

Unlearnings we screenshot

ABSTRACT

We have all had experiences at work that we wish would just disappear. This paper will reflect on the authors' journey to transform our workplace learning environment and experiences during 2011-2016 by embracing a collaborative and sustainable approach to bringing together a community of confident, responsive, and reflective learners. We encourage curiosity and lifelong learning, sharing skills and professional interests whilst managing expectations and shared responsibility for career-long and career-wide learning. This paper will form a case study and focus on our practical examples which will explore learning from *unlearnings* by a novel use of the social media network Snapchat to convene a reflective practitioner *meshwork*. The authors will reflect on seven themes of unlearnings we screenshot on Snapchat, including: What's in a Name?, Be Your Own Hero, Winners Never Quit, Don't Remind Me, Caustic Solutions and Stay in Your Own Lane.

The paper discusses how we achieved a transformation of our learning environment over five years and the key milestones we refer to as unlearnings. These unlearnings were learnt during the course of facilitating a range of workplace learning initiatives, namely, 23 Things; 23 Research Things; Innovations Forums; LEG Briefings; Lync Information Sessions; Library Staff Conversations; and ACU Library StaffShare. Resulting from our approach to an evolving workplace learning environment, colleagues have reported increased confidence in their use and application of emerging technologies for personal and professional purposes, motivation to return

to formal tertiary study, benefits of multiple modes of mentoring, skills refresher opportunities, and the unifying affect of and effect on library staff as they up-skill and multi-skill together.

Learning from our unlearnings, we propose a reflective, transformative, bottom-up problem-solving approach to workplace learning in the Library context to bring about a change-ready library and information professional workforce. This paper will provide critical reflection on the broader context of the Library's contribution to the knowledge economy by expanding on the notions of corporate memory and collective industry memory. These notions of memory, workplace learning and their vulnerability will be explored in the context of the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) workplace. Wherein there is robust bureaucracy and managerialism, alongside the amorphous and vulnerable memorisation of vital professional knowledge.

Relevance: Learning and risk taking

We take a risk and embrace Snapchat as a tool for capturing and sharing screenshots of experiences in the interest of reflecting on learning from *unlearnings*. The authors will candidly share seven of our most epic fails, in the hope that you will also learn from our unlearnings.

PAPER

Introduction

We have all had experiences at work that we wish would just disappear. This paper will reflect on the authors' journey to transform our workplace learning environment and experiences during 2011-2016 by embracing a collaborative and sustainable approach to bringing together a community of confident, responsive, and reflective learners. We encourage curiosity and lifelong learning, sharing skills and professional interests, whilst managing expectations and shared responsibility for career-long and career-wide learning.

We take a risk and embrace Snapchat as a tool for capturing and sharing screenshots of experiences in the interest of reflecting on learning from *unlearnings*. The authors will candidly share seven of our most epic fails, in the hope that you will also learn from our unlearnings. We reflect on seven themes of unlearnings we screenshot on Snapchat: What's in a Name?, Be Your Own Hero, Winners Never Quit, Don't Remind Me, Caustic Solutions, Stay in Your Own Lane and Unwanted Functionality. This paper forms a case study and focuses on our practical examples which will explore learning from the conceptualisation of unlearnings, the notion that recording and sharing failures and reflecting upon the lived experience is as important as reporting success, and by a novel use of the social media network Snapchat to convene a reflective practitioner *meshwork*.

The practical examples discussed in the paper were central to our contributions to the workplace learning environment, bringing about a transformation in employer facilitated Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning (CPDWL) over the last five years. The key milestones referred to as unlearnings, we assessed as underpinning the successful transformation of our learning environment. These unlearnings were learnt during the course of facilitating a range of workplace learning initiatives, namely, 23 Things; 23 Research Things; Innovations Forums; LEG (Library Executive Group) Briefings; Lync Information Sessions; Library Staff Conversations; and ACU Library StaffShare.

Defining failure and epic failure

We have all experienced failures at work that we wished would disappear faster than a Snapchat, but were they truly epic? Most of what immediately comes to the mind of the reader might be similar to the following experiences:

- a workshop that no one attends,
- the technology failure that is more memorable than anything you said in your presentation,
- a last minute improvised talk that *ums* and *ahs* your audience to sleep,
- sharing your acquired taste in humour with an unprepared audience,
- inventing a new date in the calendar resulting in a spectacular scheduling fail,
- the spell check fail, and
- the reply all email fail.

