An innovative cross-cultural approach to equipping librarians to provide effective learning support

A professional development project to better align the service levels of RMIT Vietnam Library with those of RMIT University Library and to enhance support for teaching and learning

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Cover photo: Huynh Ton Nu Minh Nguyet at Saigon South Campus
Executive summary

This project delivered an exciting and effective professional development program to bring a closer alignment of Library services with teaching and learning needs. The primary focus was on Library service delivery to students and academic staff at RMIT International University Vietnam (RMIT Vietnam), but in addition approximately 25% of RMIT University Library staff members were involved in various aspects of the program. Half of the funding was provided by RMIT University and half by RMIT Vietnam.

A blended learning approach was chosen and included use of face to face workshops in Vietnam, visits by four Vietnam Librarians to Melbourne, use of an online site which included resources and space for discussion, and some informal coaching. The project was run in three phases in 2010, each comprising workshops in Vietnam and online discussion. The major topics of the three phases were customer service and marketing, reference work (for example, assisting students to locate resources for assignments), and information literacy/research skills training. Many other topics were covered in varying levels of detail. Among them were the role of the Liaison Librarian, book selection techniques and management issues. Evaluation included participant feedback on workshops using feedback forms, tracking changes in Library services, a customer survey run by RMIT Vietnam Research Department in November/December 2010, a project-end survey of participants’ behavioural changes against learning topics as self-reported in December 2010, and discussion with participants.

Each of the major components of the project – face-to-face workshops, overseas visits, and online forums – was highly rated by those involved. The inclusion of face-to-face contact was vital to establish effective working relationships based on trust and respect. Such relationships break down barriers to learning by reducing any sense of intimidation or fear of speaking up with opinions or questions. Multiple times and points of contact were important to build motivation and to provide time for people to absorb, consolidate and apply new ideas. The online forum was found to be most suitable for extending existing knowledge, gaining practical hints, and examining attitudes. The face-to-face workshops and visits were more effective for learning new material in a systematic way.

Outcomes of the project included:

- Student satisfaction with service provided by Library staff in RMIT Vietnam increased
- Students gained enhanced support in locating information resources
- Professional development plans are in place for Library staff for 2011
- There is closer alignment between Library service provision in Melbourne and Vietnam
- RMIT Library staff capabilities and confidence improved.

Success factors were identified and included the enthusiasm of those involved, the ongoing nature of interaction throughout the year, the expertise and commitment of workshop leaders, the support of EduTAG, and the closeness of time zones enabling synchronous online discussion. The blended learning approach to continuing professional development of Library staff was found to be highly effective and it is recommended that the approach be considered for application in other contexts.
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4. There is closer alignment between Library service provision in Melbourne and Vietnam
5. RMIT Library staff capabilities and confidence improved.

**Acronyms**

- ALIA: Australian Library and Information Association
- IL: Information literacy
- IS: Information Services
- IR: Information Resources

**Detailed Project Description and Rationale**

This project was conceived to improve alignment of RMIT Vietnam Library services with RMIT University Library and with academic teaching and learning needs. The RMIT Vietnam Library had seen growth in its collections, resources and staffing and annual customer surveys affirmed an upward trend in satisfaction with the Library. Despite this, there was some dissatisfaction expressed and the areas where further development was needed were identified by a senior member of RMIT University Library staff through a visit in 2009. These needs were addressed in the project which developed and applied an innovative approach to deliver professional development to Librarians to enable them to provide more effective learning support to students and academic staff.

The findings on the effectiveness of the project delivery model are relevant to other units of RMIT University and other organisations seeking to align services of units in more than one country. The model is most directly applicable to professional development work and to increasing levels of staff networking across cultures.

A blended learning approach included use of face to face workshops in Vietnam at the Saigon South and Hanoi campuses, two-week visits by four Vietnam Librarians to Melbourne, use of an online site with resources and discussion, and some informal coaching. In 2010 there were 12 staff positions at Saigon South and five in Hanoi. Incumbents of three positions changed during the project, meaning a total of 20 individuals from the two Vietnam Libraries participated in some, or all, phases of the project. Three Melbourne Librarians visited Vietnam to present workshops, and additionally the project leader visited Vietnam three times to audit staff development needs, deliver workshops, evaluate the project, and develop a 2011 Staff Development Plan for RMIT Vietnam Library. A number of Library staff in Melbourne were involved in work with Vietnam Librarians when the latter visited Melbourne and many also joined in online discussions.

