

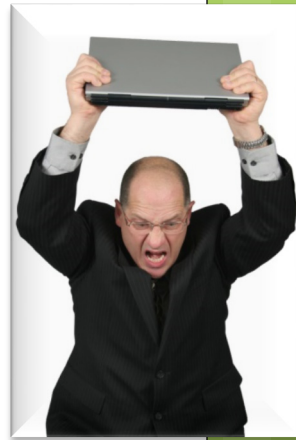
A framework to promote workplace information literacy in academic settings: Central University of Technology, Free State as a case study

- Presented by Jeannet Makasi Molopyane
- Student No: 27400019
- Degree: MIS



Brief background

- The study is motivated by workplace skills challenges, especially the need for workplace information literacy.
- The need for organisations to maintain an economic competitive advantage.
- The literature recommendations i.e. the work of Bruce (1994), Fourie (2008), Macoustra (2003), O'Sullivan (2002) etc.



Research question

- What should a framework to promote workplace information literacy entail?



Literature review: sectorial approach

- Private sector's attempt to implement workplace information literacy.
- Public sector' attempt.
- Higher education institution attempts.



The literature review attempts, advice and research cases

- Advisory information on how to implement workplace information literacy.
- Attempts that were done to implement workplace information literacy.
- Research case studies that were conducted related to workplace information literacy.

Research method

- Mixed method research was used for data collection.
- This implies that a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was used.
- Questionnaires and interviews were used in the same study.

Sampling and data collection

- A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed.
- Out of 200, 136 were returned.
- Only 121 were completed.
- That presented the response rate at 60.5%.



Sampling and data collection continued

- Twenty interview participants took part in the interviews.
- The interviewees were from executive management, senior management and managers of the university.
- The selection was based on decision making influence.
- Members of four university committees were interviewed as well.

Qualitative data analysis

- **The questionnaire comprised of:**
 - ✓ Demographic data.
 - ✓ Workplace information literacy skills needs.
 - ✓ Workplace information literacy as part of the corporate strategic plan.
 - ✓ Open-ended questions.

Level of education

	Frequency N=121	%
Grade 12 Certificate	9	7.4
Diploma	17	14.1
Bachelors' degree	27	22.3
Honours	7	5.8
Masters	24	19.8
PhD	37	30.6
Total	121	100

Job level

Level	Frequency N=119	%
Senior management	23	19.3
Middle management	19	16
Junior level	77	64.7
Total	119	100

Perceptions of skills to locate, analyse, and assess the value of information accessed

	Frequency N=112	%
Strongly agree	28	25
Agree	76	67.9
Disagree	5	4.4
Strongly disagree	3	2.7
Total	112	100

Information need frequency

	Frequency N= 121	%
Daily	95	78.5
Weekly	16	13.2
Monthly	10	8.3
Total	121	100

Information need from bachelor's to PHD degrees levels only

Frequency of information need N=95	Bachelor's degree	Honours degree	Master's degree	Doctoral degree	Total
Daily	23	16	27	8	74
Weekly	1	3	2	5	11
Monthly	4	3	2	1	10
Total:	28	22	31	14	95

Workplace information literacy importance for organisations

Importance of workplace information literacy skills for organisations	Frequency N=119	%
Strongly agree	82	68.9
Agree	32	26.9
Disagree	3	2.5
Strongly disagree	2	1.7
Total	119	100

Workplace information literacy as part of the corporate strategy

Part of corporate strategy	Frequency N=119	%
Strongly agree	76	63.9
Agree	38	31.9
Disagree	2	1.7
Strongly disagree	3	2.5
Total	119	100

Workplace information literacy as enforced or optional

	Frequency N=120	%
Enforced	66	55
Optional	54	45
Total	120	100

Workplace information literacy as part of job descriptions

Part of job descriptions	Frequency N=119	%
Strongly agree	27	22.7
Agree	58	48.7
Disagree	5	4.2
Strongly disagree	29	24.4
Total	119	100

Who should be trained?

	Frequency N=109	%
Individuals	14	12.8
Everybody employee / All personnel / All staff	62	56.9
Academic staff	33	30.3
Total	109	100

Who should take responsibility for workplace information literacy?

