and the demand for service was increasing to the point where deadlines were not being met. Wilma had difficulty coping with this because it was out of keeping with her personal standards of service but her main reason for leaving was that she needed a new challenge. Wilma felt that the organisation stifled her creativity and that it was not proactive in its dealings with the university as a whole.

Job satisfaction

I only raised the theme of job satisfaction with Wilma because her leaving was based on frustrations and dissatisfaction. I was keen to check whether she had ever felt satisfied and Wilma identified that at one time she had felt very rewarded and challenged: 'the whole unit had turned around from something that nobody had faith in' to a situation where lecturers sought out the service. She had gained a lot of experience, especially supervisory experience, and skills in relation to computers and had the opportunity to develop a lot of skills such as the development of procedures. It was only her lack of opportunity to further develop herself and the service which had resulted in her moving on.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities identified were reading, current awareness, networking, e-mail lists, seminars, and mentorship. Of course the reading, networking, attendance at seminars and subscribing to e-mail lists that Wilma was involved in with a view to service development also contributed to her CPD. She had been included in the library's current awareness circulations when she began working on the reference desk and continued to receive same.

Despite time constraints within the work and because of family commitments, Sandra tried to keep up with reading in areas of interest (training and staff development) in the circulated journals. She did not subscribe to e-mail lists but had two colleagues who forwarded interesting postings to her. Sandra believed in taking every opportunity to attend workshops and seminars and to provide feedback about same to the Library and to relate what she learnt as much as possible to her practice; for example after attending the conference on library competency standards she decided that they could be incorporated into the position descriptions. Sandra also considered the Divisional Head's mentorship as an important part of her CPD.

John admitted to not reading widely and not being on any e-mail lists. Reading was certainly not his preferred development activity although he thought that he would keep on the library's circulation list for those serials with a human resource management focus. He knew that he would not have time to deal with the postings from e-mail lists. John was interested in attending workshops and seminars on human resource management and tried to attend two a year

Where to from here?

Further study

Wilma was enrolled in the Charles Sturt Library and Information Services (LIS) degree programme. Sandra was unsure about studying in a professional LIS course and thought she might take up a degree in the area of training and development at a later stage. John had little interest in doing any further formal study, 'I suspect that if I do study it will be because of peer group pressure'.

Aspirations and career moves

John identified the personal limitation of not being tough enough to carry the sort of load attached to higher-level positions. However, he also said that he would find it challenging and might consider applying if something became available in the new structure; the decision to do so would depend on whether he met the criteria. He had expressed interest in being involved in a team building exercise at the sectional head level. In the short term, John believed that only one head of the combined acquisitions and bibliographic searching section was required and he expressed interest in that position because he would be challenged to extend the self management approach. He had thought about other jobs which might arise out of the restructuring but had to wait and see. John also expressed an interest in moving into the personnel area and thought he would be willing to drop a salary level to do so. Basically, John saw himself as remaining at the University of Melbourne Library as long as that was of mutual benefit to himself and to the administration. He had to consider whether he had reached his level of competency, 'is this where I'm best for me and best for the organisation and best for the people around me' or 'whether I'm willing to be challenged and go on'.

Wilma had an impending career move which she saw as challenging. She was returning to the public libraries sector to be in charge of a small branch library where she would be responsible for service delivery. Getting the position had motivated Wilma to complete the professional LIS qualification after which she thought she would be well placed to apply for a librarian's position in the district library.

Sandra did not see herself as returning to the job of serials manager. She thought she needed to move on and was being supported to do so by the divisional head who had organised for her to work in the training and development area.

For the position

Wilma believed there was a lot of development needed for the interlibrary loans position: an increase in the number of permanent staff was required; and the logical combining of the document delivery (intercampus) and interlibrary loans services which would allow for a more uniform delivery of services to academics, 'lecturers are filling out so many different forms ... we could have just one form and one department handling everything'. She also thought it logical that the library join ABN which would impact on the work of the position.

Implications of being in the position

For library technicians

Wilma was unsure whether library technicians would continue to occupy the position especially as four library technicians had applied for another position at the same level and it had been offered to a librarian. The interlibrary loans position had been traditionally held by library technicians and she had certainly developed it, however, basically Wilma thought the future of the position would depend on what the administration wanted; essentially it would be the best person who applied irrespective of level of qualification.

