

ACADEMIC LIBRARIAN'S TRANSITION TO BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

Academic librarian's transition to blended librarianship: a
phenomenology of selected academic librarians in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This paper explores the shared experiences of practices of blended librarianship among Zimbabwean academic librarians to identify how adequately they comply with their dynamic roles and functions. The paper relies on the theoretical constructs from Bell & Shank's (2004, 2007) blended librarianship and Lave & Wenger's (1991) Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) to understand how Zimbabwean academic librarians practice blended librarianship in the workplace through engagement in legitimate work tasks. The investigators used phenomenology to explore academic librarians' experiences of blended librarianship. They selected a sample of 101 academic librarians and later delivered a semi-structured questionnaire to the sample, conducted document research and interviewed key informants from the sample. The researchers collected data from the Bindura University of Science Education, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Lupane State University, Midlands State University, the National University of Science and Technology, and PHSBL80 Library which chose to be undisclosed. Each institution adopted blended librarianship in its way. Four (4) different categories of blended librarianship emerged from the experiences; that is "transcending blended librarians", "partially blended librarians", "intermittent blended librarians" and "aspiring blended librarians", displaying each institution's level of instructional technology and instructional design roles. The study proposes that the "*Academic librarian's transition to blended librarianship*" two-by-two matrix that developed in this inquiry needs further refinement. Further enquiries may test the matrix within the same sites or other locales altogether to corroborate if the results are replicable.

Keywords: Blended librarianship, Academic librarianship, Zimbabwe, Academic librarian's transition to blended librarianship"

Academic librarian's transition to blended librarianship: a phenomenology of selected academic librarians in Zimbabwe

This paper explores the shared activities of blended librarianship to ascertain how effectively Zimbabwean academic librarians adhere to their productive roles and functions and how they are looked upon in the university. Literature has determined that the concept of blended librarianship is still in infancy among Zimbabwean academic librarians with telltale symptoms of its partial existence here and there but not totally adopted and practised (Chanetsa, 2014: 157–281). Recent studies by Mbambo (2006), Chanetsa (2014), Chikonzo et al. (2014), Pasipamire, (2015), Chanetsa and Ngulube (2016, 2017) are identified as the inquiries that deal with some issues of blended librarianship.

Though the cited studies point to the actions of the Zimbabwean academic librarian shifting towards blended librarianship there is a gap in studies that understand blended librarianship from the realities of academic librarians.

By exploring the experiences of academic librarians, the investigators have examined how blended librarianship establishes itself and negotiates within the politics of the institutional work in higher learning institutions in Zimbabwe. The concept of blended librarianship in this study follows recommendations prepared by Bell and Shank (2004, 2007, 2011).

The concept of blended librarianship

Blended librarianship is assumed to be the *magic formulae* that can maintain the performance of the academic librarian in the teaching, learning and research (Bell and Shank, 2004; Garoufallou et al., 2008; Sinclair, 2009). Authors such as Pasipamire (2012: 152) have been calling for flexible library professionals in higher learning institutions who can claim both Library and Information Science theory and practice into their roles of information provision and

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distribution. A blended librarian is a flexible professional according to the interpretation expressed by Bell and Shank (2007: 3):

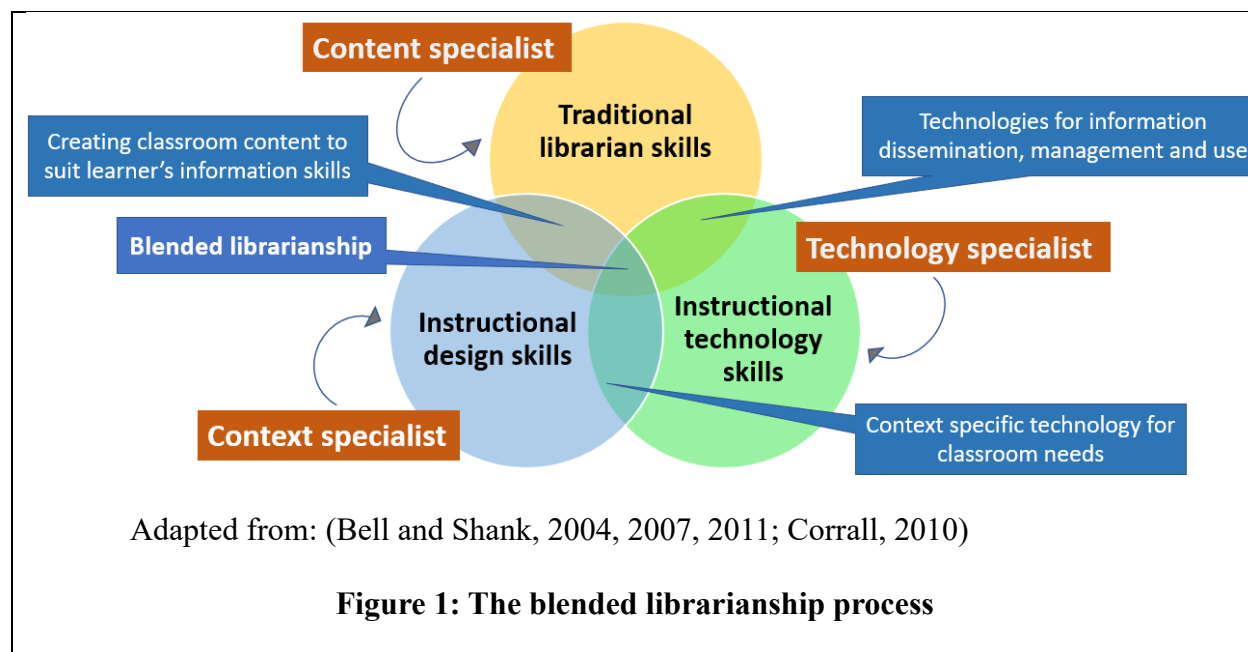
“... a blended librarian is an academic librarian who combines the traditional skill set of librarianship with the instructional technologist's hardware/software skills, and the instructional or educational designer's ability to apply technology appropriately in the teaching-learning process.”

Bell and Shank (2007: 3) further caution that blended librarianship is not interchangeable with multitasking. Rather, blended librarianship is about:

“integrating new skill sets from instructional design and technology into the practice (of academic librarians) and practicing those experiences to further accommodate the library into the teaching and learning process”.

In a follow-up article Bell and Shank (2011) explain that blended librarianship is also:

“not library-centric (that is focused on buildings and collections), somewhat it is librarian-centric (that is focused on people's skills, the knowledge they have and the relationships they build)”.



In their realization of blended librarianship, Bell and Shank (2007: 3) view academic librarians as **part instructional technologists** (who work with faculty to match the suitable technologies to

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aid teaching and learning) and likewise as **part instructional designer** backing faculty in bridging teaching and training gaps (see).

In summary Shank (2006: 517) shows that library instruction (that is bibliographic instruction, information education, user instruction, library research courses or research instruction) creates a work environment that gives greater significance to librarians increasing their teaching competences. Academic libraries are integrating Information Literacy Skills (ILS) and Low Threshold-Applications (LTAs) into the faculty's curriculum for the appropriate and effective use of both print and electronic formats (Clapp et al., 2013; Davis, 2013; Mogwais and Hikwa, 2015; Carroll, Tchangalova and Harrington, 2016).

The following research question will shed light on the phenomenon under study: "how have Zimbabwean academic librarians adopted blended librarianship?"

Overview of the theoretical framework

The theoretical framework applied in this paper was Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). The theory of LPP understands that learning is an established action in a Community of Practice (CoP). CoPs are defined by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002: 4) as "social groups that come together to share common interests and goals, with the aim of sharing information, developing knowledge and developing themselves both personally and professionally". Lave and Wenger (1991) coined the concept of CoPs to describe the context where learning and knowledge creation take place through individuals' involvement and participation in authentic work tasks and real productive and goal-oriented activities (Talja, 2010: 206).

CoPs have led Lave and Wenger (1991: 35) to point out that learning is not merely situated in practice as if it were some independently verifiable process that happens in space and time; rather they view learning as an integral part of generative social practice in everyday life. To

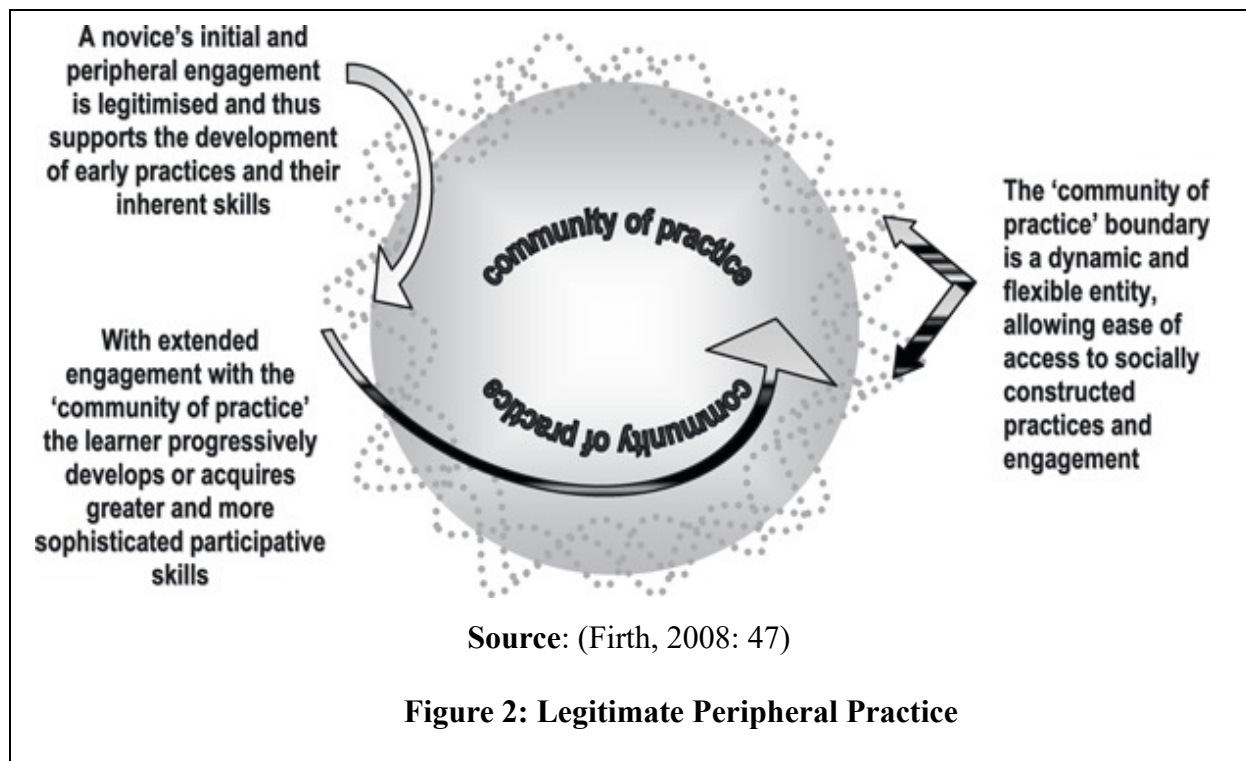
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illustrate how CoPs function Wenger and Trayner (2015) have stated that CoPs have these three unique features:

- a) **The domain:** with an identity defined by a shared interest to a cause and membership that implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people. The competencies in the domain may not be regarded as “expertise” outside the community;
- b) **The community:** members who interact in activities and discussions, help each other, and share information about their domain and in turn build relationships that maintain the domain; and,
- c) **The practice:** the members of a CoP are practitioners within the domain. They have common interpretive repertoires in experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems.