The project was run in three phases in 2010, each comprising workshops in Vietnam and online discussion. Phase 1 comprised a visit by the project leader to Saigon South to carry out a skills audit and deliver workshops on customer service and marketing and these topics were also discussed online by staff in the two Vietnam and five Melbourne Library sites in May. In Phase 2 the focus was on reference work with workshops in Hanoi and Saigon South in May and online discussions in June. The focus of Phase 3 was information literacy. Workshops took place in October and online discussions in November. Evaluation was conducted in late November and early December.

**Workshops**

Working with Vietnamese staff in person was a vital component of the project. Visits to Vietnam were essential to build relationships of trust and to understand the situation well enough to contribute significantly. Face to face delivery is a well accepted and familiar teaching approach in Vietnam and was the most popular of the components of the blended learning approach among the Vietnamese Library staff. The workshops reached all staff. All available Library staff attended workshops of general applicability and all available Information Services staff attended specialised workshops relating to their area of work.
Evaluation forms provided very positive feedback on the value of workshops, although some found it challenging to interact in English and needed leaders to speak slowly and clearly.

**Visits to Melbourne**

Four Vietnamese staff had the opportunity to visit Melbourne. These visits strengthened relationships and provided additional change impetus as Vietnamese Librarians shared insights from their experiences in the RMIT University Library with colleagues in Vietnam. The visits enabled Librarians to learn through observation and discussion. When reflecting on their experiences later, the Information Service Coordinators spoke of the value of gaining an understanding of the Liaison Librarian role, observing the friendly attitudes of staff toward students, and noting managers’ proactive approach to problem solving (T. B. Leu & V. T. T. Pham 2010, pers. comm., 10 December). The visits also provided a valuable opportunity for Vietnamese staff to interact with Australian staff and to form professional bonds which will support ongoing networking.

**Online discussions**

An online site was created to provide resources and encourage development of a community of practice. Titled Equip: Equipping Librarians to Provide Effective Learning Support, it was generally referred to as the Equip forum or simply Equip. It was developed by EduTAG with the Drupal Content Management System and used a combination of core Drupal modules, contributed modules and modules developed for the project. It was integrated with the Novell Directory Services of the university to allow staff to utilise their usual work login and password and the site could be accessed anywhere anytime. The Equip site was used to reinforce and extend workshop material and contained resources and a space for discussion. It also made it possible for a large number of Melbourne staff to interact with their Vietnamese colleagues.

![Figure 1. Screen shot of the Equip web site](image-url)
designated times. Participation rates were variable with a number of staff gaining great benefit and others less involved. Resources on the site were underutilised, but discussions were often fast paced. The discussion was well categorized and this enabled participants to easily read over material later. Numbers of participants who initiated or commented on posts in online discussions were 14 Vietnam staff and 40 Melbourne Library staff and individual post counts ranged from 1 to 97.

At some Library sites, staff organised into groups to discuss the online topics and formulate group responses. This occurred mainly at the Bundoora and Business sites in Melbourne. Figure 2 below gives an idea of the breakdown of those who worked with others and those who worked solo. Those who discussed forum material as a group found this approach to be very worthwhile.

![Figure 2. Participants’ approach to online forum discussions](image)

Figure 2. Participants’ approach to online forum discussions

The online forum was most suitable for extending existing knowledge, gaining practical hints, and examining attitudes. The face-to-face workshops and visits were more effective for learning new material in a systematic way. Twelve of the 14 Vietnam respondents to the final survey affirmed that they would recommend the mix of learning approaches used in the project. However there was some feedback that the Equip discussions were potentially a little intimidating, and use of chat, such as via Skype, with a smaller number of participants, may have been preferable for some participants, or at least would have been a useful addition.

A timeline of the project activities is provided in Appendix A.

**Project Outcomes and Impacts**

The following were the specified outcomes sought by the project:

1. Student satisfaction with service provided by Library staff will increase
2. Students will gain enhanced support in locating information resources
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3. Professional development plans will be in place for ongoing improvements to student learning support and liaison with academic staff.

