

Let me show you how it's done: information literacy practices of technical service librarians

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Introduction



The world is so fast that there are days when the person who says it can't be done is interrupted by the person who is doing it — Anonymous

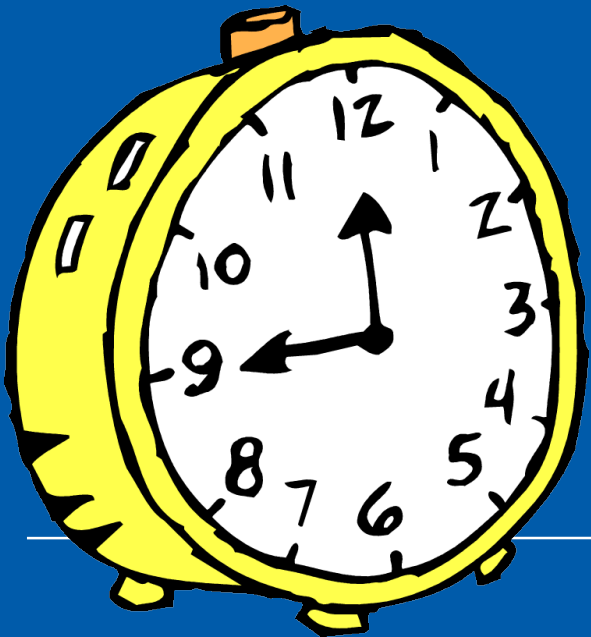


“... effective information or knowledge management systems depend on a workforce able to operationalize the cognitive and functional skills of information literacy, to solve workplace problems independently, and to develop new strategic knowledge. Arguably, in an information driven economy, employees who are able to develop information pathways and to create new corporate knowledge provide the strategic difference between a highly successful business and those that remain mediocre”, (Lloyd, 2003:88).



Agenda

- Part 1 – A theoretical perspective:
 - Information literacy in the workplace context
 - Proposed framework
- Part 2 – A practical perspective:
 - Case study:
 - Application of the framework
 - Lessons learned
 - The way forward





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Part 1:

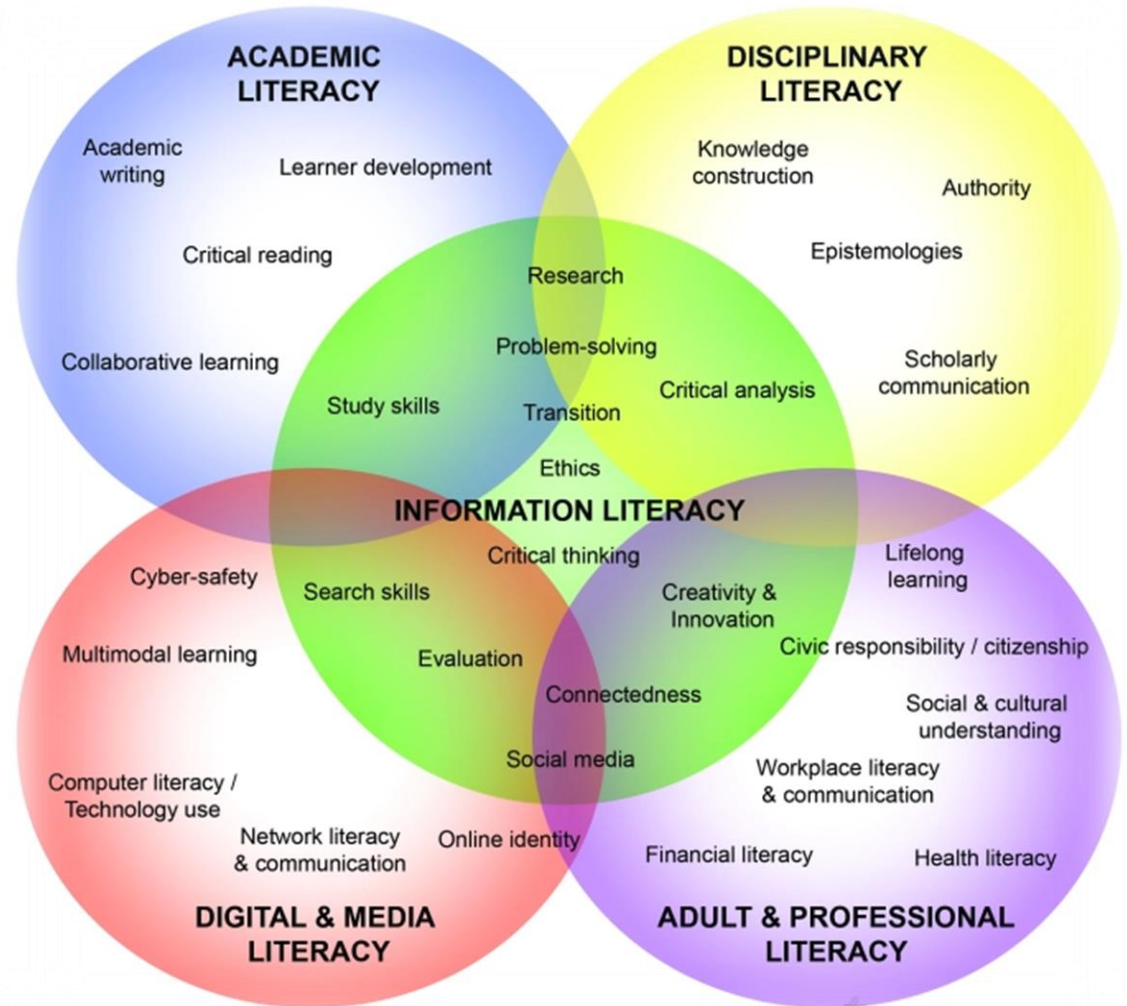
What does the literature indicate?

