The evolving library profession and education driving social justice: a perspective from the Global South

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The evolving library profession and education driving social justice

Points of discussion

➢ Teaching and learning and research continuum
➢ LIS department (DKIS) and the Library
➢ Social justice and quality education
➢ Academic library within a changing higher education paradigm
➢ Evolution for relevance
➢ Repositioning of the librarian
➢ Evolution of library and information services
➢ The evolved, repositioned library and information profession
➢ Evolution of services at UCT
   o Research landscape analysis
   o Library as a publisher

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The teaching and learning and research continuum

- Distinction between teaching and learning and research is artificial

- Teaching and learning associated with support for undergraduate and research support for postgraduate students and researchers

- For teaching and learning - libraries provide a conducive place to study, a collection to support learning and assistance in engaging in research

- Research support – libraries provide support for very first assignment to in-depth support for PhD studies and beyond

- Propose that there is no distinction between teaching and learning and research support

- This assertion must be applied to address the inequalities of colonialism and apartheid

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## The LIS department (DKIS) and the Library

- It is important to understand the relationship between the library and information schools/programmes and the library

- UCT - in the unique position of the school (DKIS) being physically located within the library - symbiotic relationship

- Library staff contribute to curriculum enrichment and DKIS provides formal and informal training

- Library staff register for the entry level professional postgraduate programme and many continue up to PhD studies

- Masters specialization and PhDs investigate new trends

- Library holds sessions where new learnings in terms of these new services are shared - LIS faculty staff also attend

The LIS department (DKIS) and the Library

- Work Integrated Learning programme - students spend a prescribed number of hours in the library experiencing the library as a place of work

- DKIS delivers lectures to the staff to understand concepts and the evolution of practice

- Concept documents underpinning new services are debated with the department before adoption

- Role and responsibilities of LIS studies and library practice contribute to the growth and development of library practice

- Enrichment - **school benefits** from the experimenting taking place in the library, curriculum enhancement and the enrichment and the **library benefits** from the theory and pedagogy shared by the school

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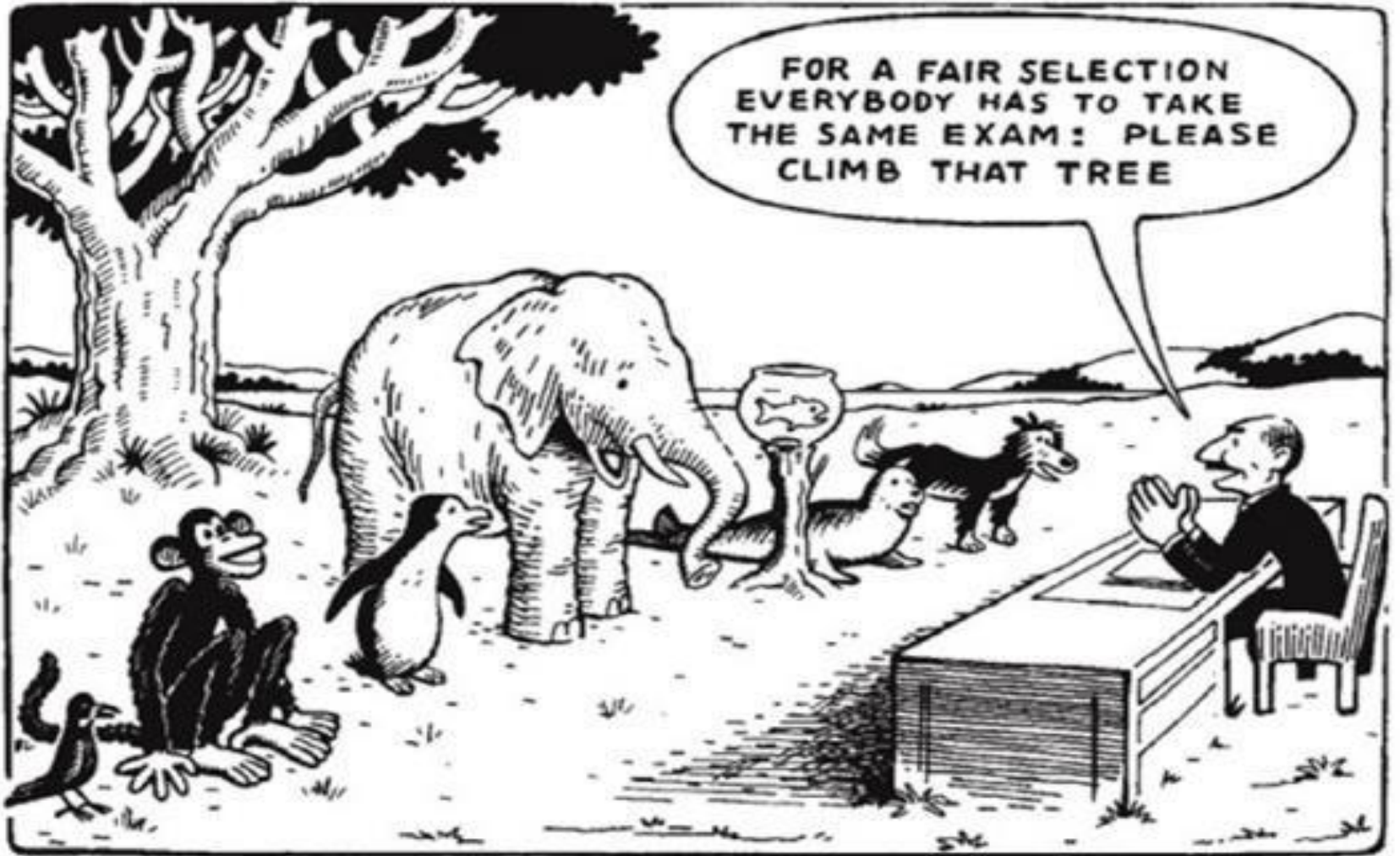
**Higher education policy institute**