Other significant outcomes were:

4. Closer alignment was established between Library service provision in Melbourne and Vietnam

5. RMIT Library staff capabilities and confidence improved.

1. **Student satisfaction** was shown to improve in Vietnam through a comparison of the 2009 and 2010 customer survey data obtained by RMIT Vietnam Research Department. In a November/December 2010 survey, customers were asked to rate Library performance on a number of items using a 1 to 4 scale (1 Not good, 2 Fair, 3 Good, 4 Excellent). There were four questions about Library staff which were highly relevant as a measure of the effectiveness of the learning project when 2010 responses were compared with 2009 data. They were ‘Knowledge in answering your questions’, ‘Friendliness’, ‘Helpfulness’, and ‘Availability’. In 2010, Hanoi Campus students’ opinions showed improvements of 5.91%, 4.75%, 3.34%, and 0.4% respectively. Saigon Campus students’ ratings improved by 3.41%, 1%, 7.36%, and 6.04% respectively. Average ratings by academic and other staff were higher than those of students.

An anticipated outcome of the project was that the Library Client Survey 2011 results for the University Library in Melbourne would maintain an overall score in the top quartile when compared with other libraries in the Insync Surveys database. Melbourne results will be available later in 2011.

2. **Enhanced support in locating information resources**
Capacity to provide advice for individual student enquiries was enhanced by: workshops in Vietnam on the reference interview, dealing with difficult queries, and resources for electrical engineering; online discussions on reference work including discussing specific queries and databases; and observation of reference interactions in Melbourne by Vietnam Librarians. As mentioned previously, students’ 2010 responses compared with 2009, in response to the item, ‘Knowledge in answering your questions’, showed improvements of 5.91% in Hanoi and 3.41% in Saigon South.

The following is 2010 Customer Survey Saigon South student data, for additional relevant questions, which also shows improvement over 2009 ratings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saigon South</th>
<th>Not good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>No idea</th>
<th>Average score 2010*</th>
<th>2009 average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circulation (check in &amp; out books)</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>3.05 (n=580)</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General questions (find books, how to print)</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>3.00 (n=559)</td>
<td>General 2.62 Printing 2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific reference questions (search online databases, journal articles)</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>2.80 (n=507)</td>
<td>Not asked in 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scale: 1=Not good, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent*
The comparable Hanoi student data, where one rating fell and one rose, is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hanoi</th>
<th>Not good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>No idea</th>
<th>Average score 2010*</th>
<th>2009 average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circulation (check in &amp; out books)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>2.98 (n=54)</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General questions (find books, how to print)</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>3.00 (n=53)</td>
<td>General 2.92 Printing 2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific reference questions (search online databases, journal articles)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>2.88 (n=49)</td>
<td>Not asked in 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scale: 1=Not good, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent

It should be noted that the Hanoi Library moved into a new building in June 2010 and also had high staff turnover in the second half of 2010 and this may have caused some disruption.

RMIT Vietnam was previously offering Library classes on use of the Library catalogue and a generic class on using databases. In Hanoi some classes tailored to specific course needs were being offered also. During the project, Library staff attended workshops on developing and presenting classes for students to enable students to locate information resources effectively. In a linked 2010 LTIF project, ‘Developing research skills for career readiness’ an online resource, iSearch, was developed, with input from Vietnam, to help RMIT students to use and manage information effectively in the Web 2.0 environment. Vietnam Library staff also worked together to develop a common template for lesson planning and have included student learning activities to improve understanding of class content. Increased cooperation with members of the Learning Support Unit and Education Technology in Vietnam has led to a reduction in overlap in student support work, expert advice to improve teaching practice, and referrals of lecturers to the Library when there is a need for tailored information literacy classes. Online discussions between Melbourne and Vietnam Library staff on this topic took place in November and extended the depth of understanding of several sub-topics. These discussions were designed as professional development activity for all Melbourne Liaison Librarians as well as Vietnam staff.

After attending workshops focused on information literacy in October, Vietnamese Librarians were more active and confident in approaching the academics to offer workshops relevant to the course needs of their students and new contacts were made. Lecturers observed that students who participated in Library workshops showed noticeable improvement in the quality of the information and sources used and cited in their assignments.