In the case of this study, academic librarianship is the **domain** that is shared by the academic librarians. The **community** is the group of academic librarians in any university library who interact with each other or with other academic librarians external to their institution to advance the practice of academic librarianship. Therefore, the **practice** is academic librarianship, which is experienced by members of the LIS profession who work in higher education institutions. Practice takes time and sustained interaction and cannot be achieved through one interaction; hence the community must be a group of individuals who work with each other over time (Lave, 1977; Lave and Wenger, 1991, 2002; Firth, 2008; Talja, 2010).

Blended librarianship is an authentic work task that is conducted by academic librarians through roles and responsibilities that suite the missions of their institutions and the needs of their community. Therefore, Lave and Wenger's (1991) LPP comprehends that without the academic librarian's real-life experience in work processes, it would be difficult to conceive how they achieve situated construction of the meaning of concepts such as blended librarianship.



LPP was introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) when they realised that the social cognitive theories in the 1980s were unable to deduce relevant meaning to the historically and culturally specific circumstances of apprenticeships (Lave, 1977; Lave and Wenger, 1991, 2002; Talja, 2010). Prior to the introduction of LPP, Lave (1977) had conducted a study on craft apprenticeship in West Africa, and later craft apprenticeship among the Vai and Gola tailors in Liberia. Lave's (1977) study used an apprenticeship system where apprentices observed masters and other apprentices at work to learn the full process of becoming a master and identifying themselves as masters (see **Figure 2**).

Lave and Wenger (1991: 35) add that their coining of the concept LPP was intentional to reflect characteristics of “**legitimate**”, that is, the ways of belonging to a CoP, that is, having the power to establish or alter some of the situations at the workplace. “**Peripherality**” is used in the positive sense to reflect the partial participation of new professionals, suggesting that there are

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multiple, varied, more-or-less, engaged and, general ways of being in the fields of participation defined by a community. Lave and Wenger (1991: 36) have made the following argument:

Peripheral participation “is being in the social world...As a place in which one is kept from participating more fully – often legitimately, from the broader perspective of society at large – it is a disempowering position. Beyond that, legitimate peripherality can be a position at the articulation of related communities. In this sense, it can itself be a source of power or powerlessness, in affording or preventing articulation and interchange among Communities of Practice. The ambiguous potentialities of legitimate peripherality reflect the concept's pivotal role in providing access to a nexus of relations otherwise not perceived as connected”.

The researchers realised that the above concepts and constructs of LPP have parallels with the phenomenological research tradition. This is because LPP is not merely interested in exploring the mundane behaviours of a CoP, rather it also seeks to find out the **experiences of participants** who are working either legitimately or peripherally in their work. Another parallel between phenomenology and LPP can be seen in the work of Wertz et al. (2011: 126–128) who argue that a phenomenological experience can take varying forms and in LPP peripherality is said to take various forms (see above quotation). This assumption was of interest to the researchers because it formed the basis for the tentative model (discussed in the findings) which was used to describe some of the general themes of this study as well as to give interpretations and form a general essence to the study.

Methods

The authors relied on the phenomenological research tradition. Phenomenology began in Europe during the 20th century as a major movement in philosophy and the humanities (Adams and Van Manen, 2008). The early tenets of phenomenology are found in the work of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl, who studied how people describe things and experience them through their senses (Patton, 2015: 116). Husserl's basic philosophical assumption was that people derive experiences by paying attention to perceptions and meanings in their conscious mind (Patton, 2015: 116). The term phenomenology has various definitions and meanings

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attached to it depending on the theoretical and practical contexts (Adams and Van Manen, 2008; Wertz et al., 2011). Phenomenology then attempts to “reduce” how people make sense of the world into a description of the universal essence (that is a "grasp of the very nature of the thing” (Creswell, 2013a: 79).

Husserl's work inspired different scholars to come up with their version of the phenomenological research traditions such as the following noted by Adams and Van Manen (2008):

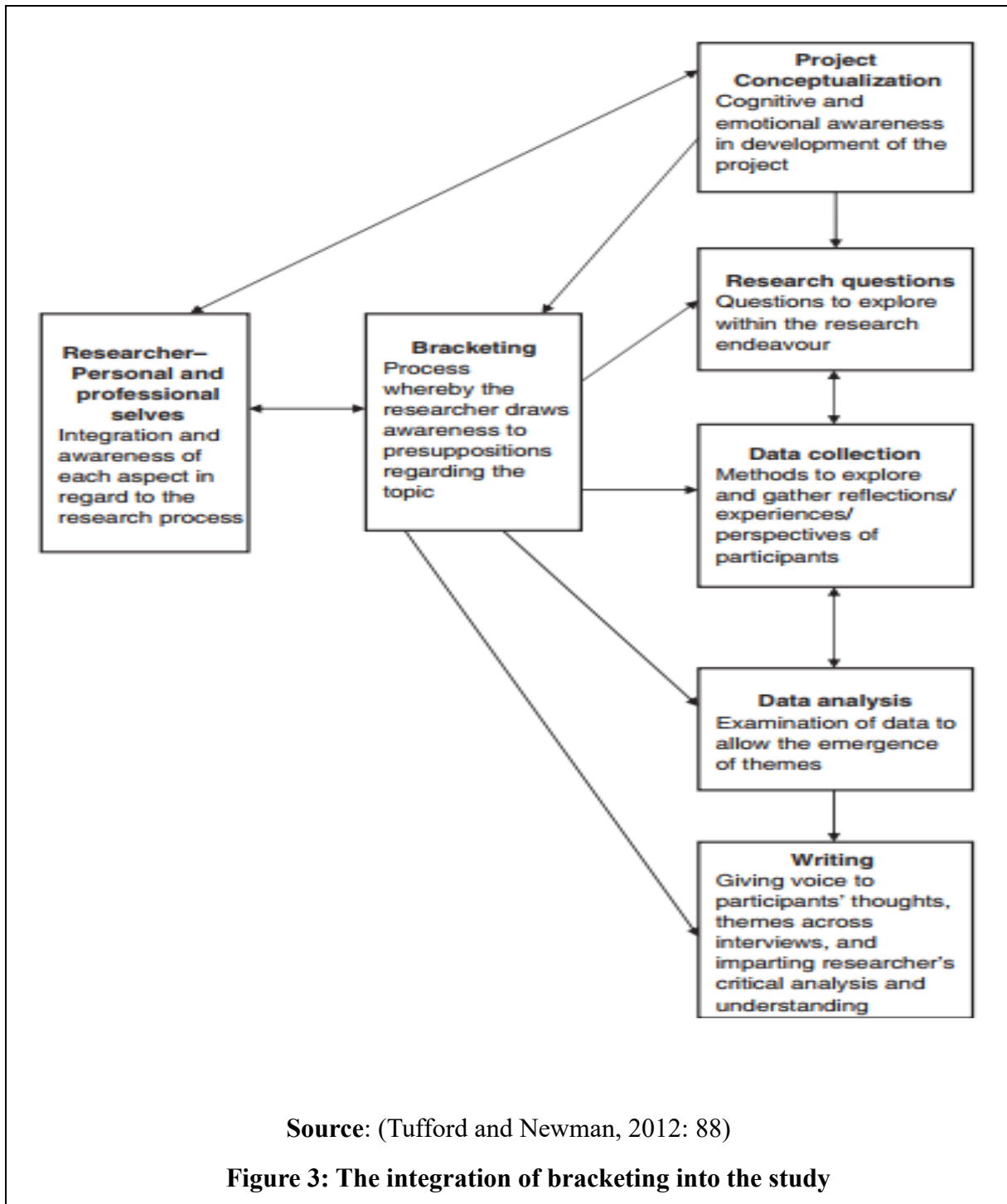
- a) **Transcendental phenomenology** by Edmund Husserl;
- b) **Existential phenomenology** or interpretive phenomenology from Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Simone de Beauvoir;
- c) **Hermeneutic phenomenology** by Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur;
- d) **Linguistic phenomenology** from French post-structuralist work of Maurice Blanchot, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault; and,
- e) **Ethical phenomenology** by Emmanuel Levinas and Alphonso Lingis.

All these variations of phenomenology have a commonality of studying the lived experiences of people and appreciate that experiences are part of human consciousness (Creswell, 2013a: 80). Furthermore, these variations of phenomenology seek to develop descriptions of the essences rather than report experiences explanations or analyses (Creswell, 2013a: 80). In the same manner, Patton (2015: 115) also attempts to reconcile the various standpoints of phenomenology when he observes that they explore “how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as a shared meaning”. Having introduced what phenomenology is, and its historical background, the next section discusses the philosophical assumptions of phenomenology and how they were applied in the study.

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Bracketing

The authors noted the importance of acknowledging their beliefs and biases throughout this phenomenological study (Creswell, 2013: 39), to allow readers to understand their positions which have been suspended (see Figure 3).



Source: (Tufford and Newman, 2012: 88)

Figure 3: The integration of bracketing into the study

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For the authors to avoid bias when bringing in subjectivism into the study, they had to use bracketing, to highlight all prior personal knowledge and let the data emerge from the experiences of the participants (Lopez and Willis, 2004: 725–733), and the literature related to the phenomena (Wojnar and Swanson, 2007: 174). Bracketing was taken by the authors to be more an interplay between reflexive and objective processes because in the phenomenological research tradition phenomena occurred that authors were not initially aware of (Ahern, 1999: 408). To guard against inaccuracies at any stage of the study (Kumar, 2011: 164), the authors bracketed their assumptions throughout the research process, that is: study design, research instruments, sampling strategy, data analysis procedures and conclusions drawn (see **Figure 3**).

The application of phenomenology in the study

Lopez and Willis (2004: 726) and van Manen (2017: 775) advise that investigators must be explicit about the type of phenomenology used in a study because the research findings generated will depend on the phenomenological tradition and its accompanying philosophical assumptions. In a simple manner, the phenomenology that was applied in this study is interpretive phenomenology.

Unlike descriptive phenomenology, that attempts to produce an objective statement about an event, interpretive phenomenology, explores personal experience and is concerned with an individual's account of an object or event (Smith and Osborn, 2007: 53). Interpretive phenomenology is based on the philosophical assumptions set forth by Heidegger that human experience can be understood by going beyond the mere description of significant statements in conversations to look for meanings embedded in common life practices (or experiences) through methods such as hermeneutics (Lopez and Willis, 2004: 729). Therefore, interpretive phenomenological analysis is a two-stage interpretation process, where the “participants are

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trying to make sense of their world” and the “researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world” (Smith and Osborn, 2007: 53; Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2012: 362) .