John thought that library technicians working in higher-level positions might be trail blazers for others in their discipline. He did not necessarily see himself as such because he had not consciously set out to lead the way, however, he thought that others might well view him as a role model. John thought that his being in the position might contribute to the development of library technicians by making people 'stop and say look we had a picture of a library technician being capable of this and this ... but [what] we've realised here is that a library technician qualification is part of a life experience ... [having the qualification] is only part of the picture'. John also had some problems with the label because people, including library technicians, used the phrase 'just a library technician' and he believed in the importance of promoting library technicians and of inspiring those doing the associate diploma. Conversely, however, he thought there was a danger in highlighting the potential and disenfranchising those people who wanted to focus on process work, of detracting from their pride in their work. John thought there was a need to recognise that individuals would have different aspirations and that they do not always have 'to go onwards and upwards to be the best leaders'.

Sandra hoped that in light of her occupying the position, library technicians might consider their own potential, however, she did not see herself as being a standard or benchmark for library technicians. Sandra thought it important that others knew about her experience and that she would be willing to talk about it.

For the library

Wilma thought that the library should recognise the need of library technicians to progress, however, from what she had heard from librarians in the organisation she believed the status quo would be maintained and library technicians would compete with librarians for HEW Level 6 positions. John thought that he might be one of a small group who could be considered as a good role model in relation to his management style. He also spoke about the Library administration having taken a risk in appointing him and he hoped they would continue to support the philosophy of appointing the best person for the job. John expressed some anxiety, based on a realisation arrived at during the interview, that if a library technician failed at the HEW6/7 level the administration might then wrongfully arrive at the conclusion that no library technicians were capable. He was concerned that the administration might then move away from appointing the best person. Sandra expressed the hope that the administration would continue to make managerial appointments on the basis that the library degree was not imperative.

For library and information services

Wilma considered that the interlibrary loans position had the potential as a benchmark for library technicians and certainly demonstrated that the role of library technicians extended beyond the ALIA definition (1994/5) of supporting 'established procedures' (p2) because she had to establish procedures in the absence of policy statements. Wilma, like other library technicians in her library, were working at a higher level than some librarians and she thought there was a need for that to be documented by ALIA. Sandra hoped that the community at large would consider the potential and value of library technicians operating at the higher level. John thought that the community at large should look at the individual and their total experience rather than the qualification and consider that outcomes were the essential performance indicators. John also spoke of the possible implications for the associate diploma with more focus on management. John raised whether one implication may be that it highlighted the question of whether there were too many different courses and that there might be a place for offering one course in which people can select the areas and levels of study.

Summary

There were some obvious institutional differences in that the library at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur was much smaller than that at the University of Melbourne, in regards to both collection size and the staffing establishment. The organisational structure in which the participants operated was quite different and whereas the two library technicians at the University of Melbourne were in the information resources division, the library technician at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur worked in client services.

The experience of the participants was somewhat different in that John had worked in libraries for 22 years whereas Sandra and Wilma had both worked in libraries for 12 years. However, Wilma had four years public library experience whereas John had two years as a storeman in a special library and Sandra had purely academic library experience. Before taking on the interlibrary loans co-ordinator's position, Wilma also gained copy cataloguing and bibliographic searching experience. Sandra had gained enormous expertise in serials work by progressing through the ranks from junior library assistant to serials manager. John had gained experience at different levels within reader and technical service areas in academic libraries. Whereas Sandra's appointment had been for approximately three years, John and Wilma had both been working at HEW Level 6 for twelve to eighteen months prior to the study. All participants had studied on a part-time basis and had completed their library technician qualification in 1989/90.

My observation of the participants mainly reflected the different requirements of their respective positions. John, as acquisitions manager, was primarily taken up with managerial functions in relation to personnel and projects, and some detailed aspects of acquisitions work, such as financial matters. Two aspects of John's managerial approach were highlighted: firstly, his determination for the staff to be a self managing group, and secondly the use of his project management skills for cross sectional work. Sandra, as a member of the INNOPAC implementation team, was required to develop the serials and acquisitions modules and I observed her working towards this goal through documentation, committee membership, liaison and information sharing. Sandra's commitment to planning was highlighted in her documentation of the activity plan and subsequent discussions about same. Wilma, as co-ordinator of the interlibrary loans unit, was observed as combining activities associated with interlibrary loans processing work and supervision of staff. Aspects of Wilma's work that were highlighted were her expertise in relation to interlibrary loan processes and her capacity to co-ordinate a number of staff mainly drawn from other areas of the library.