Social justice and quality education

- John Rawls posits that social justice promotes the protection of equal access to liberties, rights, and opportunities, as well as takes care of the least advantaged members of society

- Colonization and apartheid have caused extreme inequality and deprivation

- By embracing social justice practices and transformation, SA is confronting structures that perpetuate inequality and injustice, and promotes inclusivity

- Social justice advanced the redistribution of resources to improve the situation of the disadvantaged and to promote inclusivity.

Social justice and quality education

Equality doesn't mean Equity
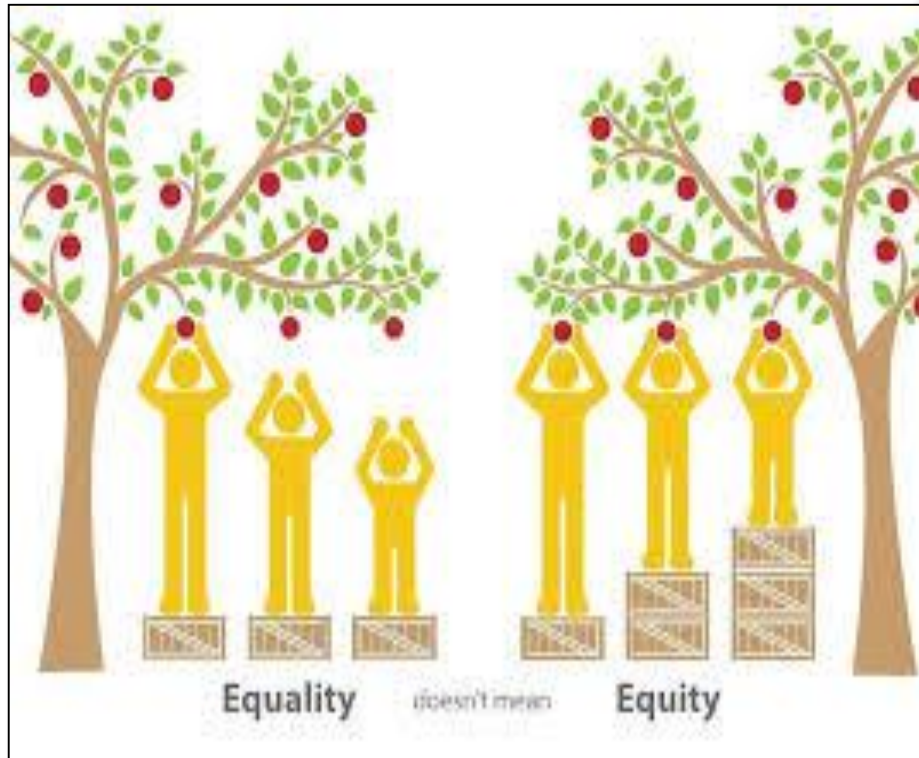
- In post-apartheid South Africa, 'social justice' entered the dictionary of higher education scholarship