In the initial project application, two initiatives were identified which applied specifically to Melbourne. These were to implement and evaluate use of the KeePad personal response system in Library classes and to develop updated class offerings for the open Library classes. June Frost, a Melbourne Librarian, assisted by Cheryl Tinney, trialled use of interactive feedback using KeePad in Foundation Studies classes in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the technology in enhancing learning. Her findings included: students respond well to additional level of engagement created through use of ‘clickers’; use of KeePad adds value when used appropriately; appropriate purposes for use of ‘clickers’ are assessing prior knowledge, gaining feedback on understanding, and gauging learning outcomes; and, for the average Library skills class, four to eight question slides are optimal. The Melbourne Library also had a separate working group to update open Library class sessions and will offer classes in EndNote and Internet use in 2011.
3. **Professional development** planning for 2011 for RMIT Vietnam Library was completed and recorded in a Staff Development Plan (see Appendix B) which follows the template used for the RMIT University Library Staff Development Plan. It was based on information on future training needs recorded by staff in a project-end evaluation and by discussion with staff. Discussion with Human Resources in Vietnam revealed that they already intended to offer training on several topics which were identified as needed by the Library. Other training approaches agreed included: Librarians in Vietnam to offer training to each other on specific databases; experts in marketing in RMIT University Library to run marketing training, probably via videoconference; occasional discussions to take place on the online site; and professional development buddy pairs to be arranged. At the time of reporting, four pairs of buddies were established and others were being arranged.

Continued professional development is essential to maintain the gains achieved so far. This is particularly vital when staff turnover is high as has been the case in the Hanoi Library. By training our staff well, we increase the likelihood that they will be offered promotions to positions in other organisations. However, the dangers of not providing ongoing professional development are greater.

4. **Closer alignment between service provision in Melbourne and Vietnam**

After studying the Melbourne Liaison Librarian model, the Library Manager introduced a contextualised approach by allocation of subject responsibilities to Saigon South staff in June and this was later extended to include Hanoi Library staff.

RMIT Vietnam Library is investigating implementing an Ask a Librarian service which more closely aligns with the RMIT University Library approach.

5. **Improvement in RMIT Library staff capabilities and confidence**

RMIT Vietnam Library staff members are now able to provide more competent assistance in selecting material for the collections in support of academic programs. As detailed previously, Information Services staff are more confident and better equipped to provide Library classes tailored to course needs.

As part of the final participants’ survey, Library staff were asked to rate their knowledge, attitudes and activities before, and after, the project on a 1-5 scale for 17 items which related to the learning topics (See Appendix C for the list of items). The best possible score was 5 scale (1=Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither agree or disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree). For participants in Vietnam the average score for all items combined moved from a baseline of 3.6 up to 4.3, showing an overall improvement of 17%. For Melbourne participants the average score for all items combined moved from a baseline of 4.2 up to 4.3, showing negligible improvement. The response rate for Vietnam was 70% and for Melbourne 50%. Two apparent explanations for the minimal improvement in self-rating as seen by the Melbourne participants are: they began from a higher base; and most of them were involved in only a subset of the project activities. Another explanation is that the items in the survey were specific to content of specified learning topics and as such did not measure all impacts. Some of the positive impacts on Melbourne Library service are given below.

- Library staff had an opportunity to reflect upon their own actions and gain a clearer understanding of their professional practice through discussing this with someone from a different background in the Equip forum.
- The opportunity to travel to Vietnam, and gain insights on another scale and type of operation was useful for those staff who worked in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi.
Explaining how and why various tasks were done in Melbourne to the visiting Vietnamese staff encouraged critical examination of those practices by Melbourne staff.

More generally this project provided opportunities for Melbourne based staff to become more engaged and involved with others in their day to day work, and to learn more about the Vietnam campuses. This will assist in engagement of staff in their work, and provide variety while we retain their skills longer term.

**Approach and methodology**

An action learning approach was taken to this blended learning project. A 2009 report into the RMIT Vietnam Library identified the need for professional development. At an initial visit in early 2010 to Saigon South Campus, Julia Leong, the project leader from RMIT University, Melbourne, presented interactive workshops on customer service to Library staff. At the same time, a skills audit and discussion increased her understanding of the needs. After this initial stage, the project was developed and ongoing input from staff and reflective practice was utilised to form a feedback loop. Timing of activities and approaches were then adjusted as needed. The project delivered workshops in the Hanoi Library and in Saigon South conducted by Melbourne staff, visits by Vietnam staff to RMIT Melbourne, an online community of practice, and informal coaching.