The interviews revealed some common themes, however, in addition to similarities between the individual there were some very evident differences. They all considered that work experience and skills development had contributed significantly to their appointment but whereas there was no conscious effort on the part of John or Wilma, Sandra had deliberately determined her progress to attain the position. John and Sandra emphasised the importance of mentors and role models to their development whereas Wilma identified the importance of the associate diploma. Reactions to their appointments was one aspect of their experience of being in the position and was varied. All participants identified personal qualities used in the position, however, John mainly spoke of these, such as his willingness to take risks in his relations with other section leaders and the division head and his weakness in his 'professional knowledge'. Work relationships were only minimally touched upon. Minimal attention was paid by the participants to values and beliefs as part of their experience of being in the job, however, I did articulate some which I thought were more explicit. All participants identified their ability to reflect on their practice. Of course a major theme, shared by all participants, was that of management particularly as it related to human resources and their

different styles of approaching this was evidenced. Other shared aspects were their experiences of the stresses and demands of the positions and their involvement in making contributions to the broader community. Support was part of the experience for all participants but the degree of same was variable. Only Wilma spoke of the constraints attached to her position and she was the only participant with which I raised the issue of job satisfaction; lack of opportunity had contributed to her developing dissatisfaction.

All participants had been and were involved in some continuing professional development but the focus of further (formal) study differed greatly. This latter was clearly related to their individual aspirations: Wilma moving back into the public library sector in charge of a small library but with the aim of applying for a librarian's position once she had qualified; Sandra interested in the possibility of a degree in adult education; and John more interested in seminars and workshops linked to his focus on human resource management, rather than a degree.

The participants had varied opinions about the implications of their being in the position. The implications for library technicians were viewed against the 'best person for the job' principle held by all participants. Wilma expressed some pessimism about the future for library technicians in the position. Sandra hoped that library technicians would consider their potential and although she did not see herself as a benchmark, expressed a willingness to share her experience with other library technicians. John thought there was a possibility that he might be viewed as a role model but this was expressed hesitantly because of his concern about disenfranchising those library technicians who were more interested in process work rather than promotion.

In the main, the participants held similar views about the implications for the respective libraries of their holding the positions. Wilma thought that library technicians would continue to have to compete with librarians for the position and Sandra hoped that the administration would continue to make appointments on the basis that the librarian qualification was not imperative. John hoped the administration would continue to appoint the best person.

Their views about the implications for library and information services generally were varied. Whereas John thought that total experience and performance outcomes warranted greater consideration than qualifications, Sandra hoped that the potential and value of library technicians operating at a higher level would be acknowledged, and Wilma considered that the interlibrary loans co-ordinator's position had the potential as a benchmark for library technicians. In addition, Wilma believed that it had demonstrated an extension of the role of library technicians beyond the ALIA definition, and John spoke of the implications in relation to the education of library workers: were there too many different courses?

Discussion and conclusion

The observation and interview data and the background of the participants in this study evidenced a higher level of functioning than had previously been described. The supervisory/management role of library technicians has certainly extended in the past fourteen years since the task analysis reported by Smeaton (1984, p34) which was compiled as a basis for curriculum decisions for some library technician courses.

The evidence of this study could clearly be used as an argument for the potential of library technicians, particularly in the technical services areas of academic libraries (and I do view interlibrary loans processes as technical). It can also be used to counter the underutilisation arguments, however, this must be done against the context within which the participants operated. Wilma remained in a position which had been reclassified according to award

restructuring requirements, and both Sandra and John had gained their positions in an organisation that selected staff on the basis of merit rather than qualification. Their positions had not been defined as 'library technician positions' and there was no indication that this would be reconsidered in future; in fact the interlibrary loans position was advertised as requiring either the professional or the paraprofessional qualification. I therefore agree with Kreitz and Ogden (1990) that the profession will continue to be faced with the problems of 'trying to define what it is that each class of library employee does that makes it unique and thus rewarded differentially' (p301).