For the authors to apply the philosophical assumptions of interpretive phenomenology, they had to determine if blended librarianship was occurring amongst the selected academic librarians by carefully studying if their experiences were within the tasks of blended librarianship. For example, the authors had to conceptualise blended librarianship as any task performed by an academic librarian that merged traditional librarianship roles with either instructional technologist skills or instructional designer roles.

None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time
0	1	2	3
Behaviour was not observed	Exhibiting some of the characteristics of the behaviour	Intermittent periods where the behaviour is practised	The behaviour is pervasive and becomes the primary task to the extent that attention to other tasks are compromised

In designing the responses to the checklists in the survey, the authors used ordinal responses where the academic librarians had to place values for pre-established statements into categories that were orderly ranked along a continuum, from low to high, that is low (0) and high (3) (see **Table 1**). These ordinal responses were limited to qualitative research and not quantitative research.

In addition, the researchers used keywords in context (KWIC) to enumerate the number of times a theme came out of the responses. The assumption about the KWIC is that the higher

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the number of times a concept comes out of the responses, the greater the chances the concept has a relevance to a person or a community.

Methodological choice: the multi-methods qualitative research

This study relied more on qualitative data and techniques and used mostly qualitative methods for data presentation and analysis. The study was a multi-methods qualitative study since it used more than one data collection procedure associated with the qualitative method but did not mix qualitative methods with quantitative methods.

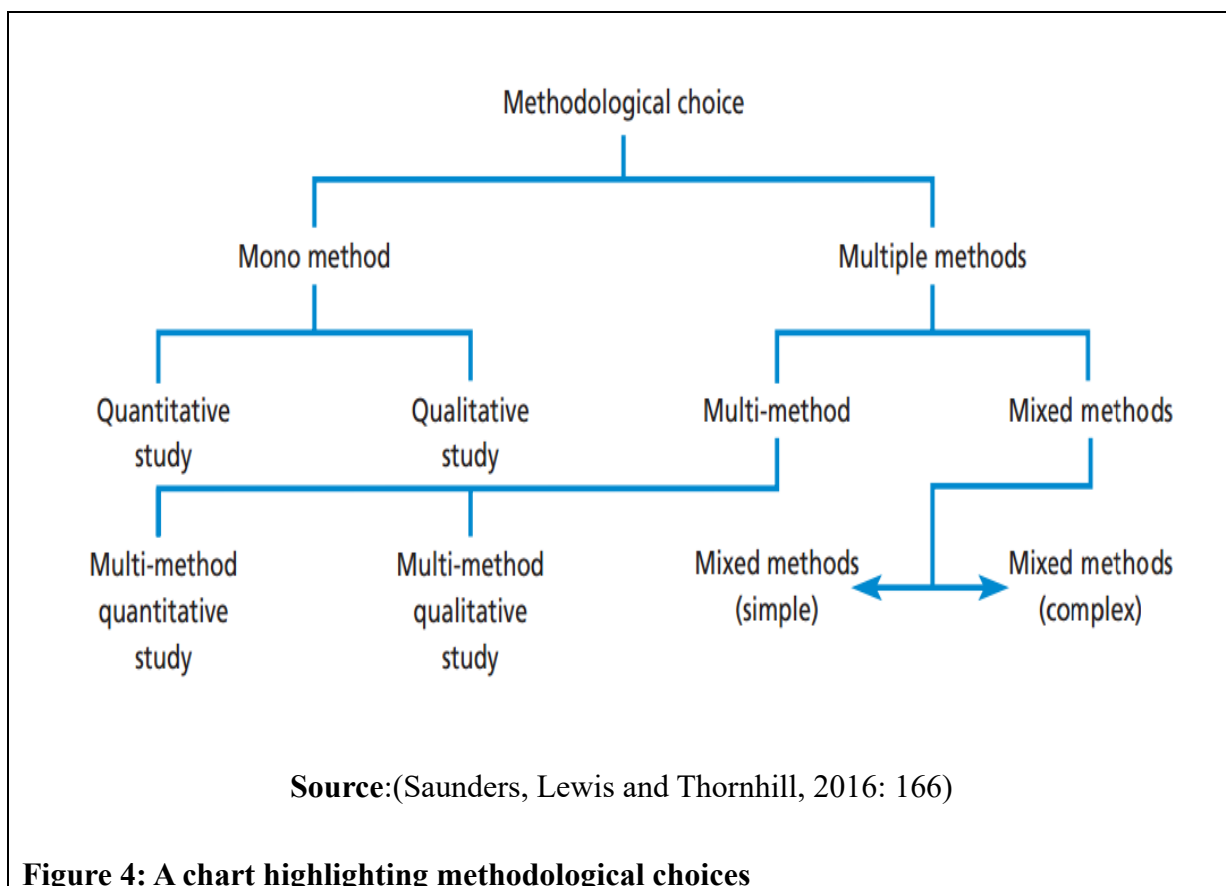


Figure 4: A chart highlighting methodological choices

Multi-methods qualitative research differs significantly from mixed methods research because it does not require the inquirer to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches into the data collection and analysis in a single study (Brewer and Hunter, 2006). A multi-methods qualitative study was preferred by the investigators because it combined a variety of research

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methods (see **Figure 4**). With regards to a multi-methods study, the investigators identified, explored, and understood different dimensions of the units of study to strengthen the findings and enriching interpretation.

The rationale for using multi-methods in this study came from Hammersley (2008) who observed that multi-methods could be used to construct the social world in diverse ways to increase the completeness of the picture. Brewer and Hunter (2006) have also recognised that multi-methods reduce the uncertainty of employing a single type of research method by testing alternative interpretations of data to increase the validity of the study's findings. Multi-methods are therefore complementary to the research's ontological position (that the study relied on the experiences of the academic librarians) to bring into focus multiple perspectives of the research problem.

Research instruments

This study has used self-reports for the semi-structured questionnaire and the semi-structured interview. For example, a semi-structured questionnaire was developed to fit in checklists and inventories of certain behaviours that are in line with the blended librarian and the respondents were asked to rate their behaviours through scales with a qualitative value (see Appendix 1).

The semi-structured questionnaire

In constructing the questionnaire, the researchers combined both closed and open-ended questions. For the closed questions, the researchers summarised aspects of blended librarianship into brief statements in the form of checklists and asked academic librarians whether they agree or disagree with the checklists and put rating scales of the statements on the checklist (see **Annex 1**).

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The semi-structured questionnaires offered the advantage of reaching many academic librarians, including those with busy work schedules, saving the researchers travel expenses and time conducting interviews. The questionnaires also aided in maintaining the academic librarian's anonymity. One of the disadvantages of the semi-structured questionnaires that the researchers encountered was the lack of an opportunity to clarify issues with the respondents who may not have understood some of the questions. As a result, some of the respondents left some sections of the semi-structured questionnaire unanswered. The researchers did not discard these questionnaires but used the available responses to analyse the findings.

After the survey, the researchers proceeded to collect data through semi-structured interviews with a selected number of academic librarians. This type of data collection procedures where a questionnaire precedes the interview is termed by Adamson et al. (2004) as a "questerview".

Semi-structured interviews

The researchers used face-to-face interviews to establish rapport with the academic librarians (i.e. Assistant Librarians) and therefore gain their cooperation (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015: 160). The researchers made appointments with the academic librarians and sent the interview guide (See **Appendix 2**) in advance.

When interviewing the academic librarians, the researchers used the setting of the academic library as it is a natural environment, and often a space that was not too noisy. In the semi-structured interview, the researchers followed the standard questions with one or more individually tailored questions to get clarification or probe a person's reasoning (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015: 160).

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The researchers' interview protocol (See **Appendix 2**) was administered to academic librarians. Another interview protocol was administered to members of library boards because of their involvement in library administration (See **Appendix 3**).

The researchers recorded the interview data using smart recording devices and notes jotted by a research assistant. Before recording the interview, the researchers informed the academic librarians and then obtained their permission to record. After the interview, the recordings were transcribed for analysis.

Document research

Documents are usually naturally occurring objects with a concrete and semi-permanent existence and can indirectly reveal the social world of their creators (Payne and Payne, 2004: 60). Flick (2009: 254) recommended that the researchers can use purposive sampling to select a corpus of documents that are representative of the problem under study. The researchers relied on the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (ZULC) guidelines and standards (Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (ZULC), 2016) because it administers all the state universities that participated in the study (and those that did not take part in the study). Some of the limitations of document research that have been identified by Payne and Payne (2004: 65) can be summarised as the failure to meet the four criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. The researchers countered this shortfall by using guidelines that were officially from the ZULC Secretariat and only relied on the sections that were relevant to blended librarianship.

Data collection

The investigators collected qualitative data through document research (the ZULC guidelines). A survey was sent out to academic librarians despite their ranks and thereafter the

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survey data was analysed and then some survey respondents were followed up with in-depth interviews directed as they are key informants. The researchers identified and analyzed different dimensions of the units of study to enhance the conclusions and clarify interpretations.

The researchers collected data from a population of 136 academic librarians from the:

- a) Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE);
- b) Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT);
- c) Lupane State University (LSU);
- d) Midlands State University (MSU);
- e) National University of Science and Technology (NUST); and,
- f) Academic librarians from an academic library (PHSBL80 Library) which has been anonymised.

	NUST	LSU	BUSE	PHSBL80	MSU	CUT	Total
Assistant Librarians, Bibliographic Service Librarians, Senior Assistant Librarians	6	5	5	13	6	4	39
Systems Librarians, Technology Librarians	2	1	1	2	2	1	9
Technical Assistant, Senior Library Assistants, Chief Library Assistants	12	4	5	23	12	9	65
Library Board members	4	3	3	6	4	3	23
Total	24	13	14	44	24	17	136

Table 2 shows the composition of the academic librarians targeted for data collection, and that included Senior Library Assistants (who are line workers; n=65), Assistant Librarians (who are middle-level managers; n=39), Systems Librarians, Technology Librarians (who are

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middle-level managers; n=9), and Library Boards (that comprise of the Head Librarian, Deputy Librarian, and Sub-Librarians; n=23).

The researchers selected the above institutions because of blended librarianship practices within them and because of their closeness and accessibility in data compilation. The researchers gave case names to the interviewee's accounts to safeguard their identity. The researchers used a uniform coding system whereby PHSBL was a shortened version of the dissertation title: Phenomenological Study of Blended Librarianship and the numeric value was assigned chronologically on each case entered.

Data analysis

The study integrated both qualitative and quantitative data to increase the validity and reliability of the findings. Although the study was framed mainly through qualitative methods, quantitative data analysis was used as a form of triangulation to strengthen the qualitative findings, by presenting data in the form of graphs, charts and frequency tables. However, the quantitative data was not manipulated statistically because the study was mainly interested in descriptive statistics.