The initial plan for the project was followed with minimal change. Timelines closely matched those in the project application. One change was to move the final evaluation visit of the project leader to Vietnam to late November/early December to allow staff to better concentrate on information literacy training in October. It was also possible to partially fund a visit by an additional Melbourne staff member to Saigon South Campus and she assisted with the information literacy training. The most significant change to an approach to content delivery was that a plan to teach book selection processes through the online forum was abandoned and instead we dedicated a day to thoroughly training three Vietnam staff in person during their September visit to Melbourne. This change reflected our observation that the forum worked well for exchange of ideas, but less well for teaching and learning new skills. Additional to the written project plan was a significant amount of informal interaction between Vietnam Library staff and the Project Leader and other Melbourne project participants as well as some coaching. This contributed significantly to positive outcomes.

**Success factors**

There are a number of factors which contributed to the success of this project. These included:

- the enthusiasm of staff to be involved and openness to learn from each other
- the availability of an enthusiastic project leader, detailed planning, and ongoing interaction to keep the project on track
- the support of senior University and Library staff
- the work of project champions in Saigon South, Hanoi, and some Melbourne campuses
- the expertise, availability, and willingness of several Melbourne Librarians to prepare and present workshops in Vietnam
- the willingness of a number of Melbourne Librarians to facilitate online discussion on allocated days
- careful scheduling which took account of the University calendars to schedule interaction in the less busy periods
- the expert support from EduTAG in developing an online site
- attention to communication and promoting involvement
- time zones close enough for synchronous online discussion to be possible.
Transferability of approach

The delivery model used in this project is most directly transferable to support units, but could also be used by academic staff teams. It is suited to situations where ongoing contact is desirable to achieve alignment of approaches in Australia and Vietnam and where resources to achieve this are available. It is a useful approach for delivering new ideas or procedures as follow up can occur via online and in-person contact. With student groups, it has applicability to joint Australian-Vietnamese project teams. These may be of a more short-term nature, but the intensity of the project work would off-set the lack of ongoing interaction in the longer term. Should another group within RMIT University wish to use the same online site as was developed by EduTAG for this project, it is estimated that a new instance could be created with about 10 -15 hours of labour (not including design).

Dissemination Strategies and Outputs

Regular status reports were provided throughout the project to the University Library Executive and RMIT Vietnam Vice-President Academic. Information was regularly provided to Library staff through the internal Newsheet and the internal Staff Development Newsletter, 2010, issues 1-5 and 2011, issues.1-2. As evidenced in the section below, additional dissemination occurred/will occur through: a brief overview of the project included in inCite, the newsletter of the Australian Information and Library Association (ALIA); a presentation on lessons learned in using an online forum given at a November Melbourne workshop popular with academic librarians; information to be shared with the University RMIT@Asia series members; and a paper on the project jointly written by Julia Leong, RMIT University and Loc Nguyen, RMIT Vietnam for an Asia-Pacific conference in Malaysia. Selected papers from the conference will be published in the International Information and Library Review. Julia Leong was nominated for an ALIA, Information Online Group, Excellence Award 2011 for work on the project and this was publicised to the Australian library community on the ALIA Online Conference blog, http://www.information-online.com.au/blog/fe_blog_view.cfm?cat=3.

Presentations and papers

Leong, J 2010. ‘Three keys to a successful online forum’, CAVAL Reference Interest Group Seminar, Redressing the Duck: Rethinking Information Literacy and Professional Practice, William Angliss Institute, November 23.


Leong, J 2011. ‘The use of blended learning to equip RMIT Vietnam library staff to better support teaching and learning’, Asia@RMIT lunchtime seminar, March 9.


Linkages

The project linked with another 2010 LTIF project, ‘Developing research skills for career readiness’ which produced an online resource, iSearch, to enable RMIT students to become lifelong learners who use and manage information effectively in the Web 2.0 environment. Debbie Wright, who led the latter project, was also involved in the former project. Debbie visited Vietnam in October to work with Library staff to build their capability to teach these skills to students, and to discuss how they would use and promote the iSearch.
Evaluation of project outcomes

Evaluation included participant feedback on workshops using feedback forms, tracking changes in Library services, a customer survey run by RMIT Vietnam Research Department in November/December 2010, a project-end survey of participants' behavioural changes against learning topics as self-reported in December 2010 (see Appendix B), and discussion with participants.