These are all fails that the authors have experienced that were embarrassing, cringe-worthy and distressing at the time. However, for the authors, when we reflected on our failures to identify epic failures, we agreed that in the context of our work roles *it is the repetition of actions that have previously led to failure, which we continue to repeat because it is convenient, the path of least resistance, agrees with existing workflows, operational procedures or policy that culminates in an epic failure*. In other words failing to scale is an epic fail.

In our reflections on the distinguishing characteristics of failure and epic failure we draw upon the role of trust, namely the effectiveness of and confidence in, our work in CPDWL. Both authors have lived through the experience of failing to gain the trust of our colleagues when we have encouraged them to take risks with workplace learning experiences. Knowledge management researcher David Snowden (2016) describes trust as a safe to fail exercise in a blog post which concludes that “it is a bit like management really. If you can’t live with failure you shouldn’t manage people. Equally if you can’t accept an off breach of trust then you will never benefit from its lived experience”. We have sought to learn and unlearn, document and share, our lived experiences of breaches of trust, failure and epic failure. While trust is a safe to fail exercise, making it a habit of convenience is an epic fail.

Reflective Practitioner Meshwork

Four components were integral to our conceptualisation of a reflective practitioner meshwork. Firstly, we sought a means to extend the habit of critical reflective practice informed by our experience in the LH Martin Institute Emerging Leaders and Managers Program (eLAMP). Secondly, we had serendipitous exposure to the scholarship of the ecological anthropologist Timothy Ingold which had a powerful impact on our thoughts about our place in the profession and the role of our work. Third, was the art of William Kentridge and a desire to play in and with Snapchat was the fourth component. Additionally, essential to our notion of a reflective practitioner meshwork, we believe in the principles of *big tent librarianship* within which librarians, “paraprofessionals, lay staff, library trustees and friends, faculty, academic administration, corporate administration, principals, teachers, superintendents, and library advocates of all stripes and types” are “intrinsically connected” and “have enough in common to be drawn together under the same soaring roof (Woodworth, 2010)”.

Reflective Practice

The authors are informed by their professional development experiences over 18 months, during 2015-2016, when they participated in eLAMP with the LH Martin Institute, University of Melbourne. eLAMP is undergirded by continual structured and unstructured critical reflective practice recorded privately, on communal discussion

boards and shared directly with mentors. Beginning during the first module of the program, and continuing throughout the authors added another layer of shared or collaborative critical reflective practice, through which we supported, trusted and challenged one another to deepen, expand upon and apply our reflective practice within a meshwork.

Meshwork

Meshwork is a term Ingold (2007; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012a; 2012b) borrows from the philosopher Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre's use of the term was to describe how the reticular patterns of movements weave an archi-textural meshwork environment (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 117-18 cited in Ingold, 2007, p.80). Ingold establishes the qualities of a meshwork in contrast to the widely used network metaphor:

“The lines of a network, in its contemporary sense, join the dots. They are connectors...a meshwork of interwoven trails rather than a network of intersecting routes. The lines of the meshwork are the trails along which life is lived...it is in the entanglement of lines, not in the connecting points, that the mesh is constituted (Ingold, 2007, p.80-1).”

The authors' understanding of Ingold's meshwork is best presented with an analogy within the library and information context. We suggest that it is much the same as a systematic search in a database, where the aim is not to search *across a network* of connecting keywords and terms, but rather to move *through a meshwork* of subject-areas for the growth and continuous birth of subject-areas-in-information and knowledge creation. This is also a more realistic approach when conducting a search using a discovery layer such as Primo which is constantly updating in real time and

is in agile development. Along our meshwork trails of reflective practice, right-time and right-sized knowledge in development is shared in real-time.

William Kentridge

The influence of printmaker, illustrator and animator William Kentridge on two Librarians' conceptualisation of a reflective practitioner meshwork, might seem improbable in the first instance. Kentridge, a 2010 Kyoto Prize laureate, gestures to an image displayed during his award presentation (University of San Diego, 2012), stating "that is a drawing of a tree. In fact, that is not even a drawing of a tree. That's a projection, of a photograph, of a drawing, of an etching, which is based on a drawing, of a photograph of tree I had seen". We were immediately attracted to the artist's deliberately visible process of assertion, erasure, alteration and re-presentation. Moreover we inferred a kinship between our iterative processes of contemplation. Kentridge's work in charcoal became an important reference, in conjunction with Ingold's theory, for our introspection on the enmeshed roles of memory and forgetting (Kendall, 2014) through the entangled lines of our reflective practitioner meshwork.

