

THE PREPAREDNESS OF TECHNIKON-TRAINED LIBRARY AND  
INFORMATION SCIENCE DIPLOMATES FOR THE WORK SITUATION: AN  
EVALUATIVE STUDY

By

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the preparedness of technikon trained library science diplomates for the work situation. The views of both diplomates and their employers were sought in order to determine the preparedness of the former for the work situation. Both the diplomates and employers were requested to rate the various tasks for which diplomates were trained according to the degree of preparedness of diplomates. Respondents were also asked to identify weaknesses and strengths of the diploma.

Results indicated that generally diplomates were employed as library assistants and were therefore not performing tasks for which they were trained. However, those diplomates who were performing tasks for which they were trained, were prepared in terms of their skills although certain problem areas were identified. There was no consensus on what could be identified as weaknesses of the diploma. Areas that should have been developed according to diplomates included communication skills, computer literacy and practical work. Employers identified areas that were peculiar to their kinds of libraries as areas that should have been developed but were not, for example, story telling, community information services, on-line searching, and others. Cooperative training, exposure to technology and the practical nature of the programme were identified as strengths of the diploma.

What also emerged was that diplomates were underutilised as half of those who responded were performing at library assistant level in their work places. This indicated the reluctance of employers to afford diplomates the opportunity of undertaking para-professional tasks.

Recommendations were made to conduct a survey of all employers in order to establish which employers have positions for para-professionals. This would indicate what job opportunities exist for diplomates. Another recommendation was that this study needs to be duplicated by other technikons in order to establish the preparedness of diplomates.

## DECLARATION

This thesis is the original work of the researcher and has not been submitted in any form to another university. Where use was made of the work of others, it has been duly acknowledged in the text and included in the ***Bibliography***.

Maned Annie Mhlongo

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Annie Mhlongo', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The need for a relevant education cannot be overemphasized. To ensure that curricula are relevant to the needs of employers and society at large, it is necessary to assess what is being taught, how it is being taught and why it is being taught. This should be an on-going exercise because needs change. In South Africa, the newly launched Curriculum 2005 is an attempt by government to address the economic, social, political and other needs of the country by providing relevant education. The emphasis on outcomes is a clear indication of this attempt. However, this can only be achieved if all stakeholders give themselves time to critically examine the type of learning that is currently being provided, the philosophy behind it and its strengths and weaknesses. The involvement of all stakeholders will enhance effective decision-making which in turn will lead to the implementation of relevant curricula.

Technikons were initially known as Colleges for Advanced Technical Education (Kerkham,1988:8). This means that from their inception, they were meant to provide education at a tertiary level, with a strong vocational orientation accompanied by theory to help develop the whole person.

The National Diploma: Library and Information Practice is one of the programmes that was offered by certain technikons from 1992 to 1995. M.L. Sultan Technikon is one of these technikons. The aim of this diploma was to train para-professionals in the field of library and information work. In 1996 the name of the programme was changed to National Diploma: Library and Information Studies with the intention to widen the focus from libraries to other information supplying agencies.

The full background to this diploma will be discussed in Chapter Two. However, it is the former diploma, namely, National Diploma: Library and Information Practice that forms the focus of the present study.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Educators at M.L. Sultan Technikon are required to conduct self-evaluation as part of staff development and subject development. This enables each educator to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subjects she/he teaches, her/his strengths and weaknesses as an educator, to propose and implement ways of improving the content and also to set goals for self-development. Students are also given the opportunity to evaluate educators in different subjects. An outside body known as the Certification Council for Technikon Education (SERTEC) visits departments every four years to evaluate all technikon diplomas and degrees. One of SERTEC's main objectives is to ensure that tertiary standards are maintained at technikons and that courses that are offered are degree worthy.

A major part of library and information services (LIS) training at technikons is the six month cooperative training students undergo at selected host libraries. At the end of this period, host libraries are required to complete an assessment form on the performance of each student. Suggestions that are made by these host institutions provide valuable insights and are taken into consideration when changes and adjustments to the curriculum are made. Cooperative training will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

The above discussion indicates that positive efforts have been and are still being undertaken to continually improve the quality of the LIS programme and ensure adequate training for diplomates. First, feedback by potential employers on various aspects of the programme provides essential information regarding its relevance and adequacy for the labour market. Second, internal as well as external evaluation of

the programme by SERTEC ensures that educators and the technikon are continually looking for ways to improve and develop the programme. However, not all significant stakeholders are afforded the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the programme. Actual employers (as opposed to potential employers who host students during cooperative training period) and the diplomates themselves are two such stakeholders. This resultant information gap could be considered a deficiency in the process of curriculum development.

Contacting and questioning actual employers of those diplomates from the programme has the potential to provide the necessary information regarding the actual performance of diplomates in their various duties on the job. The views of diplomates themselves can provide valuable feedback from the perspective of those mostly affected by the course. This holistic picture of the successes of the programme as well as the challenges that still face the technikon in ensuring that policies and principles in the programme are continually developed is essential.

### 1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to determine whether the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice has achieved its goals, namely to equip diplomates with the necessary knowledge and skills to serve in support positions in the library and information industry (M.L. Sultan Technikon, 1994:1). As a para-professional, the diplomate works very closely with the professional librarian and in some instances can perform some of the tasks performed by the professional librarian but at a lower level of complexity. Arising from this, the objectives of this study were:

- to establish whether diplomates of this programme are prepared for the work situation in terms of the skills acquired during training;
- to establish the weaknesses of this diploma

- to establish the strengths of this diploma;
- to find out ways of improving the diploma

First, perceptions of employers regarding the preparedness of diplomates in their various responsibilities on the job were sought. Secondly, diplomates' views regarding their preparedness in terms of the skills they acquired in the programme for their respective jobs were examined.

#### 1.4 MOTIVATION FOR AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The training of para-professionals for library and information work at technikons was introduced in the early 1980s and the diploma was known as the National Diploma: Library and Information Services. In 1992 the name was changed to the National Diploma Library and Information Practice with changes in the curriculum. In 1996, as mentioned, another name change was put into effect and the diploma became known as the National Diploma: Library and Information Studies. The idea behind these changes was to keep in line with the demands of the industry. A full discussion of these changes is provided in Chapter Two.

Although the diploma under study has been superseded by the National Diploma: Library and Information Studies, the researcher felt that it was essential to obtain feedback on the previous diploma because, firstly, major subjects for both diplomas have not changed. The curriculum was not "overhauled" but adjustments and changes in focus were effected. The National Diploma: Library and Information Practice curriculum focused mainly on libraries only while the National Diploma: Library and Information Studies focuses on libraries and other information supplying agencies. The new diploma recognises the fact that the library is not the only system that is concerned with information and that there are other agencies that

are also involved. Thus the focus of the new diploma is broader. Secondly, it is the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice group that was able to provide the necessary feedback based on their work experience. Findings of this study will still be relevant for the current diploma.

Concerned educators have asked the question of relevance of the LIS curriculum. Vermuelen (1995:3) is such an educator who asked the following questions:

Do library schools make a positive contribution to the work of library and information services with the product they send into the field? Or, do they merely serve the purpose of creating *prima donnas* who can demand high salaries while refusing to perform menial tasks?

The questions raised above have serious implications for the training and education of library and information workers. Educators need to work hand in hand with practitioners in order to ensure that the curriculum is relevant. Alemna (1994:431) also addresses the question of curriculum relevance. He maintains that there are “...obvious gaps between the curricula of library schools and practical working requirements.” The extent of these gaps needs to be determined and ways of bridging them worked out.

Cory (1994:326-7) alleges that one of the problems in academia is that there is a tendency to “thwart” curriculum adaptations and the result is a curriculum that does not prepare students for employment in the commercial sector but one that focuses primarily on preparing librarians. He suggests that mechanisms to establish links between schools and prospective employers should be made. This again indicates the need for cooperation and employer input to ensure a relevant curriculum.

Nassimbeni (1988:155) fears that “if library schools do not respond to change by

making appropriate innovations, the challenge will be met by other bodies or academic departments..., who, discerning the gap, are prepared to fill it.” One of the ways of ensuring that educators get to grips with such changes is by interacting with employers so that meaningful and informed decisions and adjustments are made.

The above discussion is intended to highlight the importance of this study and to indicate that educators are aware of the important role that should be played by all stakeholders in the education and training of library and information workers.

## 1.5 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

### 1.5.1 Education

The *Dictionary of education* (1973:202) defines education as the “aggregate of all the processes by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of positive value in the society in which he lives”; it is a “social process by which people are subjected to the influence of selected and controlled environment (especially that of the school) so that they may attain social competence and optimum individual development.”

### 1.5.2 Training

According to the *Dictionary of education* (1973: 613) training is “a special kind of teaching and instruction in which the goals are clearly determined, are usually readily demonstrated and call for a degree of mastery which requires student practice and teacher guidance and appraisal after students’ improved performance capabilities”; it also gives the following definition: “in a derogatory sense, a process of helping others to acquire skills or knowledge by rote, without reference to any greater framework of knowledge or comprehension.”

The above definitions illustrate that these two terms, namely, “education” and



“training” can have different meanings but can sometimes also overlap in meaning. In a narrow sense, education can be theoretical because its objectives may not necessarily be measurable while training places emphasis on observable and measurable objectives. Training is therefore more encompassing because it needs to be based on some theoretical foundation. Technikons provide training that includes the teaching of theory in order to serve as a foundation for skills training.

In the context of library and information work, Chifwepa (1994:30) differentiates between training and education. He maintains that training is the process that results in the acquisition of skills at the level of a semi-professional while education is the process of equipping a professional librarian and emphasizes theory more than practice.