Phenomenological data analysis steps were taken by the researchers using the ideals of Creswell (2013: 83) that advocate for highlighting of “significant statements,” that provide an understanding of how academic librarians experienced blended librarianship. Similar significant statements were then clustered into central themes that Creswell (2013: 83) calls “meaning units”, then presented as “textural descriptions” or “general themes” (what academic librarians experienced which are presented using verbatim quotes, tables and graphs in the findings.

Structural descriptions, that is, an analysis of the context or situation within which blended librarianship occurred (Creswell, 2013: 83), is presented in the discussion by cross-examining the literature and theoretical framework vis-à-vis the textual descriptions.

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Both the textual descriptions and the structural descriptions of blended librarianship were then synthesised together as an argument that shaped the discussion where the essence (general summary or conclusions) of the study are presented. The process described here is called “horizontalisation” or “phenomenological reduction” (Creswell, 2013b; Patton, 2015) and is presented in **Figure 5**.

Statement	Central theme	General theme	General structure	General summary
xxx [xxx xxx] xxx xxx xxx	1	CT.1	xxx xxx xxx	xxx xxx xxxx
	2	CT.3 Cen. CT.5 theme 1		
	3	CT.2 Cen.		
	4	CT.4 theme 2		
	5			
	6	CT.6 Cen. theme 3		

Source: (Ratner, 2001:5)

Figure 5: Visualising the process of horizontalisation

The study made use of NVIVO 11 Pro® software to assist in the storage and analysis of the qualitative data collected in the study. NVIVO 11 Pro® is a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) with the capability of displaying the coding categories and coding schemes assigned by the researchers (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014: 46). The coding classes in the CAQDAS were used to review data as it emerged so that it captured new observations or interpretations made of the findings. NVIVO 11 Pro® can also present the data using graphs, charts, tables and text. The data contained in NVIVO 11 Pro® was used to seek similarities and differences from the participants which were used to construct a composite analysis.

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The survey data from the questionnaire was first written out and arranged into Microsoft Excel® then sent for coding in NVIVO 11 Pro®. The researchers transcribed the interviews from speech to text and formatted using NVIVO 11 Pro®. They organised document research, semi-structured interviews and the survey first by their matching research questions and classified them into categories and subcategories using an established coding scheme and afterwards the codes that came up from the data. Therefore, this paper illustrates the findings of the study through significant statements from the participants that pointed out how academic librarians experienced blended librarianship. The data are reviewed using detailed descriptions, matrix and network displays.

Findings

One institution had not replied to grant the researchers access up to the time of writing up of the paper (this institution is discussed as **PHSBL80 Library** to protect its identity and its respondents). Hence, the semi-structured questionnaire (see appendix 1) was sent out to 80 academic librarians (including librarians from PHSBL80 Library who agreed to participate). Fifty-nine (59) questionnaires were returned; hence the **return rate** for the survey was **74 %**. **Figure 6** shows the demographic composition of the academic librarians who participated in the survey.

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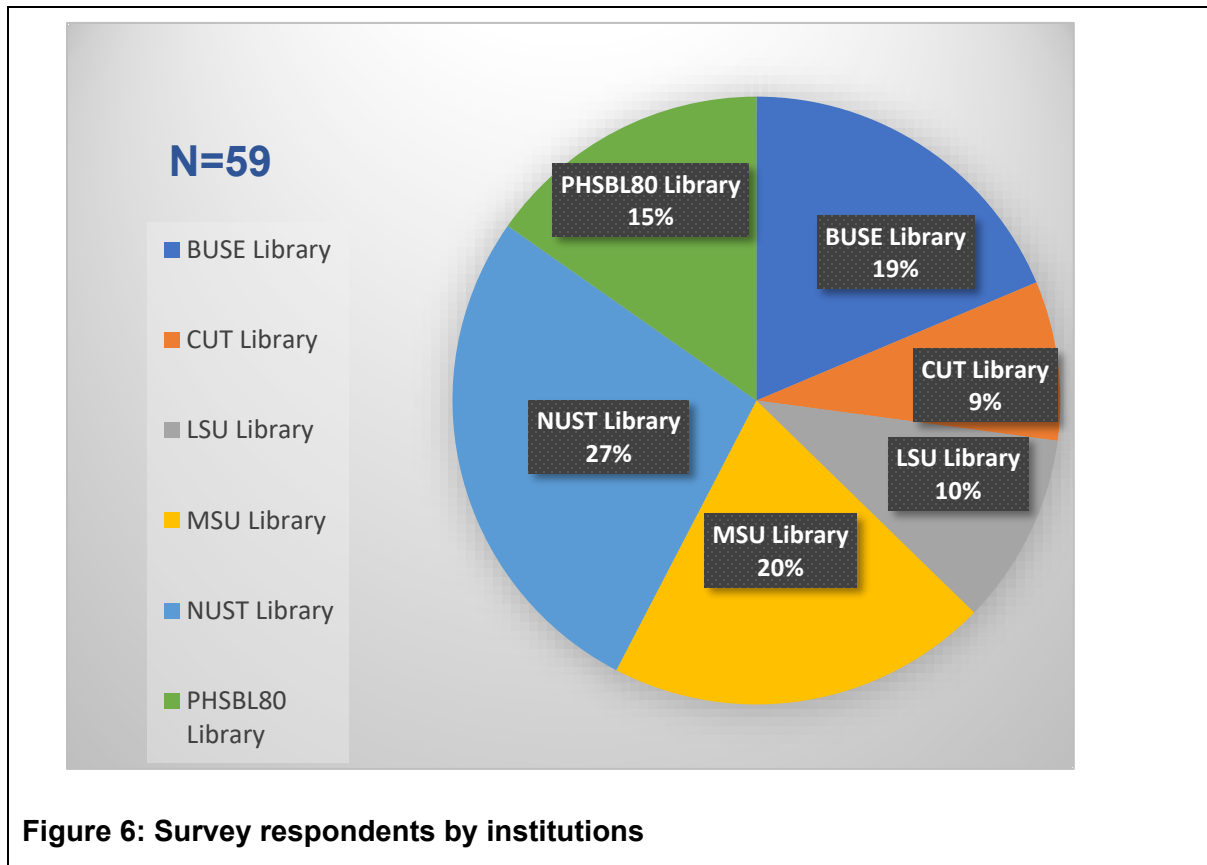
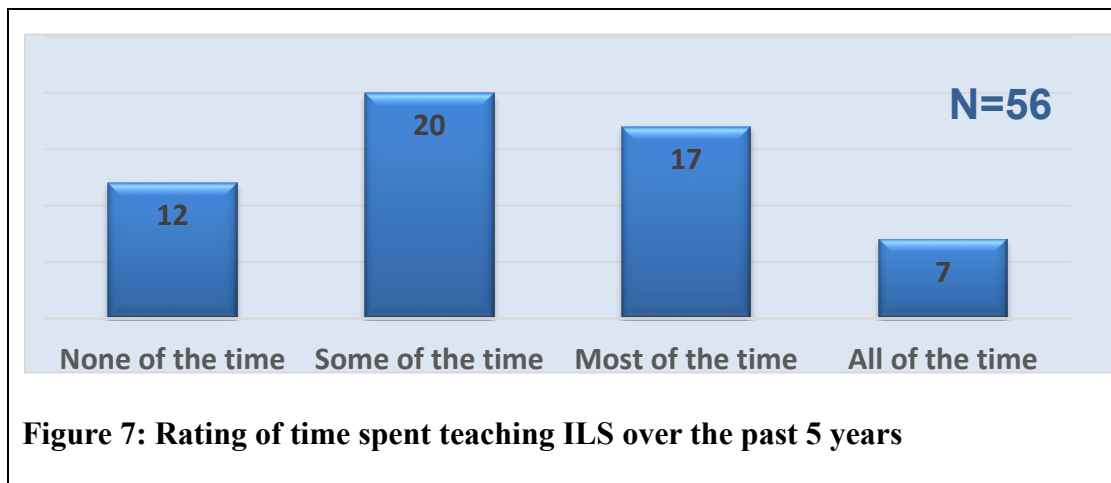


Table 3 shows the demographic composition of the academic librarians who participated in the interviews (See Appendix 2). The interviewees ranged from middle-level management to Library Board level.

Table 3: Interviewees by institution and designation							N=20
	NUST	LSU	MSU	CUT	BUSE	PHSBL80	Total
Assistant Librarians	1	3	4	2	4	3	15
Systems Librarians	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Deputy Librarians	1	1	-	1	-	-	3
Total	4	4	3	3	3	3	20

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The survey respondents were asked to rate the time that they had spent teaching information literacy skills (ILS) over the past 5 years to determine if they had adopted blended librarianship. **Figure 7** summarises the results of the time spent teaching ILS for easier comparison. Fifty-six (56) survey respondents answered this question and three (3) did not.



A review into the demographic details of the respondents in the survey found that the respondents who had indicated that they have not taken part in teaching ILS over the past 5 years were Senior Library Assistants (SLAs) from roles in the technical services departments of their libraries. There was also a clear demarcation of professional and non-professional roles, especially among Assistant Librarians and Senior Library Assistants. A Senior Library Assistant responded in the survey that: *“I am not involved in ILS as it is done by Faculty Librarians¹.”*

¹ The Faculty Librarian post is a synonym for Assistant Librarian in some of the Zimbabwean academic libraries.

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preferred to use LTAs so that the term could be related to the relevant literature in the successive discussion.

ILS training in academic libraries

In establishing how Zimbabwean academic librarians have adopted blended librarianship, the survey respondents were asked to rate statements that pertain to ILS training. **Table 4** shows the results of the ratings on a Likert scale of *None of the time – All the time* (that is 0-3). 53 survey respondents answered this question and the remaining 6 left the question blank.