Snapchat

The Snapchat app appealed to the authors as a good fit for our interest in collectively engaging in reflective practice, expressing creativity, socialising, experimenting, exploring, taking risks, and learning by trial and error (Popper, 1972) including failing. We share snaps of audio, visual, video, and text, in isolation or combination, for the purposes of communication, narrative and memorialising. The application norm is for

these ephemeral snaps to expire in a few seconds, or after 24 hours for Stories and then using Memories to retain and restore snaps. In addition, our norm is to screenshot learnings and unlearnings from each others' reflective practice.

The seven themes of unlearnings which we identified along our reflective practitioner meshwork, screenshot on Snapchat, and discuss in this paper are linked to the author's facilitation of a range of workplace learning initiatives. Yet it is important to note that carrying out these initiatives was not contingent on our reflective practitioner meshwork. What our meshwork of reflective practice has supported was our identification and understanding of patterns of failures, epic failures and accomplishments. Through the agency of Snapchat our meshwork has been reshaped, thus influencing the ways in which we practice critical reflection. Snapchat has had a positive impact on our critical reflective practice in the following ways:

- Our approach to communication, storytelling, and narrative within character limits and the framing of snaps.
- The use of video and images to illustrate concrete experiences or depict conceptual ideas to illuminate meaning.
- Our pacing, processing, and structuring of reflexive thinking captured in screenshots, Snapchat My Story, and Snapchat Memories.
- Incorporating a playful and fun aspect to our ruminations with the use of filters, stickers, emojis and drawing.

Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning in the Library and Information Sector

The contemporary workplace context is characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA). VUCA envelops the work of library and information professionals in the knowledge economy and as part of the knowledge community. We continue our critical reflection on the broader context of the library's contribution to the knowledge economy and role in the knowledge community by expanding on the notions of corporate memory and collective industry memory. These notions of memory encompass the lifecycle of information assets, such as administration files, corporate records and policy documentation, in digital and paper formats. Corporate and collective industry memory extends to decision making processes, knowledge retention and management and workplace learning. All of which are exposed to a range of vulnerabilities in the VUCA workplace, wherein there is robust bureaucracy and managerialism, alongside the amorphous and vulnerable memorisation of vital professional knowledge.

Inadequate CPD/WL for academic librarians to develop the meaningful careers they desire (NTEU, 2015) also disempowers them to "truly master their jobs, to take responsibility for their actions and to explore the boundaries of what can be done rather than rigidly sticking to prescribed policies and procedures (Crew & Crew, 2014, p.15)". We embrace and advocate for the themes of professional responsibility and risk taking in the library and information sector and academic libraries as a vital component to workplace learning and in turn learning from

unlearnings. CPDWL is an extremely rewarding aspect of our work, however it does present significant challenges as Crew and Crew (2014, p.17) acknowledge that "as the sector will experience a significant exodus of senior staff due to demographic factors over the next five to ten years, this will require substantial staff development. The overall pace of planned, focused workforce change will need to increase to meet these challenges". The situation described presents a number of challenges specific to academic librarians as within our organisations we are at risk of losing our corporate memory and within our profession we risk losing our collective industry memory.

We have noted that in our workplaces the confidence to explore the boundaries of the nature of work and the way in which we work does not come easily to many staff and for those who do take on this responsibility it is often associated with length of service, experience and age. It is our aim that CPDWL opportunities will contribute to staff lifelong learning and professional development, from both an industry responsibility perspective and to facilitate staff excellence in their current and future employment. We address this aim by taking a holistic approach to the education, training, learning and development of Library staff. We set out to co-locate staff development and professional development or workplace learning and lifelong learning when facilitating learning and development opportunities for colleagues. Furthermore, our preference and approach is to make challenges visible or transparent and then to work with staff to solve problems from the bottom-up. A consultative, client-centred and staff-focused ethos is advocated. During our concerted efforts to evolve the workplace learning environments, we have noted and

reflected that in our experience there is little tolerance, both explicitly articulated and implicitly expressed, for top-down, 'overlaid', or band-aid solutions. In our day-to-day lived experience of work, this context and conceptualisation, is central to how we establish our work. We are reminded that the path to productivity improvement is inclusive, consultative, slower and to persist.