- Social justice - addresses the inherited inequities from colonial and apartheid times – both, in terms of access to and success in higher education and for the inclusion of the marginalized

- Social justice will usher in equity resulting in equitable opportunities and will facilitate the participation of new African voices in the research landscape

Social justice and quality education

- Pendlebury and Enslin (2004) assert that one of the emerging interpretations of social justice in the South African context is its association with inclusive education

- Socially just education system entails the celebration and valuing of diversity, accommodation and tolerance of all learners, creation of equal opportunities and the promotion of the capabilities of all learners

- Social justice agenda of higher education institutions focuses on equity, redress and social responsiveness, as well as democratic and inclusive education

- How to embed social justice principles to support an evolving library and information profession to contribute justice education by providing reconstructed, revitalized and relevant services

Social justice and quality education

- 'Ubuntu' means advancing communal justice *en route* to promoting an egalitarian society

- Ubuntu - '*you are who you are because of your interaction with the community around you, if the community thrives then you will thrive*'

- One of the founding principles of Ubuntu is the embracement of human diversity, dignity and democracy. This notion of communal justice promotes an egalitarian society – it is endorsed in the Constitution of the RSA

- African academic libraries have an inherent commitment to ensuring that education is inclusive and equitable

- Ubuntu and social justice are parallels that ultimately advocate for an egalitarian society, for equity and inclusivity

Academic library within a changing higher education paradigm

- Growth of interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning and research, the pedagogical shift of education from domesticator to liberator (Raju and Schoombee 2014), the 'massification' and 'universification' or globalisation of higher education has driven institutions of higher learning to realign their new research production profile - and that would include research production at the undergraduate level

- Technological developments have added a new dimension to academic librarianship

- Enhanced potential to becoming noteworthy partners or collaborators in the evolving teaching and learning and research processes of the sector

- Cooke et. al (2011) - the increasing ubiquity of electronic resources has extended the library beyond its four walls

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Academic library within a changing higher education paradigm

- Academic libraries, in the main, have been very receptive to change

- Academic libraries are oil tankers - libraries readily accept that a turn needs to be made but the turn is slow and prolonged

- Given the trends in higher education, academic libraries transforming their services to remain relevant through becoming partners to principal stakeholders in contributing to the University's teaching and learning and research agenda

- *It will be of interest to the library and information science academics who may want to re-examine their curricula for the incorporation of new trends*

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Evolution for relevance

- Academic libraries focused their attention on delivering a service centred around subject specialization

- RLUK report (2012) - subject librarians have supported the needs of researchers through traditional services revolving around information discovery and management, collection development and information literacy training

- Change in behaviour of researchers suggest librarians play a much greater role in the research process

- Johnson (2016) found that it was **not possible** to have a librarian specifically qualified in each of the subjects areas

- Found that in-depth knowledge of the subject was not required as librarians picked up sufficient basic knowledge of a subject to guide users

- **Concerns** - librarians were working on developing their subject knowledge base at the expense of continually growing their library-discipline skills

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Evolution for relevance

- Librarians becoming redundant as they were not in a position to provide the high-end services that came with unique library-discipline skills (Johnson 2016)

- When recruiting - default position is to recruit staff who had the required library and information qualification

- RLUK reports: *the researchers have the subject knowledge – the librarians work with them to find the best database to search and how to construct a search strategy, then how to manage the results and search histories* (RLUK 2012)

- Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary research exposes the limitations of subject-bound librarianship

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Evolution for relevance

- Librarian is not a subject specialist nor has in-depth knowledge of the new services and this does not engender the confidence of the research community

- Proposed that the **librarian becomes the super expert** to deliver on new roles and responsibilities in the new library-researcher partnership