In this study, “education and training” was used instead of “education” or “training” because of the obvious overlap between the two terms. The researcher believes that in the context of technikon education one cannot separate the two. A further discussion of technikon education will be provided in Chapter Two.

### 1.5.3 Para-professional

The *World book dictionary* (1994:1512) defines a para-professional as “an aide or assistant in a professional field who does not have full professional training.” In the context of this study a para-professional is someone who has completed the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice and works in an information supplying agency and occupies a support position.

### 1.5.4 Library assistant

There is no general consensus among librarians as to what a library assistant is. The use and interpretation of this term differs from library to library. However an understanding that seems to exist is that the incumbent of this position occupies a

support role and performs routine tasks in the library. A library assistant does not possess the same skills as a para-professional who has received some formal training in library and information work and therefore his/her role is different from that of the para-professional. In this study the approach that was adopted to explain a library assistant focused on the duties performed by an incumbent. A library assistant is someone who occupies a support position in a library but does not have any formal library training.

#### 1.5.5 Assistant librarian

Personal observation by the researcher has shown that this term also has different meanings for different institutions. In the context of the present study, an assistant librarian possesses some formal training in library and information work. An incumbent of this position would be in possession of a university lower diploma or a technikon diploma. Again the approach that was adopted in this explanation was based on the job description of the incumbent. An assistant librarian also occupies a support position in a library but because of the training that s/he has received is able to perform duties such as cataloguing and classification of library materials, use basis information retrieval tools in response to patrons' information queries, assist the professional librarian in the selection of library materials and many others that cannot be performed by a library assistant. A complete list of duties that can be performed by a library assistant is provided in Chapter Two. Ideally, an assistant librarian would be able to perform most of the tasks that are performed by the professional librarian the difference would be the complexity or the level at which these tasks are performed. In the context of this study the terms "para-professional" and "assistant librarian" were used synonymously.

#### 1.5.6 Diplomate

In this study a diplomate is someone who completed his/her National Diploma: Library and Information Practice.

#### 1.5.7 Employer

In the context of this study, an employer was a representative of an organization that has in its employ one or more diplomates of the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice as explained above. This person was an immediate supervisor of the diplomate or a person who could provide reliable information about a diplomate.

#### 1.5.8 Preparedness

The *World book dictionary* (1987:1645) defines preparedness as the state of being prepared or readiness. In this study preparedness means the ability of diplomates to perform tasks for which they were trained.

#### 1.5.9 Curriculum

According to Rowntree (1981:59-60) curriculum refers to “ the total structure of ideas and activities developed by an educational institution to meet the learning needs of students and to achieve desired educational aims; the content of the subjects that are being taught and the teaching and learning methods involved and how students’ attainment is assessed.” In this study the term will be used to refer to the “ideas and activities” that diplomates learnt during the period of their education and training for this diploma.

#### 1.5.10 Programme

Rowntree (1981:230) defines a programme as a “planned sequence of study or research.” In this study, the “programme” means the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice.

### 1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study confined itself to diplomates who completed the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice at the M.L. Sultan Technikon from 1994 to 1996

inclusive. As far as employers were concerned, only those employers that had this category of diplomates working for them either in a temporary or permanent capacity were contacted.

Secondly, the study focused mainly on the practical and observable aspects of the curriculum as they apply to the work situation. It did not aim to identify problems experienced by individual diplomates that were not part of the programme, e.g. conditions of service .

Thirdly, only those diplomates whose contact information was available were contacted. Although the diploma is national, the small number of diplomates at M.L. Sultan Teknikon during the period under study does not constitute a sufficient number to make generalizations. Further research will need to be conducted before generalization can be made. However, as noted under 1.4, the study should be of value to the M.L. Sultan Teknikon and other teknikons where LIS education and training take place.

Fourthly the study relied on perceptions and may therefore have an element of subjectivity in some instances both from the perspective of diplomates and employers. Personal feelings about the job can also influence responses of diplomates. For example diplomates who feel that they are usefully employed are likely to view the job itself in a positive way and vice versa.

Fifthly, the weakness of individual students is not necessarily indicative of problems in the programme. Weak students will influence perceptions of employers and the same applies for strong diplomates.

Lastly, the length of time between the completion of the diploma and the time of this study might influence responses of diplomates in that the longer diplomates were in

the work environment, the more likely they were to forget what they were taught. It could also be argued that this is positive because the longer diplomates have been in their jobs the more likely they are in a position to understand the dynamics of a work environment as well as their strengths and weaknesses.

## 1.7 SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced the study and its motivation. Views of educators in respect of LIS training have been briefly outlined. Definitions of terms used as well as limitations of the study were also provided.

An outline of the next chapters is provided below:

Chapter Two is the Literature Review and attempts to put this study into context. Among topics that are discussed in this chapter are the history of library education in South Africa, the para-professional in the library, education and training trends for para-professionals in selected Sub-Saharan countries, the technikon curriculum and how it fits in within the National Qualifications Framework.

Chapter Three discusses the methodology of this study. The concept of evaluation is discussed and the study is placed within an evaluative framework. The survey method adopted in this study is described as well as the data collection technique, namely the mail questionnaire.

Chapter Four contains a detailed description of the findings of this study.

Chapter Five discusses the findings and what they mean.

Chapter Six is the final chapter where conclusions are drawn and recommendations for further research are made.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to put the present study into context. The chapter will examine technikon training for library and information work under the following headings: development of library and information workers' training in South Africa, the para-professional in the library, education and training trends for para-professionals in Sub-Saharan countries, the technikon curriculum as it relates to library and information education, the technikon curriculum and the National Qualifications Framework, and the evaluation of the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice.

#### 2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION WORKERS' TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The colonization of the African continent affected its development in all aspects including librarianship. The period of the British occupation of the Cape of Good Hope and Natal was characterised by libraries which were distinctly British in character. The early twentieth century saw an increase in the number of libraries which resulted in an increasing demand for librarians. This need was met by the importation of librarians from Britain (Malan, 1973: 6). The few South African librarians of the time received training that was British in orientation. This training was in the form of a correspondence course conducted by the Association of Assistant Librarians but examined by the British Library Association. This trend continued until 1928. A turning point was reached when S.A. Pitt and M.J. Fergusson were charged by the Carnegie Corporation of New York to undertake a survey of library conditions in South Africa and to recommend action for improving the situation (Friis, 1962: 79). M.J. Fergusson submitted a report in which he called for, amongst other things, the education and training of librarians for the future development of library services. The report stated the following:

- that correspondence courses did not meet the needs of South Africa since education for librarianship should be in line with the specific requirements of the country;
- that a South African library or university should initiate such a form of training by way of vacation courses;
- and that the education for librarianship should eventually be conducted by a university which might however avail itself of British correspondence courses in the initial stage (Malan,1973: 7-8).

Following the submission of the Fergusson report to the Carnegie Corporation, a conference was held in Bloemfontein in 1928 where it was decided that a system of library education should be instituted immediately and that the British correspondence courses be adopted but the examinations be conducted by South African bodies. When the South African Library Association (SALA) was founded in 1930, one of its major objectives was the specialized training of librarians. When this materialised, it was done in three ways, namely, vacation courses which began in 1933; correspondence tuition provided by the Transvaal branch of SALA in the years 1930-1933; and the conducting of the first SALA library examinations in 1934. This marked the launch of organised education for librarianship in South Africa (Malan,1973:8).

The University of Pretoria became the first university to institute library education when it started its Post-Graduate Diploma in Library Science in 1938. The University of Cape Town followed suit in 1939 ( Malan, 1973:8).

SALA had followed the British way of thinking as far as the education of librarians was concerned, that is, it did not agree with the view that education of librarians should be the task of universities. This argument was based on the notion that librarianship should have a practical nature as opposed to an academic one. It also feared an over-production of librarians if training was to be in the hands of universities because of different admission

requirements. One of SALA's admission requirements was that students should also be members of the Association while universities had no such requirement (Malan, 1973:8). The result was a decrease in enrollment for the SALA course.

Another source of conflict between SALA and the universities was on the question of standards. The University of Pretoria was not willing to let the profession interfere with its internal policies and SALA, in return declared some of the University's courses inadequate to the norms (set by SALA). The University of Cape Town on the other hand, invited SALA to evaluate its courses in 1940. After this evaluation, the Association was compelled to recognise these courses as it realised that they were equal to the requirements of its final examination (Malan, 1973:8-9). The insistence of SALA to protect standards was based on the fact that it wanted to ensure that there was uniformity in training and that newly qualified librarians fitted in with the professional-practical requirements.

The 1950s saw the establishment of library science qualifications by several universities including the University of South Africa which introduced a correspondence course in 1955. This move could be said to have led to the decision by SALA to terminate its correspondence courses in 1958. This finally took place in 1962 (Malan, 1973:10) and indeed marked the end of an era.

During the 1960s most universities offered a two-year post-matric Lower Diploma in Librarianship or a three-year B.A. However, by the early 1970s, most universities had started offering a post-graduate Higher Diploma in Librarianship or a four-year Bachelor of Library Science (B.Bibl.) as well as advanced qualifications at honours, masters and doctors level (Kerkham, 1988:7).

For many years, the training of library para-professionals was the task of universities in South Africa. These people were awarded the Lower Diploma in order to play a support role in libraries. However, in practice, many of them were in charge of small libraries. The



1970s saw an increasing emphasis on the professionalization of librarianship. This led to the drawing up of a clear distinction between the professional librarian with a three-year degree plus a Higher Diploma or a four-year B.Bibl degree on the one hand and a para-professional with a Lower Diploma and clerical and administrative staff with a Senior Certificate on the other hand (Kerkham, 1988:7). The phasing out of non-degree programmes by universities in the late 1970s and early 1980s resulted in universities not revising their Lower Diploma curricula to keep pace with technological developments taking place in libraries at that time. This brought about a need for para-professional training to be undertaken by some other institution(s).

