

Chapter 59

Project Management in Library and Information Science: An Application in University Library Context

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to provide guidelines to design, create, and develop a Community of Practice (CoP) on university library planning and project management courses, based on description of real experience within the framework of an educational innovation project on the Master course in “Documentation, Library, and Archive Management” (Complutense University). A combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology (document analysis, brainstorming, case studies, group discussion sessions, and creation of a Master Catalogue of Values) was used by different members of the CoP: professors, researchers, university librarians, and students. This case study was found to advance means of establishing alliances and mergers between such players in the field of Library and Information Science and also a manner to encourage an enterprising culture among students in our expertise field. Furthermore, CoP has improved quality of University Libraries at Complutense University with a teaching dynamic that can be implemented in additional university courses related to Management.

INTRODUCTION

The Faculty of Documentation Sciences at Complutense University of Madrid offers the obligatory subject “Project Management in Documentation Units” in all the specialities of the Master in “Documentation, Library and Archive Management”, which was a pioneering subject in the area of Library and Information Science in Spain.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0196-1.ch059

The concept and approach to that Master, in general, and that of the subject mentioned in particular, adhere to the principles of what is known as the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) that was formally adopted as an European political commitment in the so-called Bologna Declaration (European Ministers of Education, 1999). Implementation of the EHEA has brought about a structural change that emphasises a teaching model which concentrates on the students' learning process, clearly aimed at acquiring and developing skills, as well as the procedures to evaluate these.

In order to respond to the challenge of the EHEA in teaching this specific subject, the "Call for Teaching Quality Innovation and Improvement Projects" was resorted to by the Vice-Rectorate of Quality Evaluation at the Complutense University. The fundamental purpose of that call for proposals is to encourage educational innovation in order to achieve quality university teaching on the fundamental axis of the EHEA, according to which the students' learning process must be enhanced by innovation, both in theoretical as well as practical classes, seminars, tutorials, etc.

The innovation project approved has been based on constitution of a "Community of Practice" (CoP) that, as a main asset, provides a knowledge exchange network for the essential purpose of benefiting all its members. The CoP is based on the principles and grounds of project management to put forward proposals in project form, adapted to a pilot scenario, the feasibility of which may determine their applicability under real circumstances.

The focus of the innovation project to which we refer, called "Cop-PM", is based on three perspectives that are integrated in the line of this work:

- Firstly, the establishment of a theoretical context, based on the principles of project management and the search to adapt these to the scope of information and documentation units (and, specifically, to university libraries).
- Secondly, setting the institutional context within the framework of the Complutense University of Madrid, of the Libraries of that University and, specifically, its Library of Economics and Business, chosen as the pilot library due to being the Coordinating Library of the Somosaguas Campus of that University.
- Thirdly, the explanation of the directives of creation, structure, characteristics, dynamics and working methodology of the CoP, as a core element of the Cop-PM, and analysis of the results arising from the experience.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT: PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

The course "Project Management in Documentation Units" in which the experience of the Cop-PM has been developed, is based on a model that applies management techniques to projects by the information and documentation professional, linked to the planning of such units.

In that sense, project management lies within the domain of Management of information and documentation units and, more specifically, within the scope of their planning. In that line, there have been many authors who have described planning as a function of the Management of organisations in general (Drucker, 2002; Bueno Campos, 1996) and of Management of information and documentation units in particular (among others, Koontz & O'Donnell, 1972; McClure, 1982; Lynch, 1985; Bryson, 1997, 1999;

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