The blended learning approach to continuing professional development of Library staff was found to be highly effective in our context. In the survey at the conclusion of the project in December 2010, participants were asked to rate their response to the statement, “For me, the project has been worthwhile”, on a 1-5 scale (1=Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither agree or disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree). The average of all Vietnam participants' ratings was 4.7. For Melbourne participants, the average rating was 4.1. Twelve of 14 Vietnam and 17 of 20 Melbourne respondents to the final survey affirmed that they would recommend the mix of learning approaches used in the project to other units of the University (See Figure 3 below). The approach resulted in clear gains in staff competence and confidence and in improved customer satisfaction and thus the model is worthy of consideration as a strategy for application in other contexts.

Figure 3. Do participants recommend the approach this project took (face-to-face workshops, online forum, visits to Melbourne) to other units of the University?
**Timeline of project activities**

**November 2009**
Application for RMIT University, Learning and Teaching Innovations Program funding

**December 2009**
Initial project development work

**January 2010**
Funding approval

**February 2010**
Project leader visit to Saigon South Campus – skills audit, project planning with Vietnam Library Manager

Workshops run for Saigon South Library staff by Julia Leong on:
- An introduction to customer service
- Values for teams and customer service
- Marketing basics, and
- Behaviours which are seen as good customer service.

Videorecording of students and Library staff in Saigon South by EduTAG to include in the online site.

**March 2010**
Content development for online site

**April 2010**
Visit of Hoang Tuyet Anh, Vietnam Library Manager to Melbourne, 12th-22nd

Online site development, coordinated by Iain McKay, designed by Zennie McLoughlin and development/programming by Darren Smith, EduTAG

**May 2010**
Workshops run for Hanoi Library staff 17th-20th on:
- Customer services (Julia Leong)
- Team values (Julia Leong)
- Dealing with difficult queries (Tanya Bramley)
- The reference interview (Tanya Bramley).

*Online forum* – Melbourne, Hanoi, Saigon South.10 -12 Vietnam time, 1-3 Melbourne time. 18th - Dealing with Difficult customers – facilitator: Tanya Bramley. 19th - Cultural factors and behaviours to promote customer satisfaction – facilitator: Cheryl Tinney

Workshops run for Saigon South Library staff 21st-26th on:
- Dealing with difficult queries (Tanya Bramley)
- The reference interview (Tanya Bramley)
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- Resources for Electrical Engineering (Julia Leong, based on material from Wendy Haszler)
- EndNote (Julia Leong)
- Introduction to presenting skills (Julia Leong).

**Online forum** – Melbourne, Hanoi, Saigon South. 10-12 Vietnam time, 1-3 Melbourne time. 24th - Relationship marketing – facilitator: Rowan Mangan. 25th - Team values – facilitator: Anh Hoang.

**June 2010**

**Online forum (Reference)** - Melbourne, Hanoi, Saigon South. 10-12 Vietnam time, 1-3 Melbourne time. 7th-11th, 15th-16th – facilitators: Julia Leong, Jenny Loft.

**September 2010**

Visit to Melbourne by Service Coordinators: Pham Thi Thanh Van (Saigon South) and Leu Thi Thu Ba (Hanoi) and Reference Librarian, Nguyen Trong Thi, August 30th – September 10th. Foci: reference, information literacy, liaison work, selection of material for the collection, and management and supervision.

**October 2010**

Workshops run for Hanoi Library staff 4th – 8th on:
- Lesson planning (Debbie Wright)
- Delivering effective training sessions (Debbie Wright)
- Marketing information literacy to academic staff (Debbie Wright)
- Information literacy frameworks (Debbie Wright).

Workshops/seminars run for Saigon South Library staff 4th-19th on:
- Engaging and motivating students and active learning (Wendy Frerichs)
- Staying current with information literacy (Wendy Frerichs)
- Sharing knowledge on applying social networks (Blogs, Yammer) (Wendy Frerichs)
- Case study of planning, delivering and evaluating a problem based learning information literacy class for Consumer Science students (Wendy Frerichs)
- Sharing experiences about Reference & Liaison Librarian work (Wendy Frerichs)
- General discussion on developments in libraries (mobile devices etc) (Wendy Frerichs)
- Lesson planning (Debbie Wright)
- Delivering effective training sessions (Debbie Wright and Wendy Frerichs)
- Marketing information literacy to academic staff (Debbie Wright and Wendy Frerichs)
- Information literacy frameworks (Debbie Wright)
- Prezi presentations (Wendy Frerichs)
- Storyboard demonstration of the work to develop a new online information literacy resource (Debbie Wright).