Kerkham (1988:8) mentions discussions between the Natal Technikon and the South African Library Association about the training of library and information workers at technikons in the 1970s. This was followed by the submission of a proposed curriculum for a two-year National Certificate and a three-year National Diploma in Librarianship. However, these proposals did not develop any further. In 1979 the South African Library Association published the *Standards for education for library and information service* which included a section on 'Standards for the training of para-professional staff.' This document was used as the foundation for the development of the para-professional course at technikons (Kerkham,1988:8).

According to Kerkham (1988: 8), technikons were established as institutions for 'advanced technical education' which implies that education at a technikon should be at tertiary level. The emphasis was on the application of knowledge to solve practical problems and this education should include some theoretical foundation of practice as well as the education of the whole person. Van Rensburg and Fowler (1989:89) see technikon education playing the following important roles:

- education which develops the student's mind and renews his/her life perspective;
- career-orientation where people are specifically prepared for an occupation; and,
- lastly, technology advancement where the technikon aspires to advance

technology by means of education, research and development and community service. The technikon concentrates on supplying high-level person power on a post-matric level.

Cape Technikon and Port Elizabeth Technikon tried to establish the National Diploma: Library and Information Services programme in 1984. However, the Cape Technikon could not draw an adequate number of students to warrant this venture. Port Elizabeth Technikon started with a group of part-time students. By 1985 the Cape Technikon was able to attract a sufficient number of students to start with part-time courses of the Diploma. M.L. Sultan Technikon and Pretoria Technikon started courses in 1986 while Natal Technikon followed in 1987 (Kerkham, 1988:8). Natal Technikon has since discontinued this course. Technikon Southern Africa started a correspondence Diploma aimed at recruiting LIS workers already employed in libraries but without any formal qualification in 1992 (Van Aswegen, 1997:54).

It can be said that technikon education and training leans heavily on the British model that places emphasis on practical technical aspects while universities emphasize the socio-historical and theoretical education as well as the academic-professional system.

A fairly new development in technikon education in this country is the introduction of degrees. Technikon degrees were first introduced in the early 1990s and in January 1996, SERTEC granted permission to certain technikons to offer the following LIS qualifications: BTech: Library and Information Studies; MTech: Library and Information Studies; and DTech: Library and Information Studies (Van Aswegen, 1997:56). This move is in line with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which indicates that learners will obtain Higher Education and Training certificates and diplomas offered by colleges and degrees offered by technikons and universities (Department of Education, 1997:31). The M.L Sultan Technikon started part-time courses of the BTech: Library and Information Studies in 1997.

## 2.3 THE PARA-PROFESSIONAL IN THE LIBRARY

In South Africa the training of library and information workers takes place over a wide front. Universities, technikons and colleges of education provide this kind of training on different levels (Horton,1993; Nassimbeni, Stilwell and Walker,1993; Dickson,1994). According to the ***Proposed guidelines for undergraduate career training*** drawn up by the South African Institute for Library and Information Science Committee for Formal Education (1996), universities offer training on a professional level while technikons offer para-professional as well as professional training. In these guidelines, the Committee recognizes that the newly introduced fourth year of study at technikons is equivalent to a professional qualification.

Kerkham (1988:8) draws a clear distinction between the professional and the para-professional in library and information work. He states that the professional operates on a conceptual level while the para-professional operates at the application level, that is, professionals have in-depth subject knowledge. The para-professional is someone who works alongside the professional, usually in a technical capacity. He sees para-professionalism as an “alternative career direction, not an inferior career direction; para-professionalism is a parallel career direction; it is not *per se* a step in the direction of professionalism.”

Scholes (1979:152) viewed the idea of the training of para-professionals by technikons, or Colleges for Advanced Technical Education as they were known at the time, as a positive step in view of the introduction of new technology in libraries. He saw a need for a pool of trained people in order to gain the greatest benefit from the new technology. He suggested that “...the proposed courses aimed at training semi-professionals for library work at Colleges for Advanced Technical Education should concentrate on teaching the capabilities and operation of the full range of equipment in the new office technology ...” He suggested that a significant part of the curriculum for library technicians should comprise the acquisition of knowledge and skills of technology.

Tasks that holders of the Diploma should be able to perform are outlined by Kerkham (1988:9-10). Diplomates should be able to work in technical services under the supervision of a professional in the following areas: acquisitions, cataloguing, physical stock maintenance, selection and maintenance of audiovisual equipment and software, reprography and in the setting up and operation of simple computer systems. In user services, diplomates should be able to perform the following functions: circulation of library materials, reference work and assisting in the promotion of library use. When the Diploma was changed to the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice in 1992, diplomates were given basic training in management because some of them were running small public and special libraries and needed to have a basic knowledge of management and supervision (M.L.Sultan Technikon,1993).

As noted in the first chapter, the focus of this study is on those diplomates that completed the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice at M.L.Sultan Technikon between 1994 and 1996 inclusive.

## 2.4 EDUCATION AND TRAINING TRENDS FOR LIBRARY PARA- PROFESSIONALS IN OTHER SUB-SAHARAN COUNTRIES

Aina (1991:357) has provided some background on the training of para-professionals in library and information work on the African continent. Firstly, he looks at the terms that have been used to refer to these people. Terms such as “technicians”, “para-professionals”, “nonprofessional” and “sub-professionals” have been used but there seems to be a consensus among many practitioners in Africa to refer to them as sub-professionals. In South Africa, however, this term is not common. Scholes (1979:152) felt that “subprofessional” included an undertone of condescension and suggested the use of “para-professional.” In this study, “para-professional” will be used.

Aboyade as cited by Aina (1991:357) describes sub-professionals as people who are required to know the library techniques and processes and to carry out the general routine

work of the library and who are not expected to make policy decisions. Generally, training for this kind of library worker is provided by universities as a two year full-time programme and is referred to as a Diploma. Admission requirements include completion of a full secondary school education and some experience in a library, archives or an information centre. On graduation the trainees are expected to occupy middle level positions in the information profession. This seems to be the trend in most African countries excluding South Africa where most universities no longer offer non-degree programmes in librarianship. However, as is the case in South Africa, it has been found that some of these trainees occupy leadership positions in smaller libraries and information centres.

#### 2.4.1 NIGERIA

The University of Ibadan in Nigeria established a one year certificate in 1970 with the aim of providing some training for people who had completed secondary education and have worked in a library. This was discontinued to be replaced by a 2-year diploma programme. The latter programme was established to train para-professionals in the handling of essential but nonprofessional functions of the library. The kinds of duties that they were trained for could not be performed by school leavers who had no training in library work (Aina,1991:358). Another feature of training in Nigeria (Ibadan University) is that it emphasized training to work in various types of libraries.

#### 2.4.2 BOTSWANA

The University of Botswana had, from the onset, decided to accept for training candidates who already had posts for training to avoid the problem of unemployment. From 1986, the Department had the following programmes: the Certificate in Library Studies for candidates with at least a year's experience and a school certificate; the Diploma in Library Studies for candidates with a Certificate in Library Studies or a good school certificate and some library experience; and the Postgraduate Diploma in Library Studies for graduates with at least a year's experience in a library (Havard-Williams, 1994:11).

The first two programmes are aimed at training para-professionals who, due to circumstances in Botswana, end up running small libraries on their own.

#### 2.4.3 ZAMBIA

The curricula of Zambia are provided by the government through the Ministry of Education. The University of Zambia offers the education and certification for qualifications leading to diplomas and degrees. The government has close control over admission requirements and quotas, standards, examinations and certification (Chifwepa,1994:30). Professional bodies have no effective control of library education and training. This, according to Chifwepa, has had the negative effect where the non-graduate diploma was discontinued in spite of the fact that professionals still saw a great need for technically trained library workers in Zambia.

#### 2.4.4 MALAWI

The situation in Malawi is different from many other African countries. There is only one official library training course, namely, the Malawi Library Association's Library Assistant Certificate Course (MALA Course) (Dutton and Msiska,1994:26). This course is designed to produce personnel capable of managing small libraries without or with minimum supervision and is of eight months duration. The University of Malawi provides a librarian to coordinate the course while the tutoring is done by practitioners from major libraries and information centres in the country. Training is only available to personnel already employed within libraries, information centres, documentation centres and to teacher librarians.

Professional staff obtain their training from abroad. This has the unfortunate result of lack of relevance. As Dutton and Msiska (1994:27) put it

... there has ...been very little adaptation of library training in Malawi to meet the social needs and conditions within the country: with the exception of the training

of clerical level, all para-professional staff have received their training outside of the African continent. Their training has often been lacking in elements increasingly acknowledged as important to users of an oral-rather than book-based society.

#### 2.4.5 ZIMBABWE

According to Powell (1994:22), from the time of independence until 1987, the only library training that was offered in Zimbabwe was the City of Guilds of London Library Assistants Certificate. This course was offered part-time through the Library at the Harare Polytechnic and in Bulawayo through the Matabeleland branch of the Zimbabwe Library Association. This course was not relevant to the needs of the people of Zimbabwe because of its British orientation. Other problems were that there was a lack of appropriate course materials and the fact that the course was of a low level.

The Department of Library and Information Science opened at Harare Polytechnic in 1987. It offered a National Certificate and a National Diploma in Library and Information Science. The main problem was that the department relied heavily on part-time staff right from its establishment (Powell,1994:23).