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Information literacy in the educational and library context

Operational skill:

“... a set of abilities requiring individuals to 'recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information“, (ALA, 2000).



Information in the workplace

People need to be able to deal with information related challenges and tools on a daily base

- For example:
 - Information literacy (be able to identify and use relevant information resources to be able to do his or her work effectively).
 - Digital and media literacy (to be able to integrate specific software, network environments, collaboration tools, learning tools and multiple content formats).

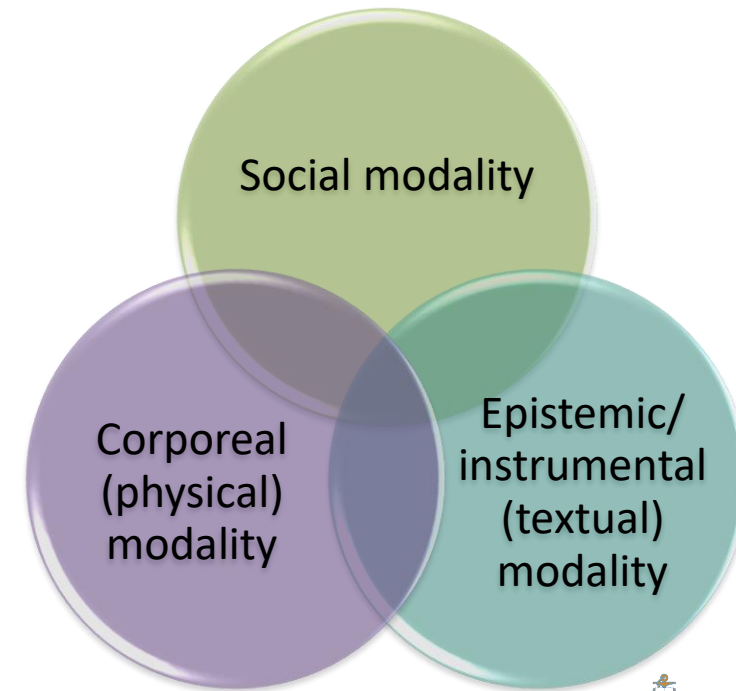


Information literacy in the workplace

A way of knowing (meta – view)

“... a practice that is enacted in a **social setting**. It is composed of a suite of **activities and skills** that reference **structured and embodied knowledges** and **ways of knowing relevant to the context**. Information literacy is thus a **way of knowing**”,
(Lloyd, 2017:94).