**November 2010**

**Online forum (Information literacy)** 16th-18th and 24th-25th – facilitators: Wendy Frerichs, Emma Rose, Pauline King, Miranda Francis, Gary Pearce, Debbie Wright and Bernadene Sward

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Presentation to CAVAL Reference Interest Group Seminar on use of online forums, 23rd December (Julia Leong)

December 2010

Project leader visit to Hanoi (29th November to 3rd December) and Saigon South Campus (6th – 10th December) for project evaluation and 2011 staff development planning

Online survey of participants to evaluate project

Workshops run for Hanoi and Saigon South Library staff on:
  • Work planning (Julia Leong).

January 2011

Conference paper written by Julia Leong and Loc Nguyen

February 2011

Final project report
1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

RMIT University International Vietnam Library aims to have capable, flexible and engaged staff who seek continuous improvement in consistent and innovative customer-focused practice. New staff are introduced to the Library and their own job (induction) and ongoing training and professional development is provided. Staff development needs are identified from library and information services competency documents, Library and individual work plans and workforce planning needs.

New developments and trends in information and communication technology, higher expectations of users, requirements of employers and managers of libraries and information service organisations and competition from information professionals in the broader information industry emphasize the imperative for associations and institutions to be 'learning organisations' and develop their staff by providing opportunities for continuing professional development and training in the workplace; and for individuals to be responsible for their own career planning and development. (IFLA http://archive.ifla.org/VII/s43/ accessed 2010).

Each staff member has a responsibility to maintain and enhance their professional knowledge and expertise (ALIA 2001) and may seek assistance where needed. Managers and immediate supervisors play a key role in staff development. The Librarian, Staff Development (Melbourne) can provide professional advice.

How the plan was designed

This plan is based on input from staff on their development needs at the conclusion of the 2010 Equipping Librarians to Provide Effective Learning Support Project; by Library planning meetings held in December 2010; and from feedback received from the December 2010 client survey.

Links to other plans/documents

The Library Staff Development Plan sits within the framework of the Library Plan and RMIT International University Vietnam 2010: Growing today’s success into the future. The University values of “creative, connected, fair, passionate, and committed to making a difference” inform staff development activities.

Evaluation and Review of the Plan

Outcomes are to be reviewed in November/December 2011.

2. STAFF DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES (or 'What are the important issues?')

Broad Priorities

- Build staff capability to support University priorities in teaching and learning, research and development, and international work
- Develop management and leadership capability of leaders
- Continue to provide training to promote compliance with relevant legislation and regulations
- Continue to build staff capacity to provide innovative customer service
An innovative cross-cultural approach to equipping librarians to provide effective learning support

- Support staff career aspirations where practical.

Development Needs

Short term (one-year) development needs

- Induction for new staff
- Technical skills, particularly advanced IT skills
- Work experience in other campus libraries.

Longer term (three-year) development needs

- Ongoing refresher training for key procedures
- Future-focused skill development
- Innovative strength
- Capacity to work respectfully and effectively across Library units and throughout the University.

Programs/Activities

Professional development needs will be addressed through the various tiers of professional development provided.

Induction

All new staff will be inducted into their work group with a program based on the University guidelines.

In-house training

In-service training programs are organised in-house as a means of maintaining and extending skills, developing necessary knowledge of new products and keeping staff current with new technology, library policies and procedures, and customer service strategies.

Staff briefings

Occasional speakers from other areas of the University will provide awareness of issues and technologies pertaining to the current information and university environment.

Work experience

If possible, one or more staff members should visit RMIT University Library Melbourne to extend knowledge of RMIT University Library and library procedures and operations. Staff swaps between Saigon South and Hanoi libraries would also be of value if funding is available.

Courses/events

Attendance at relevant courses, such as those offered by, or organized through, RMIT Vietnam HR.

Depending on funding availability, a Melbourne library staff member may be able to provide training to address specific needs.

Discussion and professional buddies

In 2011 it is anticipated that Library staff will hold online discussions with Melbourne library staff on selected topics.
Interested staff will be paired with a professional buddy in Melbourne to exchange ideas and provide professional support.

**Individual staff needs**

You are encouraged (and expected) to actively identify your development needs, agree development priorities with your supervisor, and record these in annual work plans along with intended actions. Although these cannot be listed individually in the annual staff development plan, they are an ongoing priority for supervisors.

