Challenge the distance: the Library as highway to e-information & lifelong learning

By:
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Health Sciences Library
University of Pretoria
2004
The Faculty of Health Sciences has 4 Schools made up of 71 departments. These schools are:

- The School of Dentistry
- The School of Health Systems & Public Health
- The School of Health Care Science
- The School of Medicine

**Vision:** To maintain health standards through quality education, research and community service.

Since its inception in 1943 it has grown and is of the largest health training institutions in the country boasting a student core, under- and postgraduate, of more than 5000.

These include students being trained as:

- Doctors
- Dentists
- Dieticians
- Physiotherapists
- Nurses, etc.
**Mission**

The Faculty's mission is to be an internationally recognized faculty of health sciences acknowledged for its expertise in health-related conditions in Africa and an intellectual home for an innovation generation of health sciences students and staff.

**Objectives**

Within the declared mission of the University of Pretoria, the Faculty of Health Sciences strives to promote, within intellectual stimulating surroundings, the general health of the South African population by:

- Providing excellent patient care supporting excellent academic performance;
- Providing well-rounded, competent and caring health professionals and scientists by following innovative academic programmes that are integrated, problem orientated and outcome-based.
- Contributing significantly to the knowledge of health sciences through establishing, developing and maintaining research in a pro-active research climate;
- Improving the quality of life of the community by developing comprehensive health care programmes based on best available evidence, service development, consultancy and advocacy
- Providing continuing education programmes in the pursuit of life-long learning.
Background of SHSPH

• The School of Health Systems and Public Health was launched in 1998

• Vision - grow towards a comprehensive and high quality school of Public Health

• Steady progress - six-fold student increase on registration 6 years ago

• The School provides 19 courses at the Doctoral, Masters, and Diploma levels

• The postgraduate programme continues to attract a large number of applicants
Geographical Distribution of Service Unit Health Sciences

Health Sciences

- HMK
- SHSPH
- SPORT
- UP
- KAL
- VKL
- WTH

Distances:
- 15km
- 48km
- 9km
- 13km
- 6km
- 1km
- 120km
Situated in Building 22 at the CSIR Campus

Librarian at the SHSPH: Ms Martie van der Walt & some of the students
Background of DOHM & DOH

- Postgraduate Diploma - aimed at professionals who wish to further their careers in Occupational Medicine, Health and Safety

- Diploma in Occupational Health and Medicine is aimed at Medical Practitioners

- Primary objective is to provide a strong occupational health orientation

- Important public health principles are interwoven focusing on assessing occupational health and hygiene problems and health risks, and providing clinical expertise

- The course is offered in a modular format on a part-time basis and is usually done over 2 years, although the diploma may be completed within one year.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module code</th>
<th>Module Name</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EOH 770</td>
<td>Introduction to Occupational and Environmental Health</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HME 772</td>
<td>Epidemiology Primer</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCM 771</td>
<td>Clinical Skills in Occupational Medicine 1 - 4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<td>(Part 1 of module for medical practitioners only)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHM 770</td>
<td>Learning in Public Health</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCM 771</td>
<td>Human Resources Management and Industrial Sociology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCL 771</td>
<td>Occupational Health Law</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCM 773</td>
<td>Managing Occupational Health Services</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCM 770</td>
<td>Principles of Occupational Medicine</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(for medical practitioners only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCM 771</td>
<td>Clinical Skills in Occupational Medicine 5 - 8</td>
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<td>(Part 2 of module for medical practitioners only)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHT 770</td>
<td>Principles of Occupational Hygiene and Toxicology</td>
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**Elective Modules - Student to choose when to complete (10 credits required)**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>EHM 770</td>
<td>Basis of Environmental Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>EHM 771</td>
<td>Health Risk Assessment</td>
<td>10**</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCI 770</td>
<td>Health Systems Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCF 771</td>
<td>Financial and information management</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCS 770</td>
<td>Project management for the health sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHS 770</td>
<td>Impairment evaluation</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHS 771</td>
<td>Disability management</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>TQM 770</td>
<td>Principles of Quality Assurance</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>AOH 770</td>
<td>Research Report / Project</td>
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<td>Clinical Skills in Occupational Medicine*</td>
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<td>OCM 771 (2)</td>
<td>Clinical Skills in Occupational Medicine*</td>
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<td>Clinical Skills in Occupational Medicine*</td>
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<td>OCM 771 (6)</td>
<td>Clinical Skills in Occupational Medicine*</td>
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<td>OCM 771 (7)</td>
<td>Clinical Skills in Occupational Medicine*</td>
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<td>OCM 771 (8)</td>
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**(Total over 2 years = 5)**

|                          | Total credits for the DOMH (DipOH) | 120     |
Focus group: DOHM students
Situated all over the African continent
Distance Learning / Education