In light of the linking between practice and education, and the contribution competency standards can make, suggested by Doyle (1995) and Williamson and White (1996), one needs to ask what does this mean for library technicians when considering the current, higher level of functioning of the participants in this case study? Much can be learnt from the Curtin Library and Information Service (LIS) application of the national library competency standards as a management tool. Curtin University of Technology had identified twelve core competencies:

1. Communication
2. Financial management
3. Information management
4. Interpersonal skills
5. Leadership
6. Organisational understanding
7. Outcomes management
8. Quality client service
9. Self management
10. Situation solving/decision making
11. Specialised or technical knowledge and abilities
12. Team management (Williamson & White, 1996, p17)

These competencies were certainly evidenced in the case study, however, linking of competencies to such exemplars of higher-level functioning in isolation would serve no purpose according to the Curtin experience. Where the Curtin competencies above were used 'where relevant to extend, develop or enhance the library industry competencies' (Williamson and White, 1996, p37), linking of competencies to HEW levels in order to accumulate competency profiles warrants a very comprehensive approach. They can then be used 'in establishing the climate and context for industrial reform' (p37) in regard to career development and training and thereby benefit library personnel and the industry. It would certainly provide individuals, whether they be library technicians or not, with the opportunity to realise their potential.

When considering how graduates would develop the expertise to be able to practice at the level of the case study participants one must firstly consider their educational input and whether it has been related to outcomes and the assessment of the graduate's level of competency. What assessment methods are used? Have the graduates been adequately assessed in order to demonstrate that their level of competence will allow them to cope at Level 3 or Level 5 within the Australian Standards Framework (ASF). ASF3 requires competence in order to accept 'responsibility for co-ordination of a work area and/or group, and/or of a small budget', and the ASF5 demands a level of competence to accept 'responsibility for organising and leading in a work area' (Arts Training Australia, 1995, p[10]).

The case study data suggests that the participants have all gained an enormous amount of skills, knowledge and expertise in the six or seven years since graduating and it is this that has mainly contributed to their effective functioning at the higher level. Undergraduate courses for library technicians cannot be expected to provide the required input and therefore consideration might be given to what postgraduate courses may be required. Bowden and Masters stated that they 'have found it useful to develop a conceptual model of the relationship between observable practice and underlying capacities which make competent practice possible' (1993, p155). Therefore what library technicians operating at the higher level do and what skills, knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs are essential to that doing could be useful information in determining the requirements for further education, training and development of library technicians. This case study provides at least some of that information with enough evidence to indicate that the role of library technicians does extend beyond the ALIA definition in the work level guidelines for librarians and library technicians. At the date of writing this report, the ALIA guidelines are being extensively revised and hopefully will reflect some of the changes inherent in the practice of higher-level library technicians.

Additionally, considerations about competence which as previously mentioned Quirk (1994) defined as 'a stage of development of learning leading to expertise' (p15) would require investigations about the operational differences on the career path between the novice and the expert. The findings of such action based research could underpin future courses specifically targeting library technicians in management/supervisory positions, such as the AIMA institute for library technicians.

Rider (1996) suggested that 'to meet the needs of the 21st century, libraries will want to maximise the potential of all library staff to develop new roles and contribute successfully to the mission and goals of the future library' (p31). It would seem that the library administration at the Universities of Melbourne and University of Western Sydney, Macarthur have taken this maxim to heart and may contribute to library technicians getting what they want which according to Oberg (1992) is 'respect, trust, collegiality, just compensation, and a future - in short, a career and not just a job' (p107).

Appendix A

Chief responsibilities of manager, serials position

Under the broad direction of the director, technical services division [later to become director, information resources] and liaising with other branches and divisions as required -

1. Maintain an efficient, fully operational serials section by:-

- Ensuring that section procedures manual is kept up to date on the policies and procedures of the section.
- Handling or delegating problems as they arise, assisting with routine serials section operations as necessary.
- Ensuring equipment in section is performing at its maximum capacity, seeking to improve the efficiency of work flow with other equipment options and services available.
- Set sectional plans and goals in conjunction with staff of the section, and relating to divisional and Library Strategic plans. Most complex problems
- Continuing to maintain a labour intensive outdated manual system while attempting to improve efficiency.
- Balancing the priorities of the Section when the demands are greater than staff time availability.

2. Managing the budgetary responsibilities of the serials allocation by:

- Evaluating supplier performance, selecting best suppliers, negotiating terms and service conditions.
- Ensuring ordering procedure is efficient and up to date.
- Ensuring invoices are correct before authorisation for payment.
- Liaising with accounts payable section on payment issues and adapting procedures where appropriate. Most complex problems
- Finding staff time to deal with big invoices as an additional task at a specific time of year when all the usual daily demands still exist.
- Maintaining up to date knowledge of suppliers performance, new technical solutions etc. when we have only cumbersome manual methods of assessing supplier performance.
- Minimising the effect of time delay and double handling of invoices which is a result of lack of system links to finance branch.