Table 4: Blended librarianship in ILS training

N=53

The frequency of ILS training	None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time	Totals
I plan and facilitate in-class activities for a subject using library resources	22	19	7	3	51
I am responsible for providing eResources for online classes/exercises conducted through Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai, etc.	35	13	2	2	52
I am responsible for online classes/exercises initiated by my library	32	11	2	6	51
I provide simulations and games for lecturers and learners to examine issues and problems that arise in a specific situation	45	5	1	1	52
I conduct one-shot instruction for new students/faculty members	15	17	12	9	53
I teach ILS as a course and I am responsible for grading learners	36	8	3	5	52
I can conduct face-to-face instruction at any time	7	18	17	10	52
I can do just-in-time teaching based on the immediate needs of students during a lesson or work period	17	18	9	6	50
I plan and facilitate in-class activities for a subject using library resources	22	19	7	3	51

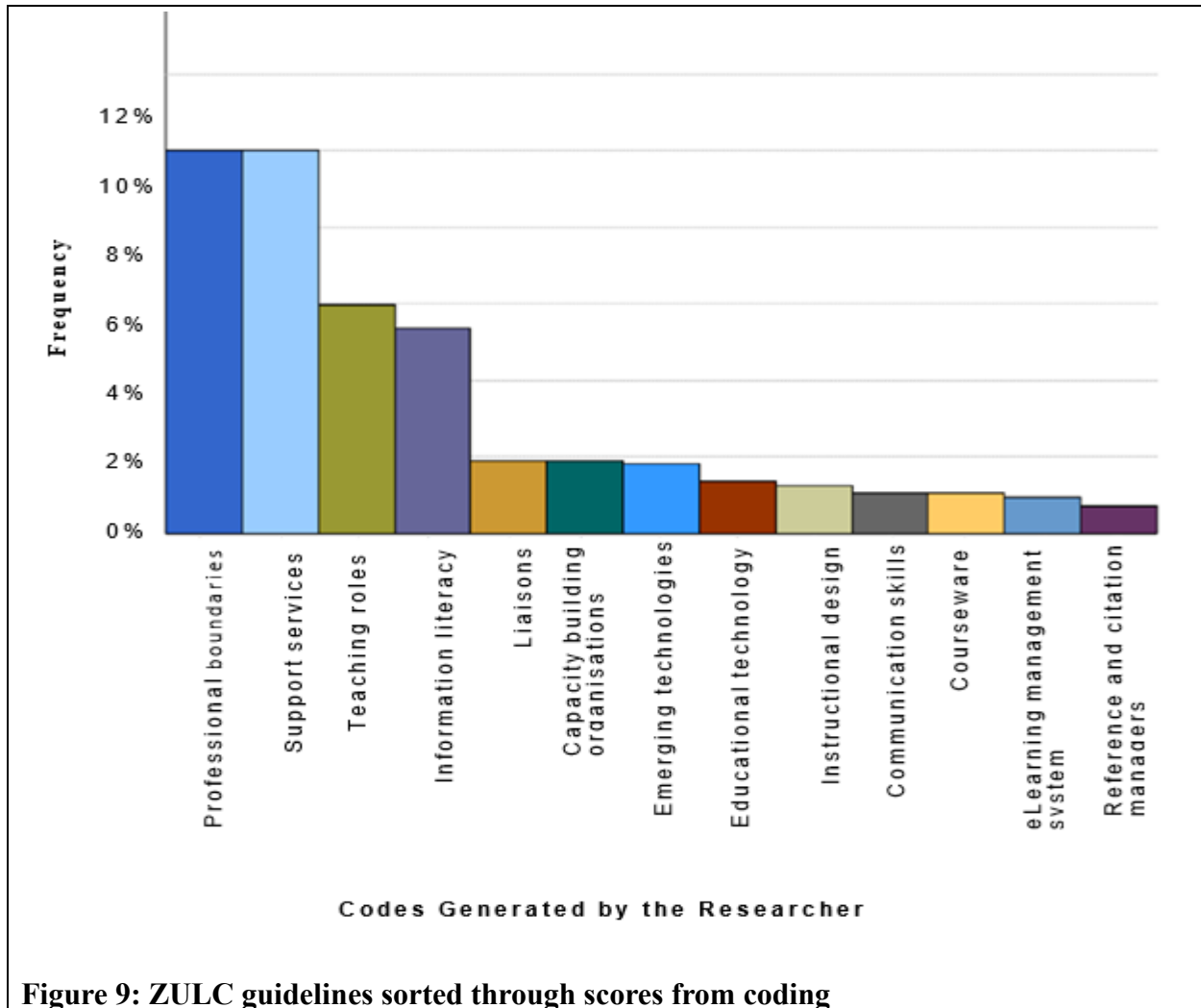
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Table 5 shows that the statements that generated the highest frequencies of ILS training related activities conducted by academic librarians were found on the category *Some of the time*:

- a) *I plan and facilitate in-class activities for a subject using library resources;*
- b) *I am responsible for providing eResources for online classes/exercises conducted through Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai, etc;*
- c) *I am responsible for online classes/exercises initiated by my library;*
- d) *I can do just-in-time teaching based on the immediate needs of students during a lesson or work period;*
- e) *I can conduct face-to-face instruction at any time; and,*
- f) *I conduct one-shot instruction for new students/faculty members*

A content analysis was done on the ZULC Academic Library Guidelines based on the codes that were generated from coding the interviews and the survey. It was found that Teaching Roles and Information Literacy scored moderately high in the codes, taking third and fourth place, respectively (see **Figure 9**).

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Instructional technologist roles

The survey respondents were required to rate the amount of time they have spent over the past 5 years teaching ICTs and LTAs in their communities to ascertain if they had adopted blended librarianship.

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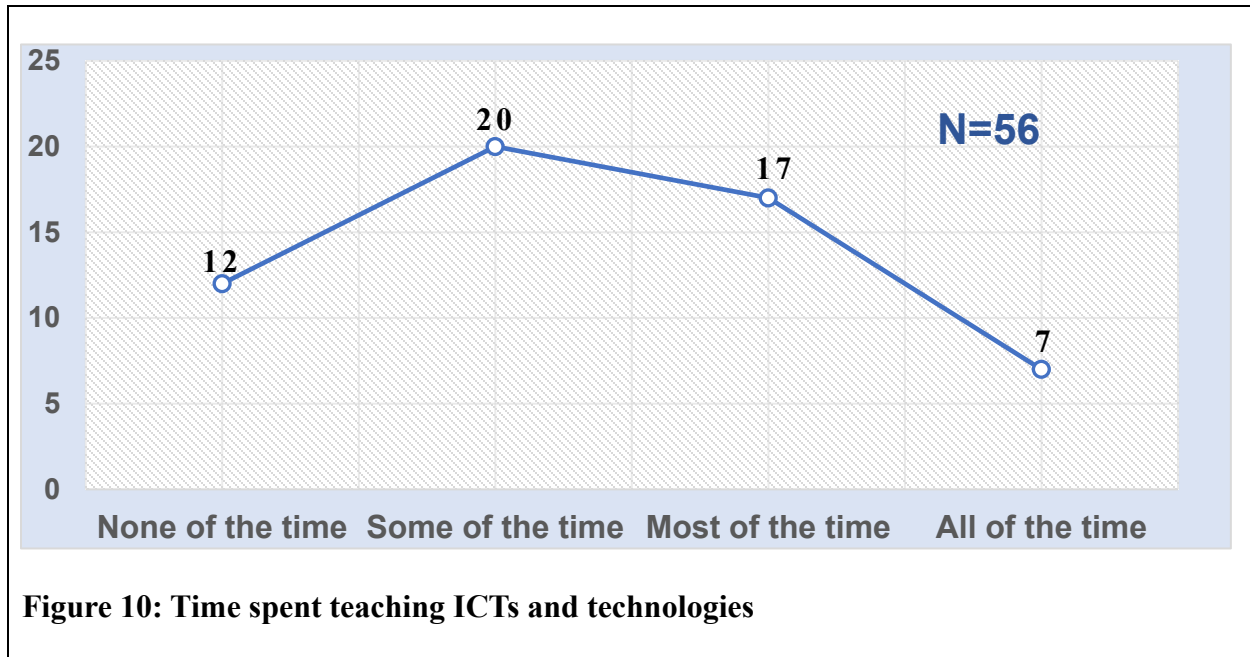


Figure 10: Time spent teaching ICTs and technologies

Figure 10 shows that ICTs are not taught often by a high number of the survey respondents as *Some of the time* received the highest frequency score (36%), followed by *Most of the time* (30%), *None of the time* (21%) and then *All the time* (13%). Only 3 survey respondents did not answer this question. Therefore, these results were explained by interrogating the demographics of the respondents where it was found that most of the respondents who rated their time spent teaching ICTs and technologies as *Some of the time*, and *None of the time* are in Chief Library Assistants, Library Assistants and Senior Library Assistants – non-professional positions from the institutions that took part in the study.

The low number of survey respondents (13%) who taught ICTs and technologies *All the time* could be attributed to other responsibilities they had in the library and the proficiency of the academic librarian. It was, therefore, important to cross-examine these factors further, by considering typical tasks that relate to the teaching of ICTs and technologies in an academic library.

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In the survey, respondents had to complete a checklist of statements that reflected instructional technologist roles that were generated from reading the literature (see **Appendix 1**). The checklist was rated using the predetermined ordinal scores, and a frequency was made for each statement (see **Table 5**).

Table 5: Survey respondents' frequency of instructional technologist roles N=55

The frequency of ILS training	None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time	Totals
I plan and facilitate the integration of library resources, for example, eResources and databases onto the course management system (Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai, etc.)	38	11	2	2	53
I am responsible for integrating third-party commercial information services, for example, statistical agencies, indexing and abstracting agencies and so forth	37	8	4	3	52
I am responsible for customising the e-learning environment for storing personally preferred resources (for example, downloaded materials and hyperlinks)	30	12	7	3	52
I provide virtual reference services through email, instant chat or real-time	15	23	10	6	54
I am responsible for the provision of training modules needed for effective information service and use	31	7	10	5	53
Consolidating learning-based print and electronic resources into the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	19	17	14	5	55
I demonstrate technologies through face-to-face instructions at any time	10	17	20	7	54
I identify and analyse emerging technologies and innovations that can be used by my community	20	15	11	8	54
I work with faculty to match the appropriate technologies for teaching, learning and research activities	23	14	11	5	53

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It was found that most of the statements relating to the instructional technologist's roles were not practised by most of the survey participants who selected *None of the time*. Only two (2) statements scored relatively lower on *None of the time*: “*I provide virtual reference services through email, instant chat or real-time*” with twenty-three (23) and “*I demonstrate technologies through face-to-face instructions at any time*” with seventeen (17). Further scrutiny found that “*I demonstrate technologies through face-to-face instructions at any time*” received a high count of twenty (20) for *Most of the time*.

The statements that reflect the survey participant's least practised (having a high score on *None of the time*) instructional technologist roles were:

- a) *I plan and facilitate the integration of library resources, for example, eResources and databases onto the course management system (Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai, etc.);*
- b) *I am responsible for integrating third-party commercial information services, for example, statistical agencies, indexing and abstracting agencies and so forth;*
- c) *I am responsible for customising the e-learning environment for storing personally preferred resources (for example, downloaded materials and hyperlinks); and,*
- d) *I am responsible for the provision of training modules needed for effective information service and use.*

Most of the survey respondents who selected *None of the time* indicated that he/she had not taken part in teaching ILS and ICTs/LTAs and it was also found that very few survey respondents had taken part in these activities *All the time*.

The researchers also found that the most common instructional technologist roles among the interviewees (made up of Assistant Librarians) centred around basic IT support, information retrieval for eResources, teaching LTAs (for example, use of plagiarism detectors like *Turnitin*

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and reference management software like *EndNote*, *Mendeley* and *Zotero* among others and developing subject guides.

Two academic librarians in the interview (from NUST and CUT Libraries respectively) made these comments about the staff at their library:

PHSBL70

"I do not think we teach technologies. We just teach students on how to access the information...I'm not sure if they are teaching hardware (how to use a computer) and software (such as Microsoft Office). They tend to concentrate more on access to eResources. I suppose those who teach technologies may have another picture, these are my observations."

