

CILIP New professionals day 2016. CILIP Headquarters, London. Friday 28th October.

I applied to CILIP for funding for travel to attend this course as I was keen to attend an event aimed at librarians from many different organisations in the early part of their careers. Every training course I have been on has been with other school librarians, teachers or with librarians who work within children's services. This left me feeling as if I was in a training bubble and was not really experiencing the wider sector.

The day started with a brief welcome by Helen Berry, development officer at CILIP and Luke Stevens-Burt, CILIP's head of member services. We were encouraged to tweet and follow #cilipnpd

Nick Poole, the chief executive of CILIP, provided the first keynote entitled 'Secrets of success: building your career in libraries and information management'. He spoke about the role of information professionals, how librarians are the key to information overload and how the profession is currently in a state of transition. He stated that 45% of CILIP members will reach retirement age in 10 years which gives new professionals the opportunity to transform the sector. He stressed that transferable skills are key- we are part of a 20 sector organisation and that it is likely that we will move between various sectors throughout our careers. We were also encouraged to look at CILIP's 4-year plan and were told that CILIP wants to be a partner in building our future careers.

There was then time for refreshments which enabled me to speak (over a cup of tea and a biscuit!) to librarians from all over the country working in public libraries, health, the private sector and students currently undertaking their library and information studies courses.

For the first workshop I decided to attend a seminar on Professional confidence run by Elly O'Brien. She spoke about addressing individual and collective imposter syndrome which is essentially a lack of professional confidence, a fear of being found out as unable to do a job or of being labelled a fraud. Elly spoke about the history behind this- this is not unique to information professionals but is ingrained in British cultural values of politeness and not wanting to be seen to be too arrogant. The librarian stereotype of the job being for quiet introverts and due to women (who make up a substantial amount of the workforce) not wanting to be seen as pushy/ aggressive has only led to a further lack of professional confidence. The consequences of this is that recruitment suffers as professionals with low confidence are not likely to apply for jobs or promotions. It also leads to a lack of diversity of voices heard e.g. the same speakers always speaking at conferences or on committees as other people don't feel that they can do a good job. The concluding thoughts were that we should lead by example e.g. give others the opportunities that we ourselves got at the start of our careers and that we should support each other to build up our self-confidence. I absolutely loved this session- I have been struggling with some aspects of self-evaluation in the PKSB and in hindsight have perhaps have been scoring myself too harshly instead of giving credit where I deserve it.

The second workshop I attended was run by Caroline Carruthers, who is the chief information officer for Network Rail, who spoke about Swapping Sectors. She explained about her current role, what a normal day is like for her and her career history. Caroline stressed that we should look at the big picture and that every job is using the same set of skills- whether it is working in a traditional library or within information management. I found Carolines career path fascinating as she had worked for so many different companies which seemed so different but she was able to adapt to each of the roles using skills learnt in previous roles. Transferable skills was definitely a key theme of the day.

Lunch break went very quickly and it was straight back into the 2nd keynote of the day which was a Voyage around the VLE. This was run by Jo Cornish and Helen Berry, development officers at CILIP who gave us a demonstration on using the Impact toolkit and the new Careers hub section of the VLE which launched that week. I had no idea prior to this session that there were modules that you could undertake on the VLE that could be used as evidence for professional registration- this is something I am keen to explore. This session was concluded by Angharad Roberts who spoke about LIRG, the library information research group and who took the opportunity to award the LIRG practitioner award to Leo Appleton.

The third workshop I chose to attend was Tricky interview questions. This was run by Tracey South and Jayne Winch from CB Resourcing. This was the most practical session of the day as we were immediately divided into 7 teams and asked to think of answers to a range of tricky questions. Luckily my group didn't get the question 'How many golf balls would fit inside a 747?' but instead were asked to answer 'What salary are you looking for?' As a group we discussed the best way to answer this and how best to prepare yourself prior to and during an interview (do your research, ask additional questions, be polite but don't sell yourself short).

My final workshop was one I hadn't expected to go to. As a speaker arrived late due to transport issues, timeslots for a few workshops were changed around. I had planned to go to Matthew Wheelers professional registration workshop but instead I attended Embedding teams to support knowledge management which was run by Mairead Smith from the Ministry of Defence. This workshop started with an explanation of Maireads role, the old structure of her team and the new structure that she implemented in order to better support knowledge management.

The final keynote speech was led by Luke Stevens-Burt who spoke about career planning and the PKSB. He started off speaking about why we should all consider having a career plan and then demonstrated the PKSB- an interactive version of this has just been launched which maps your progress. He also spoke about the importance of member networks and special interest groups and how best to use these connections to develop our skills.

I left this course feeling so optimistic. After speaking to various people, I feel so much more confident about my own skills. Quite often there is a lot of negativity surrounding our profession due to budget cuts and library closures quite rightly making the news regularly so it can sometimes dominate the conversation at conferences. I didn't find this the case at this conference- everyone was so enthusiastic and hopeful for the future. As new professionals, we have chosen a career that is sometimes challenging but ultimately rewarding and personally I think it's the best one out there! My sincere thanks must go to CILIP Scotland for allowing me to opportunity to attend this course.