A landscape approach to information literacy:
Landscapes and modalities (Lloyd, 2011)



Knowledge management



“... the implicit knowledge individuals have gained through practice and experience that enables them to be effective in doing their work” (Choo, 2016:82).

“... knowledge that has been codified formally using a system of symbols or made tangible as physical artifacts and can therefore be easily communicated or shared” (Choo, 2016:83).



Knowledge management

7 Principles of Knowledge Management (Snowden et al., 2016)

1. Knowledge can only be volunteered: it cannot be conscripted.
2. We always know more than we can say, and we will always say more than we can write down. The process of taking things from our heads, to our mouths (speaking it) or to our hands (writing it down) involves loss of content and context.
3. The way we know things is not the way we report we know things.
4. We only know what we know when we need to know it. Human knowledge is deeply contextual and requires stimulus for recall.
5. Tolerated failure imprints learning better than success.
6. In the context of real need few people will withhold their knowledge. A genuine request for help is not often refused unless there is literally no time or a previous history of distrust.
7. Everything is fragmented. We evolved to handle unstructured fragmented fine granularity information objects, not highly structured documents.

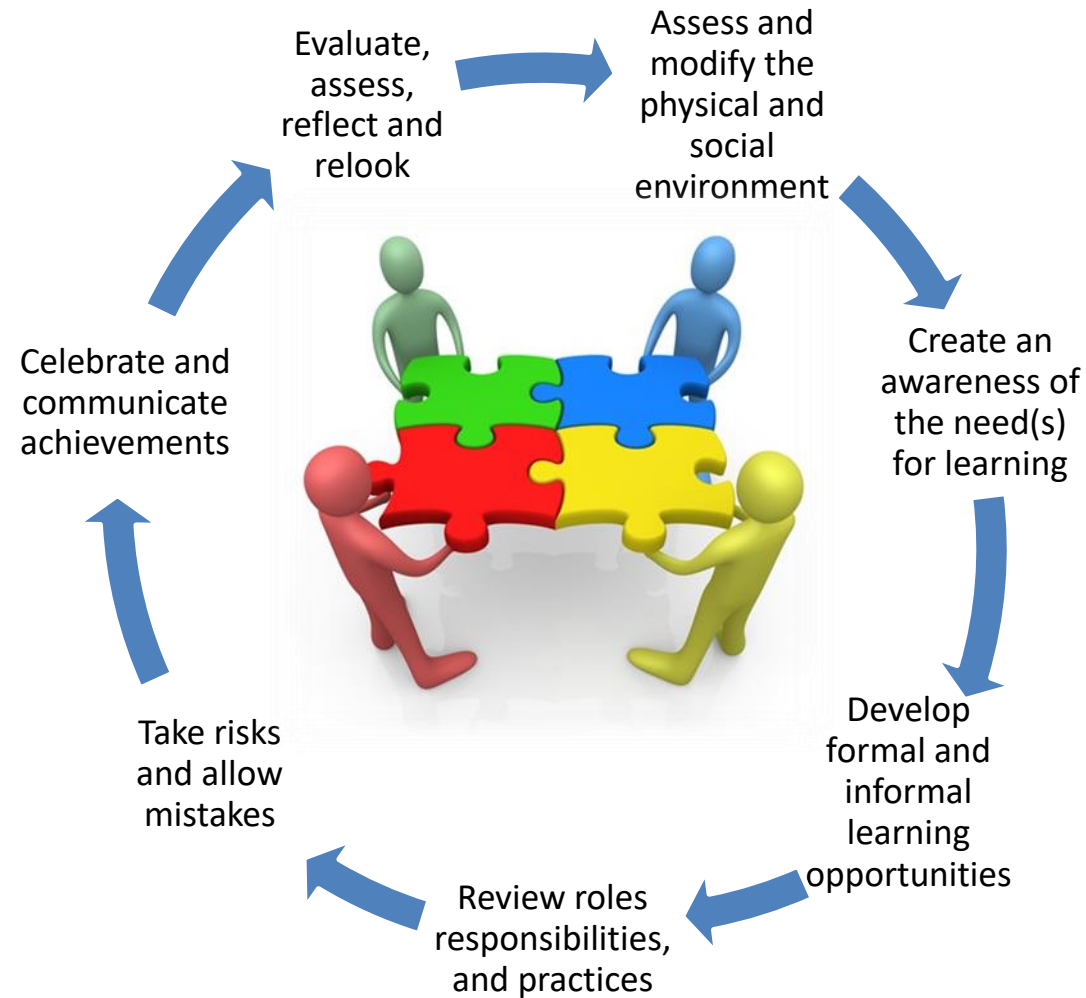


Considerations

- The physical and social environment of the workplace may impact on the information literacy practices of the team – impact on the organizational culture
- The team needs to be aware and have access to the available information resources and tools
- Need to create a culture of belonging (shared identity) and awareness of the value of the team – to form a Community of Practice mindset
- Team members must be willing to share information and their knowledge, and voluntarily participating in formal and informal information / knowledge sharing events
- Need to take risks and allow mistakes
- Focus on long-term outcomes (prepared to be patient as this can take time)



Towards a framework for workplace information literacy





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Part 2:

The Library Technical Service Unit (UP)
- A Case study

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The Library Technical Service (UP) team



Background and challenges

- One of the DLS strategic goals encourage learning and development of staff members
- Retirements
- Unfilled vacancies
- Succession planning is not included in the HR policy
- Workload – backlogs, projects
- Changing workflows as part of the library management system
- Developments in information resources (e.g., subscriptions vs. access), scholarly communications (Open Access) and information need of users (more sophisticated)
- Physical and social environment – limited information sharing and collaboration
- Impact of COVID-19
- Reluctant to take up other opportunities for professional development (e.g., providing metadata for OERs, SDGs) – due to workloads and a lack of confidence in our abilities



Assess and modify the physical and social environment

- Develop an environment that is conducive for improved collaboration and knowledge sharing