Department	N=107	%
Library	62	57.9
HR and Library	6	5.6
Library and Research	2	1.9
Training and Development	10	9.3
Library and Training and Development	4	3.7
ICT	8	7.5
HR	6	5.6
E-learning	2	1.9
Education	2	1.9
Institutional Planning	2	1.9
Humanities	1	0.9
Those that need it	2	1.9
Total:	107	100

Qualitative data analysis

- Perceptions on the importance of workplace information literacy.
- Role of information in developing expert skills in fields of speciality.
- Importance of training addressing workplace information literacy.
- Whether workplace information literacy should be a prerequisite for employment at the CUT.
- Skills to be addressed in a workplace information literacy training programme.
- Recommendations on the nature of workplace information literacy training.
- Whether workplace information literacy skills should become part of CUT's corporate plan, and if so, which recommendations can be offered.
- Responsibility for workplace information literacy training.
- Challenges foreseen for workplace information literacy training at CUT.
- Suggestions for awareness initiatives to ensure the implementation of workplace information literacy training.
- Suggestions for monitoring the application of workplace information literacy.
- Opinion on the role the library should play in promoting workplace information literacy.
- Roles specific committees should play in ensuring that workplace information literacy becomes an institutional practice (only put to committee members with regard to their specific committee).

Perceptions on the importance of workplace information literacy

- **P20** “Well I eh workplace information literacy within a higher education institution I think enables someone to 1 Ja you know more about your area of expertise, it also helps in imparting information to other people, eh also helps in uh sharpening your research skills, and it also helps in you know.”
- **P15** “Eh I think it actually eh information literacy, workplace information literacy actually helps to make people actually aware about what’s going on particularly at the workplace Ja because eh that’s people will know about that information, it also help them know about their rights at the workplace eh things like the equity policy and that kind of thing that affect them Ja, it would quite be useful.”

The role of information in developing expert skill

- **P1** “I think the role information plays is an enabler, it enables you to deliver what is expected of you, is more like you must know the embedded knowledge about the subject matter.”
- **P6** “Information is critical, we need to know about new developments so that when we teach students it must be about what is currently happening, otherwise we will feed them with out-dated information.”
- **P9** “A very important role especially my field, maybe I can just give you some background information my field of expertise is labour so what we work with is legislation, case law and daily developments in the labour market so information plays a very important role and specifically to be updated on a daily basis because although we have legislation that can remain unchanged for quite a while specifically in law and labour law we call it labour law can set precedence which supersedes all legislation. So if you are not updated on that change of information what can happen is you will be in a position where you either advice your employer incorrectly or you deal with a case incorrectly and you might prejudice a client or an employee or employer in this instance so it is very important.”

Importance of training in workplace information literacy

- **P1** “It will help people to know the importance of really their fields... It will build up confidence in the workers.”
- **P5** “Employees will be developed in their area so as to render quality services.”
- **P10** “Training play a major role in order for us to be effective and efficient as employees.”
- **P7** “Managers will be empowered to manage effectively.”

Workplace information literacy as prerequisite for employment at the Central University of Technology, Free State

- **P10** “Absolutely because how are you going to be effective I mean you might be rendered inefficient not probably because you are lazy or something just because you are not well informed in as far as your work environment is concerned.”
- **P17** “Definitely uh definitely because as you know that often staff need to attend conferences, workshops and stuff, as a representative of either a unit or department so it’s important that people are equipped or trained on how to use the information that they acquire so I would say that that should be a prerequisite.”

Workplace information literacy not as prerequisite for employment

- **P2** “I don’t think a prerequisite I think maybe after a person has started.”
- **P4** “I should say it should be a requisite but a possibility is that not to make it a prerequisite before you are employed but that you could be trained in your workplace to access information so not necessarily a prerequisite.”
- **P13** “Well I don’t know, I don’t think it can be a prerequisite because is not a common thing, we always make something a prerequisite when it is common...to have workplace information literacy is helpful because it will make things easier.”

Workplace information literacy inclusion into the staff induction programme

- training in workplace information literacy. The orientation and induction of new staff members could play a significant role in addressing the challenge of workplace information literacy.
- Upon appointment, new recruits should be put through information literacy training so as to empower them to perform their tasks with efficiency and effectiveness.
- After this, people could just be updated through workshops to upgrade their knowledge.

Committees' role

- This includes influencing and advising faculties, ensuring that feedback reports reach faculties (and other sections) and that workplace information literacy is part of the agenda of institutional meetings.
- The influence of committees could be at council and management levels.
- “the training of workplace information literacy is important so that it can be implemented from the top then cascaded towards the lower levels with ease as it will become an official organisation practice.”