- As a super expert, the librarian **provides intelligence to the researcher** to enhance the research process and its outputs

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Repositioning of the librarian

Research lifecycle

Plan → Create → Process → Analyze → Preserve → Share → Reuse

- Tise, Raju and Adam (2015) "reactive service provider to a proactive partner in the research process" has motivated academic librarians to make the paradigm shift

- Librarians are active contributors in knowledge creation using their specialized knowledge and skills

- Libraries to map their services against the research life cycle

- Librarian has moved away from traditional reactive library services to proactive collaborative/partnership services

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Repositioning of the librarian

- Giesecke (2011) posits that "by creating meaning [essentially being in their space] for users and developing relationships, librarians become an essential part of the community. In this changing paradigm, librarians are harnessing their learning and knowledge to *loosen their attachment to buildings and collections* and develop themselves as collaborators in ways external to the physical space"

- Continuous engagement with the LIS program will reinforce the understanding of pedagogy and its application to practice – this enrichment will consolidate the librarian's partnership role with the Faculty

- Johnson (2016) – concerns that librarians were working on developing their subject knowledge base *at the expense of continually growing their library-discipline skills*

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Repositioning of the librarian

- Lack of growth in library-discipline skills was deemed to be making librarians redundant – they to **NOT** provide the high-end services that came with unique library-discipline skills (Johnson 2016)

- Librarians skilled in the deep knowledge of librarianship will deliver on new roles and responsibilities

- "*…the researchers have the subject knowledge – the librarians work with them to find the best database to search and how to construct a search strategy, then how to manage the results and search histories*" (RLUK 2012)

- Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary research exposes the limitations of subject-bound librarianship

- Librarians become **super experts** and **provide intelligence** to the researcher

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Evolution of library and information services

- Transformation of services necessitates academic libraries having flexible and robust structures that deliver transformed or new services

- University of Arizona Libraries, University of South Australia, University of Guelph and UCT have abandoned its subject-based model in favour of functional expertise

- The move away from subject librarianship, which has been the bastion of South African academic librarianship, is significant

- Move from subject librarianship to functional librarianship created opportunity to restructure

- Restructured library can now offer new and/or radically expanded services consolidating the library's role as a collaborator in the teaching and learning, and research agendas of a higher education institution

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The evolved, repositioned library and information profession

- New/enhanced research support services include metrics analysis, research data management, digital preservation and curation, open access, and library publishing

- Raju, Raju and Johnson, (2016) - there is a conscious effort in making 'new' services available to their research communities – an exemplar is the introduction of evidence-based medicine

- Collaboration between medical educators and librarians – resulting in enriched systematic reviews

- Librarians are being acknowledged as co-authors of these systematic reviews as they actively contribute to the research output (Delaney and Bates 2015)

Evolution of services at UCT

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Evolution of services at UCT
Research landscape analysis (RLA)

- Two services that demonstrate how the evolution of services addresses social justice imperatives while delivering on core activities of the academy

- **Research landscape analysis is defined as:**
  The critical interrogation of the world's published legacy and current research output for the identification of niche research clusters, gaps or voids in research areas and/or topics for further research

- <u>Purpose of the service</u> is to provide support to masters and PhD students to identify gaps in the research landscape

- <u>Objective of the service</u> is to identify possible sources of funding, identification of experts in the field of study for possible co-supervision or consulting supervision

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Evolution of services at UCT
RLA: Wider imperatives

- South African National Development Plan 2030, the UN SDGs and a South African Green Paper on post-school education and training underpinned the conceptualization of this service

- SDG 4 calls for an "…inclusive and equitable quality education and promot[ion of] lifelong learning opportunities for all"

- Green Paper states that "PhD numbers are far too low to meet the country's need for research and innovation"

- NDP 2030 calls for the increase in the number of PhD students from one thousand four hundred and twenty (1420) in 2010 to 5 000 a per year by 2030

- Two of many objectives:
  - improvement in quality and quantity of research
  - to grow the number of black masters and PhD graduates

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Evolution of services at UCT
RLA: the service

- Currently, very little support for prospective PhD students until the research proposal is accepted