What? (Many Definitions)

“Distance learning, sometimes referred to as distributed learning, is defined most simply as instruction that occurs when the instructors and students are not located in the same place” *

“Members of the distance learning community are entitled to library services and resources equivalent to those provided for students and faculty in traditional campus settings” and further that “effective and appropriate services for distance learning communities may differ from, but must be equivalent to, those services offered on a traditional campus” *

* Tumlin MD. Serials for Distance Education Reasearch Projects: What are we missing? Serials Review 2002; 28(3): 206-212
**Why?**
- All over Africa
- Only 2/3 weeks at SHSPH for classes
- Need information constantly

**How?**
- Students information needs = Primary concern
- Proper training
- Constant contact
- Suitable infrastructure & technology
- Quality support
Where do we fit in? (Academic Information Service)

- Information provision
- Document delivery
- Communication
- Direct contact for students
- Guidelines & help
- Training
- Sources
Methodology

- Meeting with students & introduction of services
- Questionnaire
- Determine Information needs
- Determine Level of Computer Literacy
- Determine Knowledge of Library Services

Thus: * More effective Information Provision service

* Model to address Information Needs
• What do we have at our disposal?

• What do they need from us?

• How will we address these needs?
What do we have at our disposal?

• Trained Library staff to assist students
• Training programs for students
• Access to the online resources
• Online access to the Library
• Communication via telephone, fax, e-mail etc.
• Interlibrary Loans
• Document Delivery
What do they need from us?

- Information provision
- Document Delivery
- Training
- Guidelines
- Support
- Constant contact
- Assistance regarding individual Research Projects
How will we address these needs?

• Information Specialist must have constant contact with students
• Training: (during weeks of classes)
  • Basic Library Awareness (Services available etc.)
  • UPExplore (Electronic Library Catalogue)
  • Tyds@Tuks (Electronic Full Text Journals) - +/- 19 000 journals
  • Database Searching
  • Other E-sources (eg. E-books)
  • Use of Web page
  • Importance of E-mail

• Cooperation between Library & SHSPH staff
• Continuous quality support
Advantages

• Building Relationships
• Access to information for all students
• Constant communication = feedback
• 24 hour Access
• Information Specialist just a phone call or email away
• Applicable to other distance students
• Easy online access to full text journals
• Easy online access to e-books
Advantages (Continued)

• Infrastructure fit for Purpose
• Flexible & Self-paced
• Interactive Communication
• Information Specialist in collaboration with Academic Program
• Library Training enhances Computer & Information Literacy
• Same commitment as to on-campus students
• Research needs are met
Limitations

- Time Constraints
- Distance
- Technology is unreliable
- Infrastructure
- Information Literacy
- Computer Literacy
- Training
- Students have unrealistic expectations
**Future**

Through our level of service we would like to create an “addiction” to the Library.

As always, we will provide timely, well organised and relevant information.

We will be available – no matter where our user is located.

We provide an extended service to external users which has been tried, tested & which has succeeded.

This service relates well to the DOHM students and can easily be applied to their specific needs.

This will also grow an awareness of the services available after completing their studies and so, promote lifelong learning.
Conclusion

We provide access to a Dynamic Universe of Health Information. In being an Information Highway we challenge geography and distance daily.

Through our endeavour we again saw the emphasis on the Information Specialist. This is also the primary concern for the students. It strengthens the idea of the Library & Information Specialist as the facilitator & “highway” to their information needs. It is essential that our distance-related services narrow & eventually bridge the gap for the students.

Creating & nurturing the awareness of our services will result in the Library playing a key role in lifelong learning.

Our distance students need all the help they can get. In applying all the ideas presented, we hope to meet & exceed the expectations that we have created.