The National Certificate was similar to the City of Guilds course except that a Social Studies component which covered the situation of Zimbabwe was offered and all the library courses were linked to Zimbabwe as an example. This was a positive step in addressing the need for relevance. Students who are admitted to the course on a part-time basis must be working in a library while full-time students must have two periods of practical attachment (Powell, 1994:23).

The National Diploma was intended to produce middle-level staff for libraries and was done over three years of full-time study. This has now been phased out to be replaced by a two-year National Diploma with an extra year to complete a Higher National Diploma.

Among the reasons for this change was the fact that most courses at the Harare Polytechnic follow the same structure and secondly, many students could not support themselves financially for three years and so dropped out. Thirdly, although the Diploma was only designed to provide middle-management staff, graduates ended up occupying more responsible positions (Powell,1994:23).

The staff structure in both Government and the University of Zimbabwe systems prevent National Diploma holders from being promoted above a certain level. The National Higher Diploma will allow staff to progress further and libraries in Zimbabwe will benefit by having better qualified staff (Powell,1994:23). There is a certifying body known as the Higher Education Examinations Council which has to give approval to any changes in the course content.

## 2.5 MAIN FEATURES OF PARA-PROFESSIONAL LIS TRAINING IN SELECTED SUB-SAHARAN COUNTRIES

The main feature of para-professional training in library and information work in most African countries seems to have a similar pattern. Most of the training is provided by universities and in some cases polytechnics. A distinct feature is that although they are trained to occupy middle level positions in libraries, diplomates end up running small libraries. This could be happening because of economic reasons where employers feel that it is more cost effective to employ diplomates rather than graduates. However, these diplomates end up performing similar duties to those that would be performed by graduates. A further reason could be that graduates prefer to work in larger libraries where there is more challenge and the jobs are probably more lucrative. This reinforces the need for para-professional training which should be accompanied by the recognition of their contribution to the LIS sector. Educators, professional bodies and governments should see this as an indication of a gap that needs to be filled in the training that is provided. Education and training for librarianship has been, or is in the process of being, adapted to suit local needs in many African countries. This is a positive sign that the cry for relevance



in the curriculum has been heard. However, some countries still need to do a lot of work before this need can be said to have been addressed.

In most African countries admission requirements include some experience in a library or any other information supplying agency. For example the University of Botswana only admits applicants who already hold a post in a library. This is done to alleviate the problem of unemployment after the completion of the training. Another possible reason for this prerequisite could be that people who have had library experience are likely to be more aware of the realities of the profession and are willing to make librarianship their career. This augers well for the various library schools as the drop out rate can be reduced. However, this is not the case in most South African institutions. The only institution that makes experience a prerequisite is Technikon Southern Africa. Given the history of South Africa this is not a bad idea because some of the people who study by correspondence live far from libraries and this programme would prove to be both abstract and difficult for them given their lack of exposure to an information setting. On the other hand people who would probably make good information workers are denied access to the programme on the basis of lack of exposure to information settings.

## 2.6 THE TECHNIKON CURRICULUM

South African technikons that offer para-professional training for library and information workers have a common curriculum hence the diploma is a national diploma. However, each technikon is at liberty to focus on issues that are of local interest in their teaching. Technikons that offer this diploma are the following: Cape Technikon, Port Elizabeth Technikon which is the convenor technikon, Pretoria Technikon, M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Southern Africa which offers a correspondence course. The convenor technikon “takes responsibility at national level for the development, introduction and maintenance according to existing policies and procedures of programmes or groups of programmes”(Committee of Technikon Principals, 1997).

The convenor technikon works hand in hand with the workgroup (comprising of representative experts from each technikon offering or intending to offer or to participate in the curriculum process). If a need for an amendment to and/or introduction of instructional programmes is identified, the programme and subject experts decide on which programmes are to be submitted to local industry to establish whether a need exists to design a curriculum for a diploma/degree or to amend an existing one. The findings are then passed on to the convenor technikon together with motivations for such a move. All contributions from various technikons are considered and a decision based on sufficient consensus is reached.

The convenor technikon or another initiating technikon appointed by the convenor technikon prepares a motivated submission and further documentation. All technikons are informed by letter of the intention to introduce a new programme and a questionnaire is enclosed together with the letter to give all technikons an opportunity to indicate whether they would like to offer the programme or just receive documentation regarding the proposed programme. Comment from all technikons that have shown interest are considered and all the documents are adjusted accordingly. The relevant forms are then finalised and the motivated submissions are forwarded to all interested technikons and the Executive Director of the Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP). Documents are then ready to be evaluated by relevant subject experts at each interested technikon. This process is followed by the completion of forms and the finalization of motivated submissions by the convenor technikon. These, together with any other relevant documentation are sent to the Executive Director of the CTP. Another evaluation takes place and, in the absence of dissatisfaction from any of the concerned parties, four copies of the final document are submitted to the Department of Education via the office of the CTP Executive Directorate (Committee of Technikon Principals, 1997:2-4).

While it is important to take cognisance of trends in other countries when developing the curriculum, it is equally important to try to address the needs of South Africa. The

development of the para-professional diploma in librarianship in South Africa took this important factor into consideration. The subjects for the National Diploma: Library and Information Services which was the first para-professional qualification to be provided by technikons was as follows:

Library and Information Technology 1, 2 and 3<sup>1</sup>:

- environmental safety, care and basic maintenance of all types of equipment found in libraries, theory of the principles and materials associated with equipment;

Library and Information Practice 1,2 and 3 :

- acquisition of materials, user services (circulation, basic reference techniques, and interlibrary loans), organization of materials (cataloguing and classification), care and storage of materials;

Biblio-cultural Studies:

- background to the history and nature of libraries, information media, the book trade and literature;

Library Promotion:

- display work including signage;

Preparation of Audio-Visual Software:

- programme design and scripting, audio-recording, filming and editing techniques;

Introduction to Computer Science:

- programming, algorithms, file organization, data structure, file input-output and maintenance, file security;

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<sup>1</sup>The numbers indicate the level at which each subject is studied

Communication in English:

- writing articles, reports, letters, language usage and content analysis, meeting procedures, oral communication;

Kommunikasie in Afrikaans: as above but in Afrikaans

Practical Psychology:

- basic social psychology, human relations, personality types, behaviour, communication, the work situation;

Typing:

- keyboard mastery, basic layout, introduction to typewriters, telex and word processing. (Kerkham, 1988:9).

The Diploma was changed to the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice in 1992. This change brought with it changes in the curriculum which were perceived to be in line with needs of industry. Subjects that were taken for this new diploma were the following:

Library and Information Technology 1 and 2:

- the media centre: its history, categories of media and equipment, audiovisual equipment, office equipment, reprographic and binding equipment, ergonomics, library automation, information technology and telecommunications, library safety, description of the telecommunications infrastructures in southern Africa and the services available, description of hardware and software for local area networks, description of networking services, description of CD ROM hardware and software, and computer applications in libraries;

Information Retrieval 1, 2 and 3:

- history of information retrieval, format of the book, catalogues, cooperative cataloguing, practical cataloguing of monographs, filing rules, classification- aims and functions, practical classification using the *Dewey decimal classification* scheme, 19th ed., subject headings-using *Sears list of subject headings*, 13th ed., indexing, bibliographic techniques, the reference process, evaluating reference sources, ready reference sources, subject reference sources, simple on-line searches;

#### Library and Information Practice 1, 2 and 3:

- history of libraries and information media, legislation affecting user services in libraries, library and information services as a profession, library and information services, the book trade, collection development, management and control of serials, care of library materials, lay-out, maintenance and security of premises, circulation control systems, general office practice, staff management in library and information work, introduction to readership, reading behaviour, community analysis, promoting reading and introduction to research methodology ;

#### Library Promotion:

- marketing the library, public relations programmes, press relations, internal and external publications, reprographic processes, exhibitions, art techniques, audio-visual programmes and user orientation;

#### Human Studies:

- history and appreciation of children's literature, history and appreciation of art and music, orientation to science and technology, history of and literary appreciation of English literature and African literature in English;

#### Practical Psychology:

- survey of the development of psychology, psychology in society, value of

psychology for library staff, behaviour, development of self, theories of personality, influence of social factors and behaviour, communication, the work situation;

Typing:

- keyboard skills and office typing skills;

Introduction to Computers:

- personal computer hardware and software, and practical work which looked at care and management of hardware and software, word processing, spreadsheets, database management programmes, integrated and integrating programmes;

Communication in English; and one of the following:

Communication in Zulu A, Communication in Xhosa A or Communication in Afrikaans B (M.L. Sultan Technikon, 1994:3-8).

In the new curriculum Library and Information Technology was only done up to second year level as opposed to third year level in the old one. Content for this subject was expanded in response to technological developments, for example, the inclusion of telecommunications infrastructures in southern Africa and the services available. Another change was the introduction of a new major subject, namely, Information Retrieval which, among other things, covered the cataloguing and classification of monographs, indexing and abstracting, reference work and bibliography. Initially, these aspects were covered as part of Library and Information Practice. Biblio-cultural Studies was done away with and what used to be covered in this subject was made part of Library and Information Practice which was a second major subject. Communication in English and Kommunikasie in Afrikaans remained, but African languages were accepted as alternatives to Afrikaans.