PHSBL67

"All that I can say... we don't teach hardware and software because we have an IT department that teaches that. But you find when you are teaching ILS to first years, some of them will not be familiar with how to use a computer. So maybe it will be good if they are taught the ILS after they have grasped basic IT competencies."

However, a librarian from NUST Library decried the low usage of subject guides, highlighting that academic librarians did not liaise with their communities:

PHSBL75

"7 years ago, we introduced SubjectsPlus a software that can be used to build subject guides...A lot of work was done, and lobbying was done. But ultimately it was observed that the use of the guides and their creation has not grown to the level of our expectations. One reason may be that there has been that lack of liaison with the academics. When you are building subject guides, you must talk with academics to see what sources they want including in those guides such that their students can benefit...In that way, I would expect them to be very relevant to the students."

Additionally, the least common instructional technologist tasks among the interviewees was the active involvement in the eLearning management system (eLMS) and teaching or demonstration of new technologies (see **Table 6**). It was not surprising to find that only PHSBL80 Library made use of the eLMS (see transcending blended librarian). Another reason

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why the instructional technologist role is not common among academic librarians, regardless of the library is due to the different levels of competencies among participants. One interviewee narrated the following account:

PHSBL66

"I am not proficient in Mendeley. That is because only two people in our library were sent for the Mendeley train the trainers' workshop and amongst those two persons, I was not one of the selected candidates."

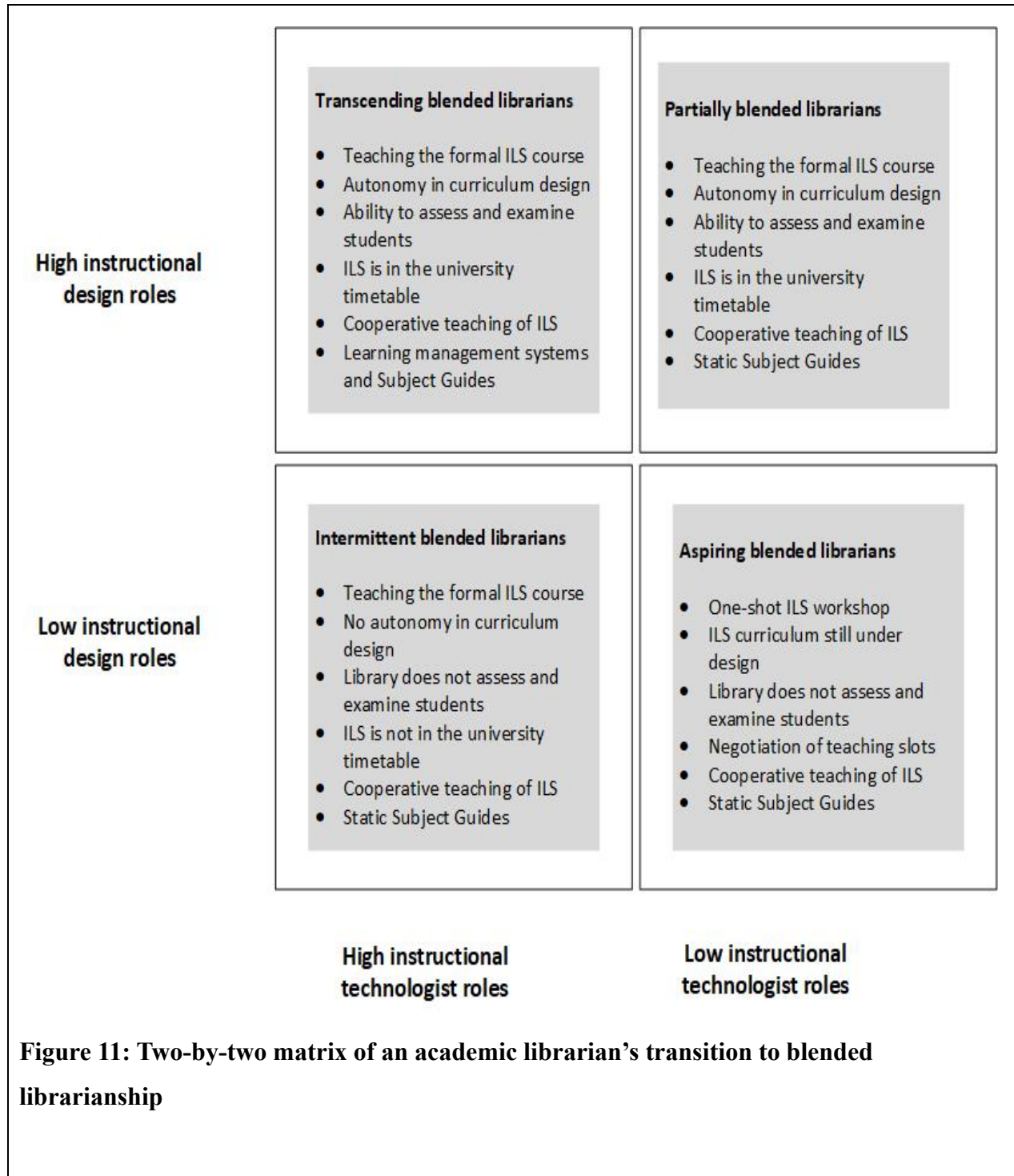
This respondent shows that the lack of financial resources may lead academic libraries to selectively train their staff.

Academic librarian's transition to blended librarianship

The researchers discovered two distinct forms of ILS, the formal and informal aligned to the academic library's user support and liaison services. The academic librarians in this study showed that they had adopted blended librarianship through liaisons in teaching ILS and LTAs, such as a reference and citation manager (for example Mendeley). Academic librarians felt they teach ILS to the students and faculty to enhance their community's lifelong learning experiences.

The researchers found that both instructional technologist roles and instructional design roles were present among the academic librarians in the study. However, expertise varied among what the researchers called transcending, partially, intermittent and aspiring blended librarians (see **Figure 11**). The researchers categorised data into four different stages of blended librarianship (that the researchers deduced the librarians practiced).

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The researchers used the categories to explain the experiences of blended librarianship in different contexts. The researchers deduced from the data that there are institutions which are “**transcending blended librarians**”, “**partially blended librarians**”,

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“**intermittent blended librarians**” and “**aspiring blended librarians**”. The researchers developed each category through the institution’s academic librarians’ level of instructional technology and instructional design roles.

The arguments below were used to reinforce the investigators’ deductions and expand on the work of blended librarianship (Bell & Shank, 2004, 2007, 2011; Campbell, 2014; Shank, 2006).

Transcending blended librarians

These academic librarians taught the ILS course and developed the ILS course’s modules, assignments and examination questions and marking the examinations (high instructional design roles). There was a faculty at PHSBL80 University, where ILS was embedded within an academic course, but frequently, ILS was tutored as a module under the Communication Skills course. In illustrating how ILS was adopted at PHSBL80 Library, an Assistant Librarian said the following:

PHSBL63

*“ILS is part of the Communication Skills Course. It will appear under Communication Skills because it is a two-part course, where we have Information Literacy and Communication Skills. This faculty is a bit different to others, here we have Communication Skills and ILS feeds into the (**name withheld**) course.”*

Academic librarians who taught ILS at PHSBL80 Library mentioned that it was part of the university timetable, even though they encountered challenges in gaining space for teaching as lecturers would intrude their teaching slots. One Assistant Librarian from the PHSBL80 Library provided the succeeding narrative about the university timetables and teaching space:

PHSBL63

“We have departments where it (ILS) is not placed on the master program and we must find teaching slots. We teach students when they are available. It’s disappointing in departments like these... The other issue is with enrolment... our numbers are increasing, and the training facilities are not adequate for the students. For example, we have a

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capacity for 50 students (in the library), and we may discover that there are 100 students expecting to be taught ILS and we have an hour per week. So, if the class is separated into two groups, we have 30 minutes for each class. 30 minutes to conduct an ILS session is not sufficient, even if we were to look at the OPAC without going into issues of referencing and citation, accessing electronic resources and so on..."

In addition, the academic librarians who were transcending blended librarians, not entirely relied on static subject guides but again used eLMS (high instructional technology roles), either developed by the library or specific to their faculties. Therefore, the PHSBL80 Library was perceived by the researchers as an ideal example of an academic library with transcending blended librarians.

Partially blended librarians

These academic librarians shared the same features as transcending blended librarians (high instructional design roles in curriculum design, teaching, assessing and examining learners). They differed in that partially blended librarians did not use eLMS for their delivery of ILS (low instructional technologist roles), preferring the static subject guides. The researchers perceived MSU Library as an ideal case with partially blended librarians.

From the interviews and the survey questionnaire from MSU Library, the researchers found that the Assistant Librarians were the key persons engaged in the teaching of ILS, while the Systems Librarians acted as support persons engaged in maintenance of the IT hardware and software infrastructure and training of the academic librarians. It was found that Assistant Librarians' teaching roles fell into two distinct categories: formal and informal teaching. For example, ILS was taught as an examinable course usually under the Communication Skills, Information Technology course or was adapted to the needs of a faculty. In all instances where the ILS course was taught, it targeted at all first-year students. Some interviewees from MSU Library explained arrangements to teach ILS, maintaining that the formal ILS course was taught

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as follows:

PHSBL73

“MSU introduced a module called Introduction to Information Technology which is in two parts, it covers IT, as well as Information Literacy Skills. The library takes the other part which is Information Literacy Skills. This is an examinable module and I am one of the lecturers from the library side...”

While some interviewees stated that ILS was taught informally as follows:

PHSBL64

“As a faculty librarian, I do conduct ILS training to students and staff. Although it's not a full-time course, which is formalised, I teach informally. We also conduct training workshops for academic staff members if new things have come up, for example, a new database that we think is important for them. We do one-on-one training in their offices demonstrating how to use the specific databases... We do training with students, but this not formalised yet. So, all that we can do is to work with them when they are referred by their lecturer.”

ILS was also taught informally through one-on-one sessions with the students and lecturers. It was also found that in all the academic libraries that took part in the study, where ILS course was taught formally, they also held information sessions for students and lecturers to sharpen their community's information and technology skills or to introduce a new technology as part of user support.

Intermittent blended librarians

These academic librarians taught the ILS course but were not responsible for developing the ILS course's modules, assignments and examination questions and marking the examinations. ILS was taught as a module under the Communication Skills or Information Technology Department. The ILS course was not yet part of the university timetable, hence academic librarians tended to compete with lecturers for teaching space and slots on the

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timetable. One Assistant Librarian from the BUSE Library gave the following account to illustrate how lecturers relate to academic librarians in the classroom:

PHSBL78

“... I know of a colleague who had gone for ILS... then during the class, a lecturer interrupted the class, so he could give the students a test. If a lecturer had the audacity to do that... we will lose the respect from the students who might equate our roles to those of babysitters. Also, some lecturers want librarians to go to their classes when they are presenting papers at conferences. So, we are babysitters...”