Evolution of the Range of Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning Opportunities

The range of CPDWL opportunities and the ways in which they are tailored for and facilitated by employers has significantly evolved over the last five years. In this paper, we focus on no-fee, internal-Library facilitated CPDWL initiatives that we have designed, developed, or managed and supported. The initiatives which have transformed our approach to fostering a collaborative, supportive and sustainable learning environment are:

- 23 Things
- 23 Research Things,
- Innovations Forums,
- LEG (Library Executive Group) Briefings,
- Library Staff Conversations,
- Lync & videoconference sessions, and
- ACU Library StaffShare.

Unlearnings: Learning by Unlearning

Arranged by the key milestones we refer to as unlearnings, outlined below we discuss our contribution to the transformation of our workplace learning environment during 2011-2016. These unlearnings were learnt during the course of facilitating an evolving range of CPDWL initiatives and opportunities. Seven of our most epic fails, are candidly shared below in the hope that you will also learn from our unlearnings.

Unlearning: What's in a Name?

Some may call it learning, or training, or capacity building, or development, or professional development, or continuing professional development, or workplace learning, or lifelong learning, or continuing education, or staff development, or capability development. We call it continuing professional development and workplace learning (CPDWL). But what's in a name? Do we need one word? We have learnt not to offend and accept all permutations. There is no one way of saying this.

Unlearning: Winners never Quit

CPDWL programming could be thought of as a collection of services to employees that requires regular collection development, maintenance and evaluation. In doing so, recording, assessing and communicating failures is as important as reporting success to avoid epic failure. This includes learning when to call it quits from an evidence-based approach. We embrace pilot and project structures that are designed with joined-up thinking in the development of mixed methods measures of

success (or failure) including statistical analysis of engagement, participation and barriers, in combination with anecdotes, informal feedback, and the annual performance review processes and planning across library units, departments and teams.

Another important dimension of CPDWL programming is the role of the self and the lived experience for participants and facilitators. As CPDWL facilitators, through reflective practice and along our meshwork, we attend to self-care, personal responsibility, emotional labour and self-monitoring. Likewise we encourage participants to commit to these activities together with time management, managing expectations, emotional intelligence, peer and supervisor support, lifelong and life wide learning plans, meaningful collaboration and unself-conscious sharing.

Unlearning: 'Don't remind me'

We use the software, systems and technology that we work with every day to roster, manage, advertise and remind staff about CPDWL programming. We have worked with staff who were based across multiple institutions, in three states and one territory spanning two time zones. Staff are employed across a range of hours to enable our libraries to be open as long as practicable but this does mean that it is difficult to find a time that suits all. CPDWL activities are noted in a calendar using LibCal (SpringShare) software, and advertised in our internal SharePoint blog. Staff register interest online using the LibCal registration process which generates a MS Outlook calendar reminder for the staff member. This all occurs in the meshwork of individual, campus, academic, and teaching commitments, as well as desk shift,

meal, and peak times. Most CPDWL activities are also recorded on Echo360 or MS Lync and links to recordings made available via blog posts for those unable to attend.

Unlearning: Be your own Hero

Learning to share our enthusiasm for workplace learning experiences with colleagues who will champion our programs has taken the pressure off us to be our own heroes. The 23 Things and 23 Research Things programs especially encourage play and experimentation. In turn this led to increased confidence and an openness to explore further new technologies and tools.

“Participating in 23 things was one of the motivating factors in my decision to go back to formal tertiary study. It helped me realize how much I enjoy learning and that this enjoyment is so central to the learning” [23 Things participant].

We also encourage staff to share their expertise and knowledge through *SharingWork*, *SharingKnowledge* and *SharingExperience* sessions. Experts share their content and learnings with their enthusiasm.

“ ... Feel more confident when I see students using technologies that I can engage...I am now more aware of new technologies and the role in which they can play in delivering library services to patrons” [23 Things participant].

Unlearning: Stay in your own lane

Guided by our personal values for enhancing life chances, in tandem with LIS professional and institutional values, we have rejected and challenged many of the

self-imposed limitations for workplace learning opportunities facilitated by and for Library staff. The concept of 'staying in your own lane' has become discursive not prescriptive. When we have challenged ourselves to hold in tension disparate perspectives, a range of lived experiences, self-identified learning needs and the acknowledgement of our organisational culture, it has supported non-linear and asynchronous approaches to CPD/WL. Self-fulfilling prophecies and limitations we have swerved from since June 2011 by seeking to encompass a synthesis of macro and micro workplace learning, such as:

- Conference takeaways and staff learning or experience highlights.
- Training for non-library, free, social and educational technology tools: Prezi, educational apps, and information, library, and reading apps.
- Corporate library methodology: valuing the range of skills that librarians bring from previous employment.
- External guest speakers: Claire Madden, social researcher from McCrindle Research, presented a video conference on *engaging with emerging generations*; Kim Sherwin, librarian from Arup, discussed research using library stakeholder workshops and the publication *Future Libraries*; and Intersect eResearchers and Data Analysts.
- University guest speakers: specific workplace learning that had not been addressed by our HR department such as *The Church and Catholic Identity* and *Living the Mission*.
- Academic and Research staff guest speakers: presenting on their scholarly work and experience with library resources and services.