At the beginning of 1996 the Diploma was, as mentioned earlier, again changed to the National Diploma: Library and Information Studies with a view to changing the focus from libraries to other information supplying agencies. Some technikons opted to offer the National Certificate (M+1)<sup>2</sup> and the National Higher certificate (M+2) <sup>3</sup>while others offered the full diploma (Van Aswegen,1997:56). However, it is not clear what position the holders of the above- mentioned certificates will be able to hold in libraries and information supplying agencies. To accommodate this change, it became necessary to re-curriculate. The new syllabus is as follows:

#### Library and Information Practice 1,2 and 3:

- general orientation to information environments, orientation to library and information services, orientation to legislation affecting information provision, circulation services, general office practice, the book trade and publishing, acquisition and procedures, periodical control, library administration and other routines, introduction to readership, extension activities and readers' advisory services, book discussion techniques and reviews, community analysis, orientation in management techniques and financial control;

#### Library and Information Technology 1 and 2:

- equipment and formats of recorded information, reprographic and office equipment, ergonomics, office and library safety, computer applications in libraries, description of network hardware and telecommunications, on-line bibliographic database services, issues in LAN management;

#### Information Retrieval 1, 2 and 3:

- orientation and bibliographic control (principles and products), arrangement of

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<sup>2</sup> Matriculation plus one year of LIS training

<sup>3</sup>Matriculation plus two years of LIS training

materials, reference sources, cataloguing and classification, OPAC searches, subject headings, introduction to indexing, bibliographic techniques, the reference process;

#### End-user Computing:

- computer types, hardware and software, keyboard skills, operating systems and environments, software packages for word processing, spreadsheet, database, and graphic applications;

#### Human Studies:

- history and appreciation of art and music, orientation to science and technology, societal themes e.g. culture, information, knowledge, work ethics, the role and function of business in society, etc.;

#### Literature Studies:

- history and appreciation of children's literature, history and appreciation of African literature and African literature in English, history and appreciation of English literature;

#### Psychology in Organisations:

- concepts and developments in organisational behaviour, personality types and human relations, motivation, communication, the work situation;

#### Library Promotion:

- marketing the library and special services, outreach activities and special services, press relations and public relations programmes, internal and external publications, material and techniques in library promotion ( including exhibitions, art techniques, photography)



Communication in English and one of the following:

Communication in Afrikaans B, Communication in Zulu A or Communication in Xhosa A ( M.L. Sultan Technikon, 1997:2-4).

Another important development is the introduction of a fourth year of study towards the B.Tech: Library and Information Studies. This aims at enabling the graduate to occupy professional positions in information supplying agencies. However, at this stage it is not yet clear whether employers will accept this category of professional because in the past, diplomates have had to enrol for a B.Bibl or BA plus post-graduate diploma at a university before they were afforded professional status (Van Aswegen, 1997:55). Before this programme could be offered the curricular process discussed above was undertaken and all concerned agreed that technikons should go ahead . At the moment, the M.L.Sultan Technikon is offering this degree on a part-time basis only.

Ongoing discussion among all participating technikons ensures that there is uniformity in the offerings and that articulation between technikons is facilitated as laid down by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Further details on the NQF will be provided under 2.7 below. However, at the time of writing, there appeared to be very little access and articulation between technikons and universities with respect to library and information training.

A major component of a technikon qualification in library and information work is the six-month cooperative training programme which is spread over the second and third years of study. Cooperative training is a system which tries to integrate classroom instruction with practical training and experience in the work place. Various terms such as “in-service training”, “experiential training” have been used interchangeably with cooperative training. Van Rensburg and Fowler (1989) have differentiated between “in-service

training” and “experiential teaching”. The former refers to training which has been systematically planned and carried out by a trainer within the organization, or externally on behalf of the organization. In this sense, in-service training then implies training that an employee will obtain in a particular job situation. Experiential teaching is defined as the provision of opportunities for students to obtain hands-on experience on the job. It is an extension of, and elaboration of the formal components of education. This definition is synonymous with cooperative education. However, in this study the term “cooperative training” was used. This system relies on contributions made by potential employers and educational institutions towards the training of students for specific careers (M.L. Sultan Technikon,1997:6).

The six months of cooperative training exposes the student to the real work situation. This, in addition to the theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom assists the student in developing appropriate skills and attitudes. When a student finds him/herself in a work situation during cooperative training, learning and training take place formally and informally. To enhance this exercise further, employers are provided with guidelines as to what the student has been and is being trained for. This is particularly helpful because it eliminates misinterpretations of what the technikon diplomate can and cannot do.

Lecturers also get involved by visiting students during cooperative training in order to get a better understanding of the nature of the information supplying agency, to help the student with whatever problems s/he may have and also to strengthen the relationship with the host. These informal visits can provide educators with valuable information about the strengths and weaknesses of the programme.

The period of cooperative training is spread out between the second and third years. The first six-week session takes place during the June/July holidays of the second year of training. Students are given the opportunity to work in a large public or academic library. At the end of this session they have to write a comprehensive report which is used to

assess their understanding of the host library and how it works. In December or early January, students are required to undertake a two-week promotion exercise in an information supplying agency of their choice. This also gets assessed by the lecturer.

In their third year of study, students are required to complete four months of cooperative training preferably in a special library. At the end of each month, they have to submit a report pertaining to their training. In addition to these reports, students have to compile a bibliography, a database and conduct a survey into reading or information needs of the host institution. The above exercises are an attempt to further enhance their preparedness for the actual work situation.

## 2.7 THE TECHNIKON CURRICULUM AND THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The National Qualifications Framework is expected to provide access to lifelong learning by means of nationally recognised levels on which all learning standards and qualifications will be registered. Its aim is to facilitate an intergrated approach to education and training which will in turn facilitate human resource development in South Africa. The concepts of access and articulation, that is, the ability for persons to move from one institution to the other (and get accreditation) and also the ability to exit the training process at a certain level with some recognized qualification are an integral part of the NQF. Another important feature of the NQF is that it recognises prior learning where a learner can get accreditation for learning that has taken place outside the formal learning situation, for example at the work place. This will enable learners who have not had the opportunity to obtain formal education to gain access to institutions of higher learning. The NQF divides learning into various levels. The main categories or bands into which these levels fall are General Education and Training Certificate which is level one; Further Education and Training Certificate which comprises levels two to four and Higher Education and Training which comprises levels five to eight. Technikon education falls into level five of this band (Department of Education).

In terms of the critical outcomes as laid down by the South African Qualifications Authority, technikons like many other institutions of higher learning are still faced with the challenge of ensuring that these outcomes are realised. Currently, and as discussed above, technikon education has always endeavoured to help learners to use science and technology efficiently and effectively. It could be argued that this is certainly the case with library and information diplomates. This could be viewed as one of the strengths of technikon diplomates.

Another feature of the technikon curriculum that is worth mentioning in relation to the NQF is that it is outcomes based. From its inception, the technikon curriculum has always strived to be career-oriented. The emphasis is on what students are able to do when they finish the diploma and the assessment of students is obviously an important exercise in this regard. Presently, the assessment of library and information students is heavily dependent on examinations. One of the challenges facing technikons, like all other learning institutions, is to work on other ways of assessing the learners' performance. At the M.L.Sultan Technikon, some departments have already started with continuous assessment. For the National Diploma: Library and Information Studies, only one subject, namely, Library Promotion, is assessed in this manner. Given that the nature of a great deal of library and information work is practically based, outcomes-based education and continuous assessment are appropriate.

## 2.8 EVALUATION OF THE DIPLOMA

The Human Sciences Research Council evaluated the National Diploma: Library and Information Services and recognized it as 'Senior Certificate plus three years' training at its inception in 1986. This meant that the Diploma was on a par with any other National Diploma "and the diplomates should therefore be appointed on the same rank and salary scale as other technicians with National Diplomas..." (Kerkham, 1988:9). In spite of the professionalization of librarianship as discussed earlier on, this does not seem to be taking place in most libraries. While it is apparent that employers have recognised the importance

of the skills attained by diplomates, it is also apparent that most employers employ diplomates on the same level as library assistants with a matriculation and no library training. Libraries seem to have only two categories of workers, namely the professional and the administrative staff. This brings about dissatisfaction on the part of diplomates who feel that their training is being utilised without the recognition that should accompany it.

Van Aswegen (1997:57) notes that

the rosy future envisaged by Kerkham has not been fulfilled. With the exception of corporate and special libraries, where technikon graduates with their superior computer and office management skills have found an expert niche..... technikon graduates have, up to now, been forced to travel the long and expensive road of “re-education” at a university to obtain true professional status.

The researcher contacted other South African technikons (Port Elizabeth Technikon, Cape Technikon, Pretoria Technikon and Technikon South African) that are involved in the training of library and information work para-professionals to find out whether they had conducted evaluative studies of the diploma. The response from all four technikons was negative. This highlights the need for a study of this nature to be undertaken if technikon training is to address the question of curriculum relevance.

South Africa's approach to curriculum development in library and information education still needs to be critically and continually examined because of the nature of society in this country. The juxtaposition of developed and developing communities has a strong influence on the curriculum. Developed communities have different information needs and are the major employers. This puts developing communities at a disadvantage because training is geared towards specific identified needs and these tend to be those of developed communities. During cooperative training students go to established information supplying agencies which are mainly in urban areas and these potential employers provide feedback according to their needs. Rural communities who do not have information

supplying agencies do not get the opportunity to provide input towards training needs.

## 2.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the development of LIS education in South Africa was outlined. The role of the para-professional in the library was discussed and training trends in selected Sub-Saharan countries were outlined. An attempt was made to place the technikon curriculum within the context of the National Qualifications Framework. The evaluation of the diploma was briefly described.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to explain the research methods used in this study. As indicated in Chapter 1, the purpose of the study was to evaluate the preparedness of National Diploma: Library and Information Practice diplomates for the work situation. This chapter will thus explain the research methods used and their rationale. The first part of the chapter discusses the concept of evaluation, placing the present study within an evaluation framework. The second part of the chapter outlines and discusses the method and data collection technique used in the study, namely, survey and mail questionnaires respectively. Sampling methods are also briefly outlined.