... when it is work, lecturers should treat it as a work not to call us because they want to present papers. When everything is going on all right and in order, they do not want to see us in their classes. They are not taking us seriously. They imply that someone must be there so that when the VC² (Vice Chancellor) comes to the class, it appears as if students are being attended to and they won't make an issue.”

Similarly, a library board member from CUT Library gave the following account:

PHSBL69

“... I know that librarians are para-academics, so because of this, they were not deeply into ILS but as time goes, I could see that this is not clearly defined on their job description. That is why it is very difficult to convince the Senate or the executive that librarians want to get into the class.”

In this study, an interviewee from the BUSE Library, who remarked that lecturers treated academic librarians as “babysitters” to watch over their classes when lecturers went away for other business also expressed the gift of time. This interviewee also noted that lecturers did not want academic librarians to enter their lectures or integrate ILS into their courses. Perhaps, some

²

The Vice Chancellor is an administrative post in the university, with the equivalent of a Chief Executive Officer or Chancellor in British and North American universities. The President of Zimbabwe subsumes the Chancellery roles as stated in the constitution, while Vice Chancellors deputise and oversee the running of the university.

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lecturers felt threatened by the academic librarian's participation in the teaching, learning and research. The demarcation between Zimbabwean academic and non-academic staff may have led to lecturers feeling they have a privileged position over the academic librarians.

It was also found that intermittent blended librarians had no eLMS and had static subject guides. The researchers perceived BUSE and CUT libraries as ideal cases with intermittent blended librarians.

Aspiring blended librarians

These academic librarians did not teach the ILS course formally through in-class sessions which are examinable. They were still in the elementary stages of developing the ILS course modules and seeking approval from their Senate Committees to teach the ILS course under the Communication Skills or Information Technology Department (low instructional design). These libraries had taken the example from other academic libraries who had adopted the ILS course by partnering with the Communication Skills Department, as this was an academic department that had curricula with closely fitting goals.

Although the ZULC guidelines stated that academic libraries should have a formal ILS course, not all academic libraries are teaching the ILS course. For example, academic librarians from NUST and LSU libraries reported through the interviews that they have attempted to formalise ILS but have encountered bottlenecks. Their Vice Chancellors and Senate Committees, which govern each of them respectively, have "shot down" the proposals to teach the ILS course, despite evidence that the trial programs conducted were successful. NUST and LSU libraries are currently teaching ILS through informal sessions. An Assistant Librarian from LSU Library gave the following account of how ILS was taught informally:

PHSBL61

“The community is responsive to the use of these things (ILS and technology) ... what really suffices is the drawback that we don't really teach formally...As much as it comes out as information for their schoolwork, we teach as and when we get free slots, negotiating with the lecturers...It's a win-win situation, it's not something that's formally embedded (into a course)...”

An academic librarian from The LSU Library stated that the university administration felt that *“librarians should make a way of teaching it (ILS), but it must not be examinable because the students have so much workload.”* However, the academic librarians from LSU and NUST libraries, have mentioned that when issues about ILS are not formalised, students relax, and this leads to the low usage of the academic librarian's blended roles. One academic librarian observed that students *“do not consider ILS if we do not assess it.”*

The academic librarians from LSU and NUST libraries relied on orientation and one-shot instruction workshops to teach ILS, where they would have in-class activities such as pointing or searching for specific information. The students would voluntarily attend the ILS teaching when they had free time slots or at the lecturers' request.

Aspiring blended librarians had no eLMS and had static subject guides (low instructional technologist skills). The researchers perceived LSU and NUST libraries as ideal examples of aspiring blended librarians.

Discussion of the findings

In the theory of LPP, Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that members of a profession move from novice (or newcomer) to expert (or old-timer) - both forms reflecting different levels of mastery of the skills. This paper has also established that this transition is not a straight path, as

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there are levels in between each institution's social processes (where access to resources, intercedes the transition from novice to expert).

The researchers see this transition where different levels of blended librarianship were found in the selected Zimbabwean academic libraries because of the access to resources that were given to academic librarians to take part in legitimately. The researchers inferred the resources that determine the legitimate participation of the academic librarians to become blended librarians are:

- a) The existence of policies that support ILS;
- b) Autonomy to teach ILS;
- c) Modernised ICTS infrastructure;
- d) Teaching facilities;
- e) Communication and liaisons with the community; and,
- f) An organised learning curriculum.

One of the key features of CoPs identified by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger and Trayner (2015) has been the ability of the individuals within a CoP to come together to share information, insight, and advice to solve problems by creating tools, standards, generic designs, manuals, and other documents. The researchers found that academic libraries created tools such as subject guides for their faculty to improve access to information and taught their communities how to use LTAs to improve the usage of information. Moreover, ZULC acted as a CoP where academic librarians would share best practices which would act as standards and impart competencies that were critical for academic librarians.

Academic libraries also lacked requisite facilities that are used in blended librarianship, for example, academic libraries are understaffed and lacked classrooms. This finding was contrasted to LPP, where Lave and Wenger (1991: 101-103) opined that "participation involving technology

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is especially significant because the artefacts used within a cultural practice carry a substantial portion of that practice's heritage". This was taken to mean that there were certain tools that academic librarians needed to be identified as blended librarians because they represented what a blended librarian does, which is engaging in instructional design and instructional technology.

Without access to the key technologies, most academic libraries (5 out of 6) in the study were still participating at the periphery in teaching, learning and research. Lave and Wenger (1991) argued that "peripheral participation", is the stage "where the academic librarians are restricted from participating more fully, often legitimately through their work practice". An observation that was made by Corral and Keates (2010) was that academic librarians who were still participating at the peripheral level in their faculties faced difficulties in using the available technology to reach out to students. It may be speculated then that the low-level usage of the subject guides might be linked to the peripheral participation of academic librarians.

Additionally, peripherality in this study was observed where the academic librarians believed that the learning outcomes might be easier to see if the ILS course was formalised because they would use the goals of the curricula to measure their successes. This finding highlighted the image and status that was attached to the academic librarians in their universities. To this end, Walsh (2011: 8) sees ILS training as the opportunity where academic librarians have their most extensive contact with students.

Therefore, the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016) has placed a mandate on the academic libraries to introduce the ILS course. The Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016) guidelines also fit into the theory of CoPs and the framework of LPP, if we follow Lave and Wenger's (1991: 53) propositions that CoPs are made up of individuals who share the same interest and work towards the same goal. Although the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016) encourages its members to use its standards, the standards are not in terms of LPP: a "condition for membership", but are an "evolving form of membership." That is why each academic library has been given the mandate to introduce the ILS course to its communities. The Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016) has submitted the guidelines to the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) which is a higher body that accredits higher learning, thus making the guidelines formal standards. The section that covers ILS in the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016: 10) guidelines avers that:

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“ZULC members shall be responsible for producing competent graduates who are information literate, critical thinkers and independent learners who can use information and information communication technologies legally and ethically. In this regard, the ZULC member libraries shall be responsible for curricula development in line with technological, information and academic developments.”

Despite the existence of the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016: iii) guidelines, the adoption of the ILS course is dependent on the organisational culture and resources from which the academic library emanates. For example, the researchers found that the university administration and lecturer's understanding of the ILS have been critical elements in adopting the ILS course. This finding matched that of Oakleaf (2011: 63) that many faculties and institutional administrators consider ILS standards as library-centric standards, rather than outcomes that should be achieved during a student's university experience. The researchers have seen this in aspiring blended librarians such as at NUST Library and LSU Library where the ILS course is yet to be established because of institutional policies.

Lave and Wenger (1991: 103–104) point out there can be an ambiguous status in LPP, when members of a CoP can participate but are not given productive access to activity – thereby causing legitimate peripherality. This scenario shows in the data, where some academic librarians taught ILS but were not given access to autonomy for examining ILS and in the denial of teaching slots. Julien and Pecoskie (2009: 151) have termed the above relationship between faculty and the library as “the gift of time”, whereby academic librarians play a subservient role with unequal power and the provision of in-class time to teach ILS is perceived as a “gift” from the faculty member.

Studies on the instructional design roles of academic librarians, such as that by Manuell and Adams (2016) confirm the role played by academic librarians in the delivery of ILS and its integration into specific subjects. Manuell and Adams (2016) observe that academic librarian-

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faculty collaborations are needed to realise the learning outcomes. In this study, academic librarians had created collaborations within their communities (faculty and students), the Systems Librarians and Communication Skills department to teach ILS and LTAs within the Communication Skills course. The librarians relied on collaborations to augment the skills they lacked in subject knowledge and the use of ICTs in the teaching, learning and research. Therefore, academic librarians' collaborations centred on the access to library products and services to take part in legitimately as blended librarians in each university.

The findings of the paper also suggest that academic librarians in partially, intermittent and aspiring blended librarianship institutions preferred face-to-face delivery of teaching and demonstrations, rather than the use of online platforms such as the eLMS. Carroll, Tchangalova and Harrington (2016) criticized static eLMS such as subject guides, arguing that they offered a passive learning experience that could lead to potential low-level retention of ILS. Academic librarians may prefer face-to-face delivery of ILS because they may meet and interact with the learners and because most of the Zimbabwean academic libraries (that took part in the study) do not have eLMS. However, it is not conclusive that face-to-face learning may not be as effective as blended and online learning since Anderson and May (2010) have found that face-to-face instruction to be equally effective with other teaching methods.

The researchers inferred that teaching LTAs, such as reference citation management tools, online information retrieval and the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) were tasks that fell under Bell and Shank (2004, 2007, 2011) definition of instructional design roles. However, teaching LTAs might be slowed down because academic libraries may not have the financial resources to buy or subscribe to some LTAs. A common trend among the academic libraries was to rely on Open Source software (for example Mendeley and Zotero) that provided the same functions as the LTAs that needed subscriptions or licensing, i.e. Endnote. MacMillan (2012:

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561) also agrees that LTAs such as Mendeley and Zotero are effective because they are free and reduce the information overload in today's digital information environment.

Most of the LTAs used in the selected academic libraries revolve around reference and citation management tools. This may be due to the academic librarian's realisation that reference, and citation management resources are necessary for students to become information literate, and to use information ethically. Researchers such as Childress (2011: 150) have stressed the need for academic librarians to have increasing participation in teaching and demonstrating reference and citation software. The data in this study, also pinpointed that academic librarians were looking for opportunities to increase their participation in teaching reference and citation managers.

Conclusions

A central theme of this study recognized that blended librarianship was adopted through the teaching of ILS and LTAs. Something to draw a conclusion from this central theme is that academic librarians liaise with faculty and students to teach ILS and LTAs because most academic libraries do not have enough supportive resources (such as classrooms and eLMS) and autonomy to teach in the classroom. Blended librarianship requires that academic librarians must first operate within the margin of faculty and students, and then subsequently earn their support (after completing a relevant degree for teaching, subject expertise or creating valuable liaisons) so that it can be fully realised. Although there are academic libraries that have credit-bearing ILS courses, it does not guarantee them cooperation from the faculty and students, due to the traditional subservient role of the academic library. The researchers can conclude that Zimbabwean academic librarians are still working at the outskirts of faculty hoping that if they attract a faculty, students will follow along, and this may be the reason they have not fully carried out blended librarianship.