- Close the gap between Acquisitions and cataloguing (physical, workflows, social)
- Relocate offices
- Impact of COVID-19



Create an awareness of the need(s) for learning

- Important that people in the team, themselves, need to become aware of the need and importance of knowledge sharing and learning
- Involvement in strategic planning and decision making
- Growth and development needs to be on an individual level as well as in terms of the team – which will translates in the growth and development of the DLS (organisational level)



Develop formal and informal learning opportunities

- Formal monthly meetings and learning events
- Extend to mentoring and task-based learning
- Training by staff approaching retirement
- Provide resources, opportunities and tools for learning and development
- Encourage awareness of developments in local, external and global professional environment(s)
- Other



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Assign and review roles responsibilities, and practices

- Distribute responsibilities of staff approaching retirement among other staff members
- Allow staff to take additional and/or other responsibilities
- Training of interns and students – increase awareness of team members' role and importance in the team and organization
- Team members need to be encouraged and supported to take initiative, responsibilities and leadership roles in projects and areas of interest (ownership of certain tasks)



Take risks and allow mistakes

- Provide platforms for implementation and execution
- Failures and mistakes are used to learn
- Provide support and guidance to overcome obstacles and challenges



Celebrate and communicate achievements

- Acknowledge success and good performance (of both the individual and the team)
- Create learning and development as a KPA on the Performance contract of each staff member
- Communicate our success and achievements to the wider community – as this will demonstrate our value, and improve the image of the team
- Consider a variety of communication channels, such as:
 - Newsletter articles (e.g., internal newsletter, LIASA - In-Touch)
 - Presentations at conferences, meetings and webinars (e.g., eBook webinar)
 - Internal and external learning sessions (interns learning session)



Evaluate, assess, reflect and relook

- Provide platforms to discuss progress, mistakes, alternative strategies
- Need to reflect as a team on our achievements, but also the mistakes – and develop alternative measures or approaches
- Reflect and relook at the team's strategic planning session, and create new strategies



Progress and lessons learned

- People are more participative and take initiative
- Visibility of LTS in the DLS and university increased
- Positive feedback from external colleagues (e.g., interns)
- Collaboration with other teams improved (breaking down the silo's)
- Better understanding of the different roles in the library (internally as well as externally)
- Culture shift in terms of knowledge sharing (also beyond the LTS team)
- People start taking ownership and leadership of projects
- Realized the library-wide need for learning and knowledge sharing (which would address other challenges too, such as the image of teams and the tendency to work in “silo’s”)