#### 3.2 EVALUATION

##### 3.2.1 DEFINITIONS OF EVALUATION

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989:447) defines evaluation as “ the action of appraising or valuing.” According to Bawden (1990:49) evaluation is "the process of systematically assessing the effectiveness against a predetermined norm, standard or expressed goal." It is the process of identifying and collecting data about specific services or activities, establishing criteria by which their success can be assessed, and determining both the quality of the service or activity and the degree to which the service or activity accomplishes stated goals and objectives ( Bawden,1990:49).

Effective evaluation demands that a decision on the entity to be evaluated be taken. The entity can be a group, a product, a method, an organisation or a management system. There needs to be a careful delineation of the entity to be evaluated and all its components (McMillan and Schumacher, 1989:478). The function of evaluation is to place a value on the thing being appraised (McMillan and Schumacher,1989:474). The above authors

define educational evaluation as the application of research skills to determine the worth of an educational practice. The merit or worth of a service or an activity are measured against predetermined norms and standards. Merit refers to "those valued characteristics intrinsic to the practice for which there is relatively consistent agreement among professional peers and groups" (McMillan and Schumacher, 1989: 474). It is therefore evident that merit is relative and the criteria according to which it is assessed can differ depending on the parties involved. Worth is determined by an assessment of local needs conducted by normative methods. Thus if the site for some practice changes, then its worth also changes (McMillan and Schumacher, 1989:474).

Bawden (1990:16) maintains that evaluations can be objective or subjective. Subjective evaluations are those that seek opinions of, for instance, users of an information system regarding its merits and value or otherwise. Objective evaluations are essentially probabilistic in the sense that answers given depend on a lot of probabilities. This can be interpreted to mean that objective evaluations depend on the situation being evaluated. He discusses the argument of whether evaluation should be qualitative or quantitative. He feels that this is a synthetic and misleading distinction because although evaluation is essentially concerned with quality, there is some quantitative component in any evaluation procedure (Bawden, 1990:13). Carl (1995:13) maintains that evaluation does not just include the quantitative description but includes the qualitative as well as the quantitative description of achievement.

The present study is a subjective one because opinions of diplomates and their employers were sought regarding the preparedness of the former for the work situation.

### 3.2.2 WHY EVALUATE?

It is essential to look at why evaluation is being done, by whom it is going to be conducted, data necessary for effective evaluation, how this data will be analysed, etc. (Pratt, 1994: 306). According to Nixon (1992:25-28), evaluation must always have a



purpose, that is, the purpose of evaluation is in terms of the impact that it will have. One such impact is that of shared understanding. This can be achieved by an evaluation alerting, challenging and serving as a stabilizing force between policy and practice. Policy makers and practitioners need to be alerted to the need for critical thinking in what they do. In examining themselves critically, new challenges can be identified and in some cases, the assurance that what is being done will lead to the achievement of the set goals.

Other purposes of evaluation have been identified by Patton (1988:13) who sees evaluation as a useful force in “influencing change, directly affecting decisions, immediate program improvement, and follow-through on specific recommendations for improvement.” He maintains that evaluation should be accountable, utilization-focused and saleable (marketable). It is the responsibility of the evaluator to ensure that the above criteria are met by any evaluation. If evaluation is used to make programmes more effective and provide information for decision-making, then it is useful and accountable because it is serving the needs of those affected by the entity being evaluated. In order to increase the usefulness of a programme, an evaluator needs to create from the very beginning, a positive expectancy that the evaluation is to be useful.

Eisner (1994:171) maintains that educational evaluation performs five main functions. These are to diagnose, to revise curricula, to compare programmes, to anticipate educational needs and to determine if objectives have been achieved. It is the last named function of evaluation that this study is concerned with, namely, determining if objectives of the programme have been achieved (these objectives were stated in 1.3). For this to take place effectively, educational programmes must have specific goals which will be used as criteria for evaluating whether they have been achieved. However, Eisner (1994:171) warns against placing too much emphasis on stated objectives only as this can lead the evaluator into overlooking other important outcomes which were not intended but which are equally important. Some of the possible outcomes of this study could be the possible revision of the curriculum and the identification of other educational needs. The evaluator

is thus required to have a much wider evaluative net than just the pre-planned objectives. Evaluation demands that relevant questions are asked by the evaluator. This enables the stakeholders (in the present study diplomates and employers) to establish what the current situation is and how it can be improved. It is imperative that utility and accountability are the focal points throughout the evaluation process.

### 3.2.3 CURRICULUM EVALUATION

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989:152) the word curriculum means “a regular course of study or training, as at a school or university.” Songhe as cited by Carl (1995:31) traces the origin of the word to the Latin word “curro” which means a race, a track, or a racetrack. He therefore sees the curriculum as “the educational track on which pupils move under the leadership of their teacher on the way to adulthood.” According to South Africa’s Department of Education (1997:10), curriculum is defined as “everything planned by educators which will help develop the learner”. This is a very broad definition and includes extra-mural and other activities that take place outside the classroom. A curriculum should be aimed at developing a learner’s intelligence, attitudes, knowledge and values. The approach that was adopted for this study was to focus on the activities that took place in the classroom in terms of how they are applied in the work situation.

When one decides to evaluate the curriculum, it means that one is trying to compare two images, namely, the ideal and the actual in order to see how well they coincide. Thus the aim of curriculum evaluation is to change the actual to make it coincide with the ideal (Williams, 1974:5). In terms of this study the ideal would be a situation where diplomates are able to perform all duties for which they were trained competently without any assistance whatsoever. The actual is the level of preparedness of diplomates, that is, the extent to which diplomates require assistance or even further training to perform duties for which they were trained. The study tried to see how far apart the ideal was from the actual.

In education, two types of evaluation are identified, namely, curriculum evaluation and programme evaluation. Curriculum evaluation refers to the determination of the worth of a document (the curriculum) while programme evaluation involves the determining of the worth of activities that occur when a curriculum is implemented (Pratt, 1994: 297). Posner (1992:232) describes curriculum evaluation as the determination of the worth of a document or a judgement about the value of the educational experiences afforded to the students. According to Posner curriculum evaluation looks at, among other things, the appropriateness of these experiences, how these educational experiences can be improved, etc. This study was concerned with this latter definition of curriculum evaluation where the worth of educational experiences was to be determined. Posner's definition is a broad one and also encompasses what Pratt calls programme evaluation. The present study subscribes to Posner's definition.

Curriculum evaluation is an aspect or phase of curriculum development. Curriculum development comprises a number of phases, namely, curriculum design, curriculum dissemination, curriculum implementation and curriculum evaluation (Carl, 1995). Evaluation is a continuous process that is necessary before, after and during all stages of curriculum development.

### 3.2.4 METHODS OF EVALUATION

There are different methods of curriculum evaluation that can be used. The appropriate method to be used at any given time is determined by the level at which curriculum development is done. For example, evaluation can be done at a macro level where the evaluator will want to determine how effective the broad curriculum is, or at a micro level where the evaluator will want to ascertain the effectiveness of the subject curriculum. The subject teachers will want to evaluate the effectiveness of syllabi and the progress of pupils. In this context one can then talk about pupil-oriented and curriculum-oriented evaluation (Carl, 1995:121). The following are some of the methods that can be used in curriculum and pupil-oriented evaluations:

#### 3.2.4.1 Summative evaluation

Summative evaluation is mainly a summarizing evaluation which takes place at the end of the instructional learning process. This can be equated to product evaluation because it is done when the curriculum has been finalised ( Carl,1995:121).

#### 3.2.4.2 Formative evaluation

Formative evaluation is ongoing and can take place at the discretion of the evaluator. It involves the collection of data in order to modify or revise a curriculum in the developmental stage (McMillan and Schumacher,1989:475). Feedback obtained from this type of evaluation can lead to the modification or revision of the curriculum in the development phase. De Corte as cited by Carl(1995:121) maintains that it is desirable to evaluate the product during the development phase on an ongoing basis in order to ensure relevance and appropriate changes. He also sees this as affording an opportunity to identify and correct errors promptly.

#### 3.2.4.3 Norm-oriented evaluation

Norm-oriented evaluation compares the learner's achievement with the average achievement of the group. Questions asked for this evaluation are of varying degrees of difficulty so as to accommodate learners with different abilities. The aim here is to obtain a normal spread of points (Carl,1995:122).

#### 3.2.4.4 Criterion-oriented evaluation

Criterion-oriented evaluation compares the pupil with one or other objective criterion and not with the class average. The evaluator determines abilities which learners should possess. The aim here is on the total mastery of given abilities or skills (Carl,1995:122).

#### 3.2.4.5 Pre-evaluation

This evaluation is done to determine the pre-knowledge and skills of learners. It makes planning more effective by indicating learners' potential and interests ( Carl,1995:123).

#### 3.2.4.6 Illuminative evaluation

Illuminative evaluation is a form of process evaluation during which change/renewal of a programme (including the curriculum) as a whole is intensively studied. This encompasses a total evaluation of the rationale, development, progress, success and the problems encountered. Instruments such as observation, interviews, questionnaires and analysis of documents form part of this whole process ( Carl, 1995:122).

This study will conduct an illuminative evaluation with special emphasis on the successes and problems encountered by diplomats in the work situation from the point of view of diplomats and their employers.