Workplace information literacy framework

CUT managerial and institutional buy-in

Needs analysis

Situational analysis

Strategic plan

Alignment with the university's corporate strategy and formulation of a workplace information literacy policy

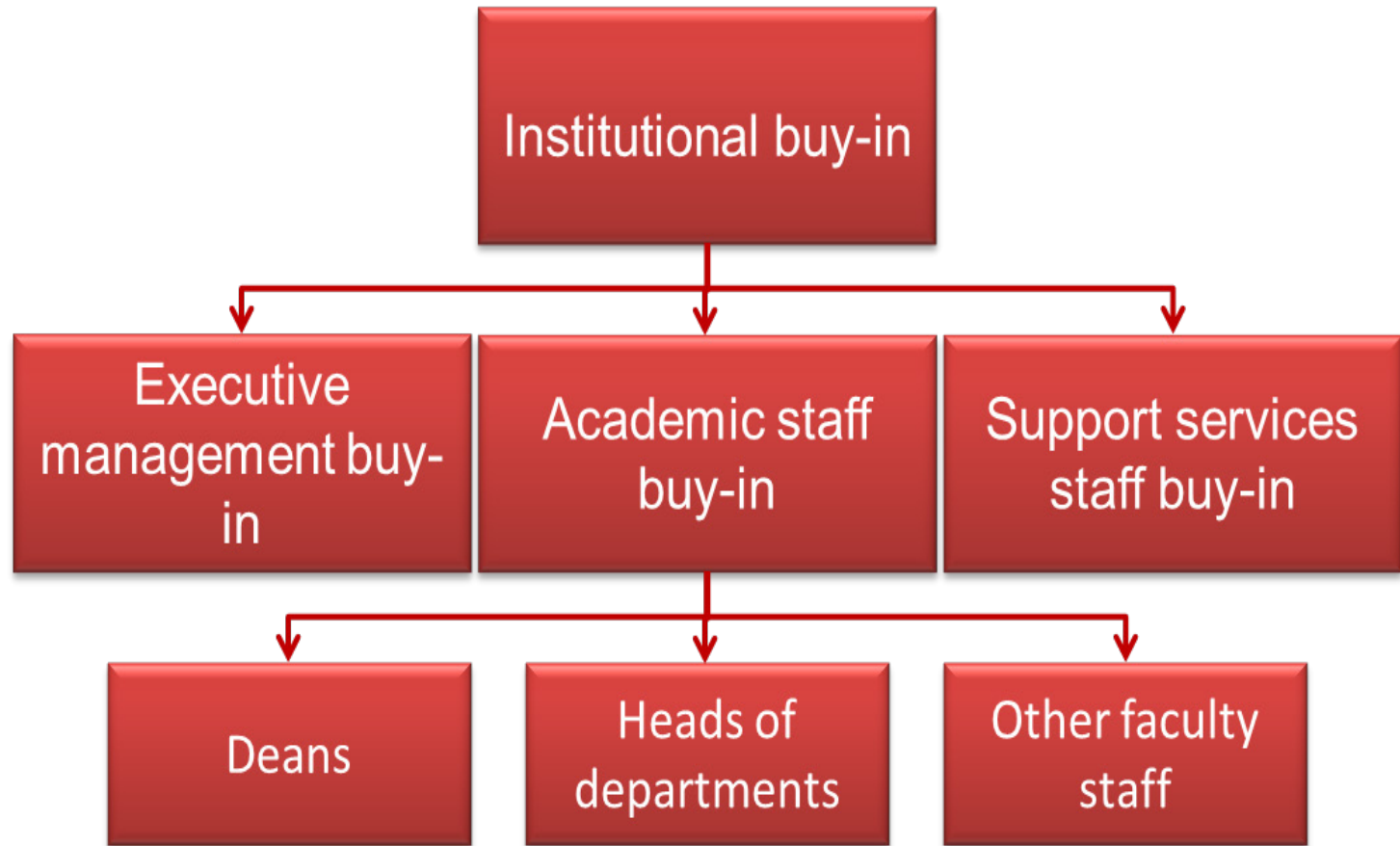
Programme design and development

Programme administration

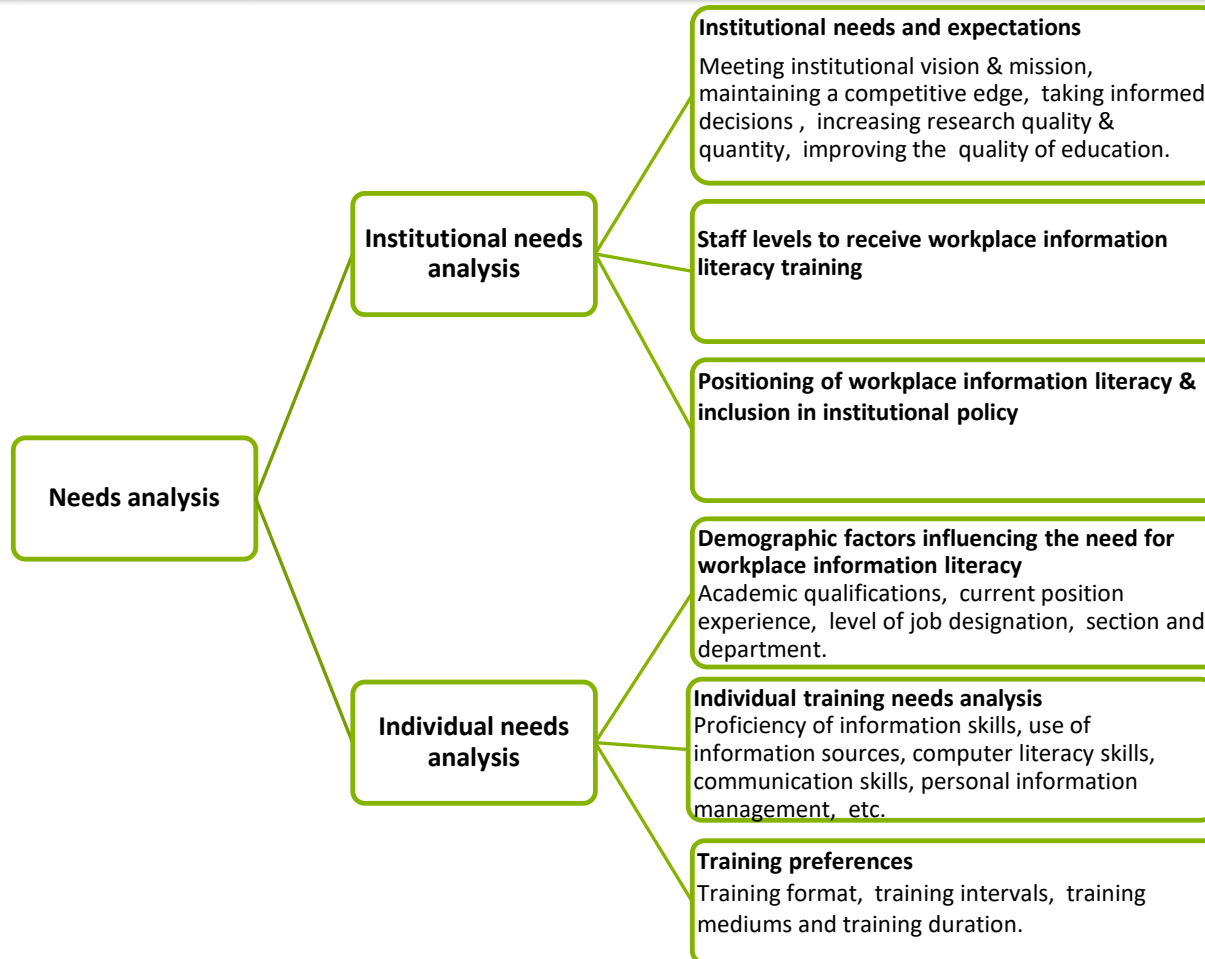
Awareness raising and marketing

On-going monitoring and evaluation

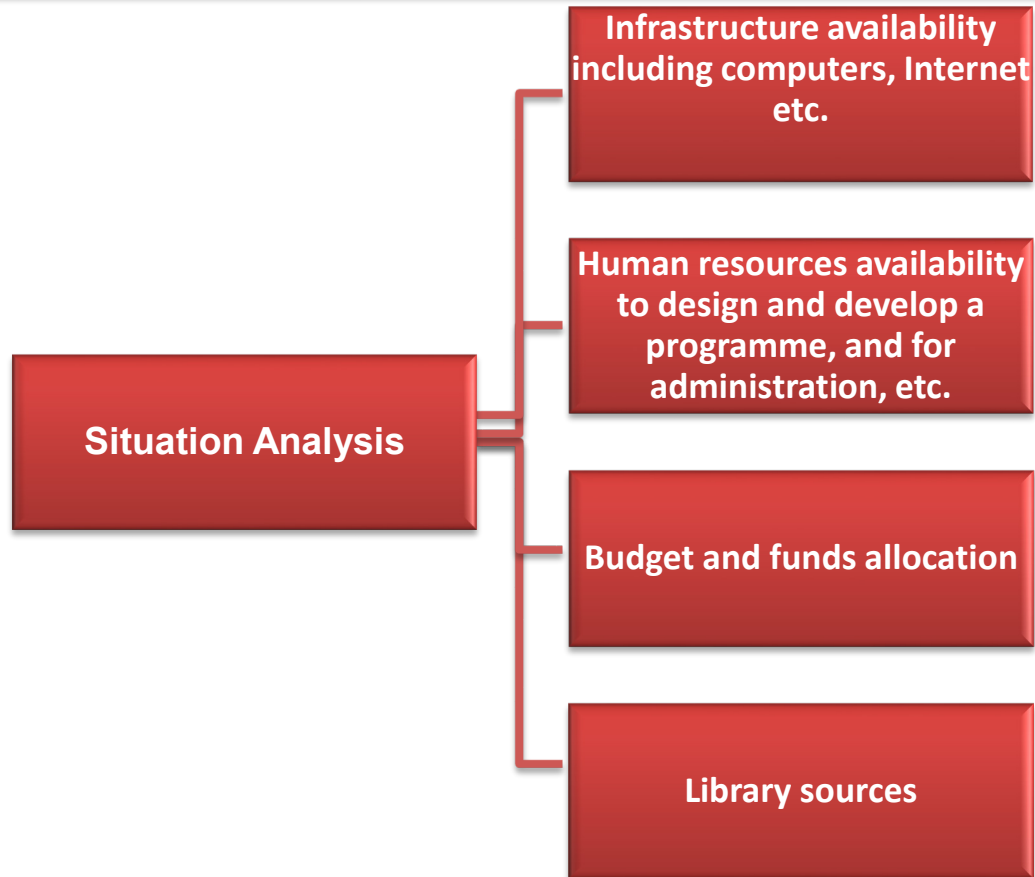
Buy-in



Needs analysis



Situation analysis



Programme design and development



Programme administration



Ongoing programme monitoring and evaluation

- Supervisors to come up with projects and assess how the projects are dealt with and completed when information literacy tools are utilised.
- Reports on how many people have attended.
- Annual reviews and audits of training offered and attended.
- Training attendance register.
- Availing short questionnaires/surveys after the training to evaluate the programme.

Recommendations for practice

- Extension of needs analysis at Central University of Technology, Free State on individual level to include a wider spectrum of staff levels.