- Library support during this processes is also very limited

- Subscription to expensive research performance management (RPM) tools need justification – hence attempts to maximise return on investment for these very expensive RPM

- These tools provide citation data, global metrics, and multidimensional profiles on leading research institutions

- Also have the capacity to identify funding agencies, potential collaboration based on analysis of institutional and individual research performance

- RLA is a service that it meant to exploit the capacity of these tools for the benefit of prospective PhD students and researchers

Evolution of services at UCT
RLA: the service

- Students from previously **disadvantaged institutions** have to compete with students from previously **advantaged institutions**

- The service provides some equity from the outset through assistance with the identification of a research area - support in identifying sources of funding

- Scenario: A prospective PhD student walks into the library seeking the assistance of the librarian:
  - identify voids in the landscape for prospective interrogation as a PhD area of research
  - identify experts in the field should such expertise not reside at the institution
  - to identify consulting external supervisors
  - Identify possible sources of funding

- Schoombee and Du Plessis (2013) tools used to assist "research students to identify research topics based on alignment with institutional research strengths"

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Evolution of services at UCT
RLA: the service

- Librarians need to have in-depth knowledge of these tools

- Exploitation of the capacity of these expensive tools' research performance management is not restricted to librarians at South African institutions

- Librarians across the globe have an obligation to maximize use of these tools at their institutions, as there is growing pressure on library subscription budgets

- South African institutions - the provision of a research landscape service will contribute to achieving the PhD graduation goal of the National Development Plan.

- Role of librarian has changed from provision of resources to the provision of intelligence for the students to exploit in the roll-out of their masters and PhD studies

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Library as a publisher
Social justice and inclusivity through library publishing

- Ubuntu 'agended' library publishing service

- Some academic institutions are delivering diamond open access publishing

- Offering service without any skills training

- Service responds to the social responsiveness and transformation agendas of South African higher education institutions and delivers on, *inter alia*, on decolonized African scholarship

- Promotes the principles of inclusivity, ensuring that African research output is included in the dissemination process

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Library as a publisher
Librarians' contribution to Ubuntu and social justice

- Academic libraries have done exceptionally well in creating and managing open access repositories to ensure that scholarly content is discoverable and accessible
- Now delivering a new service – a 'library as publisher' service
- Especially relevant to global south which is in need of material that is 'local' and addresses 'local' imperatives
- Local monographs do not generate large enough profits and is not economically viable
- Librarians have been investigating, testing and offering open monograph publishing services
- Provision of '**social justice-Ubuntu**' driven service

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Library as a publisher

Librarians' contribution to Ubuntu and social justice

- No LIS program in Africa offers a curriculum and/or training to support this publishing service

- Staff currently engaging in the provision of publishing services have grown into these positions

- Challenges confronting African academic librarians - the quest for inexpensive/free monographs and the quest for decolonized content

- Library publishing services offer some relief in providing relevant collections in African academic libraries

Library as a publisher
Monographs transition to open

- Wiens (2015) conducted research and her findings highlight the predicament of a large number of students

- Average cost of first year science textbooks is approximately US$1400 per year

- Book allowance for students on a Bursary Scheme is approximately US$283

- The additional cost of textbooks $1117 per year – this is most unaffordable

- This burden forces students to make choices between food and rent over textbooks and many opt for not buying textbooks: students are dependent on under-resourced libraries or they make copies illegally to meet their textbook demands

Constitutional Law
A textbook for students

- UCT Libraries has published twelve titles in the last 40 months

- Four of twelve open textbooks (books written primarily for students and intended to be used in the lecture halls)

- Currently, UCT Library is working on a constitutional law textbook which is funded by national government

- Highly failed course in the law degree - prescribed textbook is extremely expensive and majority of the students are second or later English language speakers

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- The next phase is to do an audio recording of the book to make the book accessible to students who prefer to listen to the text before starting to read – adapting to alternative learning styles

- This book is now accessible to the visually challenged

- This textbook will be accessible to all law students in the country and to the public in general

- Through this publication UCT is addressing the transformation agenda and decolonizing of content

- These challenges are being navigated under the broader umbrella of the innate principles of open access and social justice

Thank you for this opportunity

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