#### 3.2.5 EVALUATION RESEARCH

Evaluation research is not one technique but it encompasses all useful methodologies used in social research. It is research that is not done for its own sake but is done with the specific aim of helping decision-makers improve the situation under investigation, that is, evaluation research is action research. This kind of research needs to be user-oriented and it must be aimed at the needs of “specific and identifiable people, and not at a vague and passive audience” (Bawden,1990:23). The direct involvement of users of the situation under study is critical and all questions asked must be relevant to them.

Evaluation research is judged according to certain standards. These are **utility**, which serves to ensure that an evaluation will serve the practical as well as information needs of given audiences; **feasibility**, which ensures that an evaluation will be realistic, frugal and diplomatic; **propriety**, which ensures that the evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved and affected by the findings of such an evaluation; and **accuracy**, which ensures that the evaluation will state and convey technically adequate information about the features of the practice studied that determine its value ( McMillan and Schumacher,1989:477).

As mentioned under section 3.2.4.6, this study is illuminative because it aimed at identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the diploma. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the target audience were diplomates who completed the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice between 1994 and 1996 inclusive. The entity that was evaluated was the programme under which this group of diplomates studied. The activities for which this group was trained for were used as criteria against which their preparedness was measured. It is a macro-level study because it focused on the effectiveness of the broad curriculum.

In conducting the study, the researcher tried to ensure that the above-mentioned conditions were met. The utility of the study was envisaged as the way in which the study will close an information gap that exists in curriculum development. It is hoped that programme experts, curriculum developers and educators in the field of library and information work will find the study useful. The study was considered feasible because the target group under investigation had the knowledge and the ability to supply the required information. The instrument used for the collection of data was constructed with this group in mind. Ethical considerations were taken care of by respecting and ensuring the confidentiality of respondents while emphasizing the importance of their contributions.

### 3.3 RESEARCH METHOD

In order to evaluate any entity, it is important to decide on the entity, identify stakeholders and decide on the type of evaluation that has to be conducted. In the present study, the entity to be evaluated was the programme (by examining the curriculum), stakeholders were diplomates and their employers and the evaluation was illuminative in nature. As mentioned under section 3.2.4.6, an illuminative evaluation uses techniques such as observation, interviews, questionnaires and analysis of documents. Questionnaires were used to collect data for this study. A questionnaire is one of the instruments used in surveys. Surveys are particularly useful in finding out opinions and this study was an

attempt to find out the opinions of diplomates and their employers regarding the preparedness of the former for the work situation.

### 3.3.1 SURVEY RESEARCH

#### 3.3.1.1 WHAT IS A SURVEY?

On defining the word “survey”, Leedy (1989:141) says that it is composed of two elements: “sur-” which comes from Latin and means “above,” “over” or “beyond”; while the element “videre” means “to look” or “to see.” Thus “survey” means “to look or to see over or beyond.” Powell (1985:62) maintains that many researchers use the terms “survey research methods” and “descriptive survey” interchangeably. Leedy (1989:140) uses the term “descriptive survey” to refer to the “method of research that looks with intense accuracy at the phenomena of the moment and then describe precisely what the researcher sees.” Jaeger (1988:304) defines survey research as a research study in which data is collected from members of a group for purposes of estimating one or more population parameters. According to him, the critical objective of the survey researcher is to present all respondents with questions that they will understand and interpret in exactly the same way. The survey research method aims to describe specific characteristics of a large group of persons, objects, or institutions (Jaeger, 1988:303).

Leedy (1989:142) has outlined the major characteristics of the descriptive survey in the following manner: the descriptive survey method uses the technique of observation as the principal means of collecting data; the descriptive survey demands that the population under study must be carefully chosen, clearly defined and specifically delimited in order to set precise parameters; the data collected in the descriptive survey method is susceptible to distortion because of bias that can be introduced in the research design; lastly, the data that is collected needs to be organized and presented systematically so that valid and accurate conclusions can be drawn.

Before proceeding any further, some of the terminology used in survey research will be briefly outlined. **Population** refers to any group of persons, objects or institutions that have at least one characteristic in common. In some instances it is not practical or possible to conduct a survey among the whole population. In these cases, a sample is drawn from the population. A **sample** is that part of the population that is used to collect data. **Bias** in research design refers “to any influence, or condition, or set of conditions that singly or together distort from what may have been obtained under the conditions of pure chance; furthermore, bias is any influence that may have disturbed the randomness by which choice of a sample population has been selected” (Leedy, 1989:166). Bias is inherent in any research but Powell(1985:65) suggests that when it appears, the researcher should at least acknowledge its presence and indicate how it affects the results of the study. Sampling and bias in research design are further discussed under section 3.3.1.2 and 3.3.1.3, respectively.

One of the advantages of the survey method is that it enables the researcher to study a large number of geographically dispersed cases. It is also useful in finding out opinions of a group of people regarding an issue (Powell, 1985:59-60). As indicated above, one of the major disadvantages of this method is that data used in survey research is susceptible to distortion through the introduction of bias into the research design (Leedy,1989:142).

### 3.3.1.2 SAMPLING

There are two basic types of sampling, namely, probability and nonprobability sampling (Powell,1985:69; Leedy,1993:200). In nonprobability sampling, the researcher cannot guarantee that the elements of the sample will be representative of the total population while probability sampling is more scientific in nature. Nonprobability sampling is easier and cheaper than probability sampling. It is divided into three kinds, namely, accidental or convenience sampling, quota sampling and purposive sampling. In probability sampling the researcher can decide on the characteristics of the sample and to a large extent ensure



that the sample is homogeneous. Probability sampling enhances the likelihood of selecting a set of elements that accurately represents the total population from which the elements were drawn (Powell, 1985:71).

In the present study no sampling was done. The small size of the target population, namely, diplomates on the one hand and their employers on the other, and the focus of the study meant that the entire population could be surveyed.

### 3.3.1.3 POPULATION

For this study, a group of 38 diplomates was identified as the target group (that is, they completed their diplomas between 1994 and 1996 inclusive). On close examination of this group, it was found that two of them had actually studied under the old curriculum (National Diploma: Library and Information Services) but had converted their diplomas for various reasons. On this basis, the two were eliminated from the target group. Out of the remaining 36 diplomates, 3 had box numbers as contact addresses and 5 had no contact addresses at all which left a total of 31 diplomates (including those who could be contacted through box numbers only) who could be surveyed.

Employers of the above group of diplomates were identified as the second group of respondents. In most instances, the contact address of each diplomate indicated his/her place of employment. For those diplomates who had just provided box numbers as contact addresses, it was not always possible to identify some of their employers. The total number of employers who could be surveyed was 28.

### 3.3.1.4 BIAS IN RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to a plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures to answer research questions (McMillan and Schumacher, 1989:158). A sound research design increases the credibility of research results. Sometimes bias occurs in the research design. Careful planning can eliminate or reduce sources of error or bias. Bias in

research design affects the credibility of results. Powell (1985:84-6) discusses causes of error in sampling which can result in bias. These are sample size and sampling procedures. However, as no sampling was done for this study, there was no danger of bias in research design which could have resulted from the above.

As far as this study was concerned, there was another possible cause of bias, namely the fact that the researcher is involved in the education and training of the diplomates. The researcher made an undertaking to treat any information provided as confidential. The fact that respondents did not have to indicate who they were was a further measure for eliminating bias. However, respondents were requested to be as frank and honest as possible in order to render their input valuable.

### 3.3.1.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

#### 3.3.1.5.1 VALIDITY

Validity refers to the soundness and the effectiveness of a measuring instrument . It raises questions as to what the instrument measures, whether it measures what it is supposed to measure, and whether it is accurate and comprehensive (Leedy,1989:28). This has a direct impact on the questions that the researcher asks. Only questions that have direct relevance to the study need be asked to ensure the validity of the instrument. Leedy (1989:27) discusses the most common types of validity. These are: face validity which refers to the subjective judgement of the researcher and addresses questions of whether the instrument in fact measures what it is supposed to measure and whether the sample is representative of the population under study; criterion validity which addresses the question of standards against which the results of the instrument that is doing the measuring can be measured; content validity which refers to the accuracy with which the instrument measures the factors or situations under study; construct validity which is concerned with the degree to which the construct is actually measured; internal validity which is the freedom from bias in forming conclusions in view of data; and external

validity which is concerned with generalizability of the conclusions reached through observation of a sample to the universe.

For the purposes of this study, and in terms of face validity, the whole population was used because of the small numbers of diplomates of this diploma as mentioned. Questions which pertained to their curriculum were asked and the researcher felt that answers to these would give an indication of their preparedness. In order to counteract any bias on the part of diplomates' responses, and also to get another perspective, a similar questionnaire was also sent to the diplomates' employers. The researcher assumed that immediate supervisors of the diplomates would provide the necessary information although the questionnaires were addressed to heads of libraries in order to follow protocol. This proved to be the case in most instances except in cases where diplomates themselves were in charge. Employers who responded enclosed complementary slips which showed who they were and the positions they held in their organizations. In instances where people other than immediate supervisors responded there were explanations. For example in some libraries local authorities were the employers but the libraries were affiliated to the KwaZuluNatal Provincial Library Services (KZNPLS). On the basis of employers not being able to provide answers, a KZNPLS representative who visits these libraries on a regular basis responded to the questionnaire(s). Questions asked about the various subjects were broken into smaller components to ensure that interpretations of these did not differ. The criteria against which the standard of the questionnaire should be measured were the tasks for which diplomates were trained. These were taken from Kerkham(1988) and from M.L. Sultan Technikon (1994) and have been outlined in Chapter Two. This step was taken to ensure criterion validity. It is believed that bias in the formation of conclusions will be minimized because of the quantitative nature of this study. This study can be used as a basis for further studies before any generalizations can be made.