- Library Executive Group (LEG): quarterly videoconferences in which LEG discuss strategic planning, the direction for the library, introducing and reporting on major initiatives.

Unlearning: Caustic Solutions

CPDWL at its best: is usable, has a learner for every learning, a learning for every learner, saves the time of the learner and evolves (Ranganathan, 1931). CPDWL at its worst: is a caustic solution. We have learnt that an abundance of CPDWL programming can obscure and may ignore vital informal feedback from colleagues. CPDWL is at a disservice when used as a carpet to sweep problems under. As the authors have reshaped the ways in which staff could choose to engage in CPDWL, we re-examined the balance of generic and tailored training, outdated and outmoded sessions, anticipated participation and expected outcomes. ACU Library StaffShare was designed to build CPDWL programming in existing and available gaps. Such as capping learning via Lync video meetings to 50 minute blocks of time, including time for questions, to accommodate campus rosters. Examples of the range of CPDWL engagement, arranged by mode of participation, are expanded upon in table 1.

Table 1. *ACU Library StaffShare* examples of engagement.

Mode of Participation	Type of Engagement	Examples of Learning Opportunities and Experiences
Lync Video Meetings	<i>SharingSkills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primo search strategies • Equella-CAL search strategies

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Subject Guides
	<i>SharingWork</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workflow for Shelf-ready arrivals and processing • Liaising and supporting research institutes (outreach strategies)
	<i>SharingKnowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's new: Alma Updates • Understanding ERA, competitive grants, and research classifications
	<i>SharingExperience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference takeaways • Reports from state-based associations, such as CAVAL, CRIG, ALIA-ACT, ALIA-NSW Library Technicians, QULOC
Videoconference	<i>GuestShare</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eResearch Technologies • Customer Service
Face-to-Face	<i>SpaceShare</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-training and shadowing counterparts in a different library • Observing workflows and staff roles in a different department

Unlearning: Unwanted Functionality

One of the more unexpected outcomes of CPDWL has been building of a sense of community. While we did not plan for this functionality, it is definitely not unwanted. Lync and videoconference session introductions are not just about the presenter but also the audience, and present an opportunity to meet via video/computer screen, colleagues that you may never have met in person. This community building through the formation of a training community should not be underestimated. Many staff are working within a meshwork of dispersed groups and work cultures.

“I think it's a fantastic way to upskill staff, that don't necessarily get to use these things normally during their job. It also has the benefit of unifying staff, by having people from different areas and different levels all doing the same program, and thinking, writing, collaborating, communicating with each other. Appreciate all the effort you put into it and think it's a very worthwhile endeavour! long live the 23+ things @ ACU ;)” [23 Things participant].

Conclusions

In this paper, we have discussed how a transformation of our learning environment was achieved over five years and the key milestones we refer to as unlearnings.

These unlearnings were learnt during the course of facilitating a range of workplace learning initiatives, namely: 23 Things; 23 Research Things; Innovations Forums; LEG Briefings; Lync Information Sessions; Library Staff Conversations; and ACU Library StaffShare. The unlearnings were identified within our reflective practitioner meshwork, coalesced into the themes of: What's in a Name?, Winners never Quit;

Be your own Hero; Stay in your own lane; Caustic Solutions; Digital Tragedy; and Unwanted Functionality.

Resulting from an evolving library workplace learning environment, colleagues have reported increased confidence in their use and application of emerging technologies for personal and professional purposes, motivation to return to formal tertiary study, benefits of multiple modes of mentoring, skills refresher opportunities, and the unifying affect of and effect on library staff as they up-skill and multi-skill together. Learning from our unlearnings, the authors advocate for collective and collaborative reflective practice, and a reflective, transformative, bottom-up problem-solving approach to CPDWL in the VUCA library context. Taking risks across our meshwork to learn from epic and understated failures we believe that this interconnected and interdependent approach has supported our colleagues' life chances as they have evolved as change-ready library and information professionals.

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