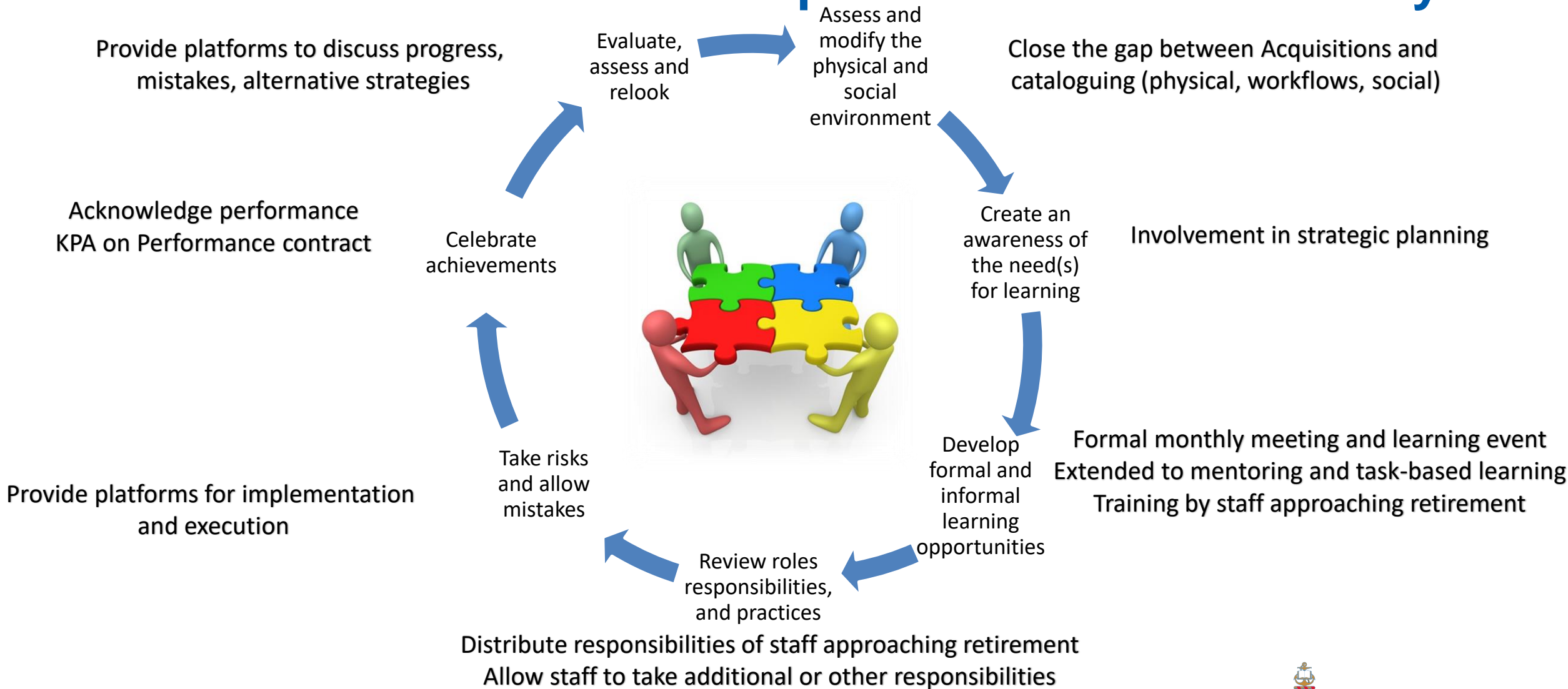


The way forward

- Applied the framework to the learning events developed for interns (DLS staff also attended and indicated the value) – we now want to propose it to other units and the DLS executive
- Benchmarking – locally and internationally
- Focus on advanced learning and reevaluate our skills sets and align with new developments (we focused on learning from internally – we now need to expand it further and outside the team)
- Create networks (CoPs) with other libraries
- Continues evaluation and realignment



Towards a framework for workplace information literacy



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