- Pilot project at Central University of Technology, Free State to determine the effectiveness of workplace information literacy and identify areas of improvement.
- Assessment of pilot project involving all stakeholders, management, academic staff and support service staff.
- Determining a curriculum with outcomes and content according to the needs identified at Central University of Technology, Free State.
- Alignment of a workplace information literacy with regard to the needs of academic information literacy for under-graduates.
- Promotion of the framework to other workplace sectors.

Recommendations for further research

- Studies are conducted at other tertiary institutions in the area of workplace information literacy.
- Comparative studies between similar institutions are conducted.
- Workplace information literacy as part of job descriptions and means for assessment where further needs can be investigated.
- Training of librarians for workplace information literacy related jobs.
- Suitability of task-based information behaviour as frameworks for studies on workplace information literacy are investigated.



A framework for workplace information literacy in academic contexts: Central University of Technology, Free State (South Africa) as case study

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Authors Jeannet Molopyane, Ina Fourie

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Description Purpose

– The purpose of this paper is to suggest a framework for workplace information literacy based on a case study at the Central University of Technology (CUT), Free State (South Africa).

Design/methodology/approach

– The framework is based on a literature survey covering case studies from the private, public and academic sector and a case study conducted at the CUT, Free State (South Africa). A mixed methods approach was followed using questionnaires, individual interviews and focus group interviews. Descriptive statistics and qualitative data were collected.

Findings

– The data analysis reveals a need as well as support for workplace information literacy. It addresses institutional buy-in, the need for alignment to the institutional strategy, inclusion of workplace information literacy in job descriptions, whether workplace ...

Total citations Cited by 8



In conclusion