3. Maximise the personnel resources available in the section by:-

- Ensuring staff training and development within the section is effective, making best use of all resources.
- Supervise, counsel, coach staff. Complete regular staff performance appraisals.
- Handle staff related matters within the section, consulting with the division head and director, management services or library office staff as appropriate.
- Conduct and participate in staff development and performance planning program.

- Be aware of legislation relating to occupational health and safety, affirmative action and equal opportunity. Report potential/existing problems. Most complex problems
- Maintain morale of staff in the face of inherited backlogs, decision making outside Section control, limited career opportunities for staff.

4. Assist in communication within the division and the library by:-

- Providing information on section activities to the division head and other section heads.
- Holding regular sectional meetings for serials staff reporting on library developments.
- Producing a written report on the activities of the section annually as required on specific issues.
- Providing statistical information on a regular basis and as required for specific purposes. Most complex problems
- Keeping informed of developments in other sections, being aware of impact on serials section and initiating any action needed.
- Establishing appropriate decision making capacity in a climate used to hierarchical management.

5. Assist in the provision of direct service to users by:-

- Managing the serials counter and phone enquiry service efficiently.
- Ensuring that staff involved in this service are adequately trained and kept up to date.
- Liaising with reader services to ensure that serials are kept informed of changes which affect their service delivery.
- Co-operating with reader services division to assist in matters relating to shelving, signage, relocation of periodicals. Most complex problems
- Balance the demands of the users directly with the routine serials work which has to be done to meet the user needs more long term and indirectly.

6. Contribute to library service objectives by:-

- Taking part in planning and policy discussions within the division.
- Becoming involved in library-wide activities personally and ensuring the section is also involved. Most complex problems
- Balancing all the priorities in the position.
- Maintaining a knowledge of library and university policy issues.

Appendix B

Chief responsibilities of the manager, orders position

Under the broad direction of the director, information resources division and liaising with other sections of the IRD, branches and divisions as required:

1. Maintain an efficient, fully operational orders section by:-

- Managing the personnel and work flow of the section.
- Set sectional plans and goals in conjunction with staff of the section, and relating to divisional and library strategic plans. Most complex problems
- Developing and maintaining effective procedures and applying changes on information technology to achieve the goals of the library's strategic plan.

2. Managing the budgetary responsibilities of the monograph allocation by:-

- Evaluating supplier performance and selecting the best suppliers, negotiating terms and service conditions.
- Ensuring ordering procedures are efficient and up to date, and meet the university's statutory requirements.
- Liaising with accounts payable section on payment issues and adapting procedures where appropriate. Most complex problems
- Committing and spending the monograph budget within required time frame, despite the lack of quality library IT management reports.

3. Maximise the personnel resources available in the Section by:-

- Effectively and efficiently managing the Section staff. This would include regular staff performance appraisals, counselling, coaching and continuing leadership.
- Participation in staff selection to build the optimum team.
- Handle staff related matters within the section, consulting with the division head and director, management services or administrative services staff as appropriate. Most complex problems
- Team building and motivation, change management, deployment of staff in face of conflicting requirements.

4. Assist in communication within the division and the library by:-

- Providing information on section activities to the division head and other section heads.
- Holding regular sectional meetings for orders staff reporting on library developments.
- Producing written reports on the activities of the section annually and as required on specific issues.
- Providing statistical information on a regular basis and as require for specific purposes.
- Liaising with staff of other library divisions to help relate existing policies to work assignments. Most complex problems

- Keeping informed of developments in other sections, being aware of impact on orders section and initiating any action needed.
- Communicating section developments to other sections and divisions.

5. Contribute to library mission and service goals by:-

- Providing clear and productive leadership.
- Taking part in divisional planning and policy discussions.
- Being aware of the interrelationships between sections and divisions of the Library. Assessing, relating, adapting and implementing procedure and policy to ensure the continuing development and carrying forward of the library's strategic plan.

Involving all section staff in Library-wide activities.

On-going innovation to ensure best practice is achieved in a timely manner.

Balancing priorities and applying a flexible approach to achieve section goals relating to the wider divisional and library perspective.

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