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A related conclusion is that academic librarians who engaged in the study are in transitioning to become “fully blended librarians” as suggested by Held (2010). As they increase their presence in instructional design and or instructional technologist roles academic librarians might go into the next phase of the transitions, but it may be fraught with its unique set of problems.

Finally, the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016) guidelines had far-reaching value in the practice of the academic librarians that took part in the study as they set targets that academic libraries ought to achieve. Throughout the study, the academic librarians referred to some components in the ZULC guidelines, and their practice was in most cases consistent with the guidelines, though some variations occurred because of organizational culture and the resources available in each institution.

The researchers recommend that the “*Academic librarian's transition to blended librarianship*” two-by-two matrix developed in this study needs further refinement. Further studies may use the matrix within the same settings or different settings altogether to test if the matrix is replicable.

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Appendix 1: Semi-structured questionnaire for academic librarian

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please tick in the appropriate box(es) and provide further explanation where necessary.

Section A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Select one option in each of the categories

Item	Category	
Age	20 and below	
	21-25	
	26-30	
	31-35	
	36-40	
	41-45	

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	45 and above	
Number of years in practice in an academic library	0-5 years	
	6-10 years	
	11-15	
	16-20 years	
	21-25 years	
	26 years and above	
Academic Institution	BUSE Library	
	CUT Library	
	LSU Library	
	MSU Library	
	NUST Library	
Other academic institution (Please specify)		

2 (i.) What is your formal job title?

(ii.) Is Library and Information Science the qualifying degree for the position that you hold?

Yes No

(iii.) If your answer in **2 (ii.)** is **No**, please specify your qualifying degree

3 (i.) Have you held any job prior to joining the academic library?

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Yes No

(ii.) If your answer to the Question 3 (i) is **Yes**, please specify your previous job position

(iii.) How has your previous job influenced you in your current job position?

Section B: ESTABLISHING THE ADOPTION OF BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

A **blended librarian** is defined by Bell and Shank (2007: 3) as “an academic librarian who combines the **traditional skill-sets of librarianship** with the **information technologist’s hardware/software skills**, and the **instructional or educational designer’s ability to apply technology appropriately** in the **teaching and learning process**”

4 (i.) Information literacy skills training can be defined as teaching the skills of finding information in a library or similar platforms, and the skills required to critically evaluate information content and use it effectively (Reitz, 2017).

How much time during the past five years or so, have you been engaged in information literacy training. **(Select one option)**

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None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time

(ii.) Are the information literacy training activities that you conduct linked to any identified needs in the user communities that you serve?

Yes No

(iii.) Please provide a reason to this response

(iv.) INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS (ILS) TRAINING

Please tick where appropriate				
Frequency of information literacy skills training	None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time
I plan and facilitate in-class activities for a subject using library resources				
I am responsible for providing eResources for online classes/exercises conducted through Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai, etc.				
I am responsible for online classes/exercises initiated by my library				

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I provide simulations and games for lecturers and learners to examine issues and problems that arise in a specific situation				
I conduct one-shot instruction for new students/faculty members				
I teach ILS as a course and I am responsible for grading learners				
I can conduct face-to-face instruction at any time				
I can do just-in-time teaching based on the immediate needs of students during a lesson or work period				

Other, please specify

5 (i.) How much of time during the past five years or so, have you spent teaching user communities how to use any information and communication (ICT) and related technologies?

(Select one option)

None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time

ACADEMIC LIBRARIAN'S TRANSITION TO BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

(ii.) Are the technologies that you provide demonstrations for, linked to any courses or classroom activity in your college/university?

Yes No

If your response to 4 (ii.) is **Yes**, please list some of these technologies

(iii.) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SKILLS TRAINING

Please tick where appropriate				
Frequency of information technology skills training	None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time
I plan and facilitate the integration of library resources, for example eResources and databases onto the course management system (Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai, etc.)				
I am responsible for integrating third party commercial information services for example statistical agencies, indexing and abstracting agencies and so forth				
I am responsible for customizing the e-learning environment for storing personally preferred resources (for example, downloaded materials and hyperlinks)				
I provide virtual reference services through email, instant chat or real time				

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I am responsible for the provision of training modules needed for effective information service and use				
Consolidating learning-based print and electronic resources into the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)				
I demonstrate technologies through face-to-face instructions at any time				
I identify and analyse emerging technologies and innovations that can be used by my community				
I work with faculty to match the appropriate technologies for teaching, learning and research activities				

Other, please specify

6 (i.) Does your library follow any systematic problem-solving procedures when conducting any training for a subject field (i.e. chemistry, biology, accounting among others)?

Yes No

(ii.) If your response to Question 6 is **Yes**, please list the steps that you take

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7 (i.) **ADDIE** is a commonly used model for problem solving for learning and teaching in academic libraries. Which of the stages of **ADDIE**, listed below, are mostly used in your library when conducting training or providing subject expertise?

Process	Description	Yes	No
<i>Analysis</i>	the process of defining what is to be learnt		
<i>Design</i>	the process of specifying how it is to be learnt		
<i>Development</i>	the process of authoring and producing learning materials		
<i>Implementation</i>	the process of installing the instruction product in a real-world context		
<i>Evaluation</i>	the process of determining the impact of the instruction		

(ii.) Is it possible to fully implement all the steps of the **ADDIE** model in your work roles? Please justify your response?

8. Please tick the appropriate frequency for blended librarianship activities that you perform at your academic library

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Blended librarianship activities				
Please tick where appropriate				
Frequency of blended librarianship activities	None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time
Developing, building, and maintaining good public relations inside and outside the library				
Negotiating for copyright/licenses, collecting, and storing relevant course materials into accessible platforms, for example subject guides or course outlines				
Answering subject related reference questions				
Anticipating what learners and lecturers want from the library				
Delivering services in a way that responds to users' needs in a timely and personalized way and with continuity				
Maintaining a presence in and among the targeted user group				
Learning, understanding, operating, and providing a service within the space of the user				
Collaborating with other units/functions to serve learners/lecturers				

Other, please specify

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9 (i.) Please provide any example(s) of activities that you are responsible for, which are outside the scope of your normal job description

(ii.) Why have you taken on the activities that you have stated in Item 9 (i.)?

10. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to share regarding the subject of this study?

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Appendix 2: Interview guide for academic librarians

Section A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Tell me briefly about your work at (name of the academic library)?

- a) What is your formal job title?
- b) Is Library and Information Science the qualifying degree for the position that you hold?
- c) Have you held any job prior to joining the (name of the academic library)?
- d) How has your previous job influenced you in your current job position?

Section B: ESTABLISHING THE ADOPTION OF BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

Instructional design roles

2. What tasks do you conduct that are related to teaching, learning, influencing curricula or grading students?

- a) Are the skills you impart for finding information in a library or similar platforms, linked to any identified needs in your user communities? Why do you say so?
- b) Which courses/user communities have benefited most from your participation in the teaching, learning, influencing curricula or grading student's activities? Why do you say so?

Information technologist roles

3. What kind of technologies do you teach in your user communities?

- a) What kind of assessments do you conduct prior to teaching any technologies?

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b) What have you found about your user community's technology needs?

4. Have you followed any systematic problem-solving procedures when conducting any training for a subject field?

OTHER DUTIES WHICH ARE BLENDED

5. Please provide any examples of activities that you are responsible for, which are outside the scope of your normal job description?

a) Why have you taken on these activities?

Section C: THE INTERPRETIVE REPERTOIRES OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

6. You have given me some background information about the work you do at (name of the academic library). From what you have said about your work, do you think you are a blended librarian?

a) On a scale of 1-5, one being the lowest and five the highest, how would you rate your performance as a blended librarian?

b) Are you able to balance your role as an academic librarian and as well as the duties that cut across curriculum design and teaching ICTs in your user communities?

c) How are you able to balance these roles?

7. Do you believe that to be an effective blended librarian, you must be a subject librarian (that is conducting liaison and communicating on subjects with faculty and students)?

ACADEMIC LIBRARIAN'S TRANSITION TO BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

- a) Are there any other models besides subject librarianship and blended librarianship that you believe may be more effective in delivering teaching, learning and research activities to meet the needs of your user community? If so, why do think so?
8. How are academic librarians perceived by lecturers and students in your college/university?
9. Do you believe academic librarians would be more effective at delivering teaching in a classroom or in an eLearning environment if they have formal recognition such as faculty status? Why you do think so?
10. Please tell me about a recent negative situation (if any) that discouraged you or any of your colleagues in the library from meeting the teaching, learning, and research roles of your job/s.
- a) What makes you perceive these issues as being of concern?
11. Do you believe that academic librarians would be more successful at delivering teaching, learning and research activities to their user communities when they collaborate with other stakeholders?
- a) Who do you think academic librarians should collaborate with?
- b) Please explain who among the stakeholders you have mentioned, is the most important.
12. Do you believe academic librarians can take on roles like those of teaching/academic staff, for example, teaching in a classroom or in an eLearning environment? Please explain your position.
13. In your current position at your library, where do you see opportunities to work more closely with faculty and students to help them learn how to use library technologies more effectively?

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14. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to share regarding the subject of this study?

Appendix 3: Interview guide for members of library boards

Section A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Tell me briefly about your role on the Library Board at (name of the academic library)?

Section B: ESTABLISHING THE ADOPTION OF BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

Instructional design roles

2. What do you think about academic librarians' (name of the academic library) involvement in teaching, learning, influencing curricula or grading students?

a) Do you believe that the academic librarians at (name of the academic library) link their support activities for teaching, learning and research to any identified needs in their user communities? Why do you think so?

b) Which courses/user communities do believe have benefited most from academic librarians' participation in the teaching, learning, influencing curricula or grading students' activities?

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIST ROLES

3. What kind of technologies are taught by academic librarians in your user communities?

a) Do you believe that academic librarians should conduct assessments of user technology needs prior to teaching the technologies? Why do you think so?

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- b) What have you found about your user community's technology needs and the way they take up technology?

4. Can you tell me the steps that are followed by academic librarians in the (name of the academic library), to solve problems when conducting any training or when providing information assistance in any subject field?

- a) Is it possible for academic librarians at (name of the academic library), to follow any systematic problem-solving procedures when providing information and technology assistance in any subject field?

OTHER DUTIES WHICH ARE BLENDED

5. Please provide any examples of activities that academic librarians are responsible for, which are outside the scope of their normal job description?

- a) Why do you think they have taken on these activities?

6. In your current position as a Library Board member, where do you see opportunities for (name of academic library) to work more closely with faculty and students to help them learn how to use library technologies more effectively?

7. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to share regarding the subject of this study?