### 3. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES (OR 'HOW DO THINGS HAPPEN?')

#### Financial Allocation

Funding is allocated to Library professional development from the Vice-President Academic budget.

#### Staff Resources

- The Library Manager has oversight of staff development activities.
- The role of supervisors and management in identifying staff development needs and acting upon these needs on a daily basis is extremely important in the staff development process. The development plan section of staff Work Plans is an ideal opportunity to identify individual training needs and development opportunities.
- The Librarian, Staff Development (Melbourne) can provide advice and is active in seeking to establish professional development links with Vietnam Library staff.
- Professional associations of relevance are the Vietnam Library Association and VINASAL (association of southern academic libraries).

### 4. STATEMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT TARGETS

- To be determined

### 5. ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES (or 'How do I get a piece of the action?')

To apply for activities, complete a Professional Development Application form.

### 6. DISSEMINATION POLICY (or 'What obligations do I have to my colleagues?')

There is an expectation that staff who undertake staff development activities will share what they learn with others in the RMIT community. Dissemination may include presenting papers, distributing notes, undertaking projects, contributing to improvements, etc. These outcomes should be discussed the relevant manager prior to the activity.
### 7. SUMMARY TABLE OF ACTIVITIES 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Priorities</th>
<th>Development Needs / Target Audience</th>
<th>Programs/Activity</th>
<th>Schedule/Timing</th>
<th>Programs to be developed</th>
<th>Resource Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University-wide Priorities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Subject Librarians and Reference Librarians</td>
<td>Presentation skills training</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>To be offered by HR</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Development</td>
<td>Liaison Librarians</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td></td>
<td>Possible visit to Melbourne by RMIT Vietnam Library staff member. Possible visit to Vietnam by Melbourne Library staff member.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarify need</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry engaged</td>
<td>LIS students</td>
<td>Work experience placements</td>
<td>As requested</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>All staff</td>
<td>In-service training</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and Leadership</td>
<td>Current leaders</td>
<td>Performance management Probation management</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Provided by HR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT Business Processes and Systems</td>
<td>Service point staff</td>
<td>In-service training on procedures</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>Also consider videoconference with some Melbourne Library leaders</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Legislation and Regulations</td>
<td>Service point staff</td>
<td>Warden training</td>
<td>Property Services</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service point staff</td>
<td>First Aid</td>
<td>Provided by HR</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>All staff</td>
<td>Manual handling</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>To be provided by HR – Hanoi and Saigon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Unit Specific Priorities</td>
<td>Multi-skilling and career development</td>
<td>Staff Swaps</td>
<td>Disciplines Specific Expertise</td>
<td>Professional networking and current awareness</td>
<td>Representation at key conferences</td>
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<td>Organisational Unit Specific Priorities</td>
<td>Professional networking and current awareness</td>
<td>Representation at key conferences</td>
<td>Disciplines Specific Expertise</td>
<td>Professional networking and current awareness</td>
<td>To be established by end February for 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing PD for Customer Service excellence</td>
<td>Respectfully assertive or dealing with difficult customer</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>HR to offer session. + approach Student Services counsellor to offer an informal session with Library staff in HN and Saigon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customer Services</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Consider priority topics from Melbourne Customer Service SD plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>Writing business letters and emails</td>
<td>HR may offer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing awareness for interested staff</td>
<td>Videoconference with RMIT University Librarian and Marketing Coordinator</td>
<td>To be scheduled</td>
<td>Possible session with Marketing lecturer</td>
<td>Cost of video-conference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

End of project participants’ survey item list for self-rating knowledge, attitudes and activities before, and after, the project

I smile when greeting library users

When I need to be firm with angry customers, I am still polite

I think about how to make our library service better

I suggest improvements in services &/or work procedures to my manager

I promote/market the library &/or services to staff/students

I use open-ended questions to find what enquirers are looking for

When I am listening to a person and not sure if I understand, I check with the person by rephrasing the question to them

Most of the time I can advise students on databases for their topic

I can answer 3 out of 4 reference questions well without help

My knowledge of the library collection & eResources is increasing

I know how to select books on a topic for purchase

I have selected books on a topic for purchase in the last 6mths

I understand the RMIT Melbourne role of the Liaison Librarian

I think our Library should offer/continue to offer library training to students

I present/teach library classes

I work with lecturers to offer tailored sessions for their students