### 3.3.1.5.2. RELIABILITY

Reliability is concerned with the accuracy of the instrument (Leedy,1989:30 ). It refers to the consistency of the observations obtained through the instrument employed in the study. If a study is duplicated using the same procedures and techniques, the same results should be obtained. This indicates reliability in research design (Powell,1985:37). Powell further discusses reliability in measurement. He maintains that any measurement is comprised of the true score and the error of measurement. An instrument is therefore said to be reliable if the error component is reasonably small and does not fluctuate greatly from one observation to another.

There are methods that are used to assess the reliability of an instrument. One of these methods is the test-retest method where the same instrument is used twice to collect data from the same group of subjects. If there is correlation between the results, then the instrument is considered reliable. Another method of assessing the reliability of an instrument is called the split-half method. In this method the researcher splits the measuring instrument into two sets of questions after it has been administered. The scores of the two equal halves are then compared to determine how similar or close the results are. The closer the results, the more reliable the instrument (Powell, 1985:38).

In this study, the population was homogeneous in as far as the curriculum under which they studied was concerned. This, according to Powell (1985:39) increases the chances of the reliability of the sample. However, there may be differences in terms of the level of preparedness of diplomates depending on the approaches of lecturers and also the understanding and ability of students themselves.

### 3.3.2 PILOTING

For purposes of this study, the instrument was given to three diplomates who completed the National Diploma: Library and Information Services which is the first library para-professional training diploma offered by technikons. These respondents were selected

mainly because of their accessibility and also because they worked in different types of libraries. This was done mainly to establish the validity of the instrument by identifying any problem areas in the instrument. All three respondents provided consistent answers which indicated that there was no difficulty in understanding and interpreting the questions.

Respondents were also asked to identify any problems that they encountered in answering the questions.

Employers of the same diplomates were requested to complete a similar questionnaire. However, only one employer who was an immediate supervisor of the diplomate concerned was available to do this. Answers provided by this employer indicated that there was no misunderstanding of the questions asked and also that there were no difficulties encountered in answering the questions.

### 3.3.3 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

Survey research uses three techniques for collecting data. These are the mail questionnaires, interviews and observation. In the present study, the mail questionnaire was used as a data collection technique. This technique was selected for various reasons. First, the population under study was geographically dispersed and the other two techniques of data collection would not be suitable. Second, it was important that respondents gave frank and honest answers, therefore an undertaking had been made by the researcher to secure their confidentiality - something which could encourage frankness and honesty. The researcher felt that, because of her current position (lecturer), respondents might not feel at ease to be critical even though there might have been a need to do so had a face-to-face interview been conducted. Third, the questions asked necessitated that respondents take time to think about their answers in order to come up with honest and accurate answers. Again a mail questionnaire which allows respondents to answer in their own time was suitable for this. Finally, given the geographically dispersed population that was being surveyed, the mail questionnaire was the most

economical technique in terms of both time and financial cost.

In spite of the above points which show the advantages of the mail questionnaire, Powell (1985:90-1) has pointed out the disadvantages of this technique. First, mail questionnaires eliminate personal contact between the researcher and the respondent. However, in this study, personal contact may have inhibited honest responses. The mail questionnaire does not allow the respondent to qualify answers to ambiguous questions. This can sometimes be an advantage though because the researcher is more likely to get consistent answers. Samples used in mail questionnaires can be biased in the sense that although carefully selected, there is a tendency for people who feel strongly about an issue to respond and those that do not feel strongly not to respond. This results in a biased sample. However, as no sampling was done for this study, this was not a concern. Mail questionnaires may be difficult for uneducated people to complete. Again this was not an issue in this study because all respondents had a high level of education.

*Open-ended q.*

Powell (1985:93) identifies two basic types of questionnaires, namely, those containing open-ended and those containing fixed responses or closed questions. Open-ended questions allow free responses from participants. Fixed response questions limit responses of participants to stated alternatives. Each of the two types of questions have advantages and disadvantages. Open-ended questions provide respondents with the opportunity to indicate points which might not be catered for in closed questions. The main advantage of open-ended questions is that there is no limit to answers that can be provided by respondents. They are particularly useful in exploratory studies (Powell, 1985:92). Closed questions tend to have more reliability because of limited set of responses provided. This can also be a disadvantage because respondents are forced to select answers which they would not provide if asked open-ended questions.

✓ In this study a combination of open-ended and closed questions were asked. The diplomats' questionnaire (Appendix A) comprised fourteen questions. The first nine

were mainly biographical in nature but were deemed useful because they formed the basis for Question 10. Question 10 which was the crux of this questionnaire was subdivided into fourteen sections where tasks were listed and each task was broken down into its constituent parts. Respondents were requested to rate these tasks on a scale of 1-5 to indicate their preparedness for the work situation. Questions 11, 12 and 13 sought opinions of diplomates regarding the shortcomings, strengths and necessary improvements for the diploma. Question 14 was intended for those diplomates who were not employed in information supplying agencies to determine if this was due to shortcomings in their training.

The employers' questionnaire (Appendix B) comprised five questions. Question 1 asked for the name of the organization. Question 2 was subdivided into fourteen sections where tasks were listed and each task was broken down into its constituent parts. Thus respondents were requested to rate these on a scale of 1-5 according to their observation of the preparedness of diplomates for each task. The wording of Question 2 was the same as that of Question 10 of the diplomates' questionnaire. Questions 3 and 4 sought opinions of employers about the diploma. The last question asked whether the respondent felt that the diplomate was usefully employed in his/her place of employment.

#### 3.3.3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTION

Thirty one questionnaires were mailed to the diplomates who worked and lived in different parts of South Africa. For some of these diplomates the only contact address was a box number which unfortunately did not indicate the place of employment. An accompanying letter, requesting the cooperation of diplomates and explaining the purpose of the study was enclosed (Appendix A).

Another twenty eight questionnaires and an accompanying letter were sent to employers of these diplomates (Appendix B).

### 3.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the concept of evaluation was discussed in order to put the present study into perspective. In the discussion, methods of educational evaluation were also briefly outlined. It was concluded that the present evaluative study could be categorised as an illuminative one. The survey method was discussed as well as the data collection technique used, namely, the mail questionnaire. A breakdown of respondents and how they were identified was given and a brief explanation of the questions asked in the questionnaire was made.



CHAPTER 4

4.1 RESULTS

The aim of this chapter is to list in table format and briefly describe the responses to the questionnaires sent out to the two groups of respondents, namely diplomates and their employers as noted. A total of 22 diplomates and 19 employers completed the questionnaires. First, responses of diplomates will be outlined followed by employers' responses.

Average percentages have been given for each question. However, in some cases, due to rounding error, percentages do not always equal 100 although the total is always given as 100%. Totals of 0,5 and over were rounded to the nearest whole number.

4.2 RESPONSES BY DIPLOMATES

Table 1

Year of completion of diploma

Year	No.	%
1994	6	27
1995	6	27
1996	10	46
Total	22	100

Just under half (46%) of respondents completed their diplomas in 1996. Respondents who completed in 1994 and 1995 formed 54% of the total number of respondents (27% in each of the two years).

Employment situation

All respondents were employed in information supplying agencies either on a temporary or permanent capacity.

Table 2

Type of agency where employed

Type of agency	No.	%
Public library	6	27
Academic library	7	32
Special library	6	27
School library	1	5
Community Resource Centre	2	9
Total	22	100

A little under a third (32%) of respondents were employed in academic libraries, followed by public and special libraries with 27% each. Community resource centres employed 9% of respondents and only 5% were employed in school libraries.

Table 3

Area where agency is situated

	Rural	Urban	Peri-urban	Total
No.	3	15	4	22
%	14	68	18	100

*Enough data*

The majority of respondents (68%) worked in urban libraries, 18% in peri-urban and 14% in rural libraries.

**Table 4**

Length of service

	0-12 months	13-18 months	19-24 months	25 months+	Total
No.	9	5	3	5	22
%	41	23	14	23	100

Forty one percent (41%) of respondents had been in their places of employment for a year or less. Twenty three percent (23%) had been in their places of employment for 18 months or less (but over a year) while a further 23% had been in their places of employment for over 2 years. 14% had been employed for between 18 months and 24 months.

Prior employment

Fourty one percent (41%) of respondents had been employed in other information supplying agencies before while 59% had not been employed in information supplying agencies before.

**Table 5**

Employment history

(a) Type of agency

Agency	No.	%
Public library	1	11
Academic library	3	33
Special library	3	33
School library	1	11
Community Resource Centre	1	11
Total	9	100

Of the 9 respondents who had previously worked in information supplying agencies before, 3 (33%) had worked in special libraries, 3 (33%) had worked in academic libraries, 1 (11%) had worked in a public library, 1 (11%) had worked in a school library and 1 (11%) had worked in a community resource centre.

(b) Area where agency was situated

Eight out of 9 (89%) respondents had previously worked in urban libraries and 1 had worked in a library situated in a rural area.

(c) Length of service

All respondents who had been employed before had worked for a period of one year or less in other information supplying agencies before.

(d) Position held

Out of the 9 respondents, 8 (89%) were employed as library assistants while 1(11%) was employed as a librarian.

**Table 6**

(e) Duties performed

Task	Frequency
cataloguing and classification	3
circulation	3
filing	2
shelving and shelf-reading	2
other	6
Total	16*

\* Multiple responses elicited

Cataloguing and classification and circulation were the two most frequently (frequency of 3) mentioned duties performed by respondents while filing and shelving and shelf-

reading followed suit with a frequency of 2 each. In addition to tasks mentioned above, respondents also performed a variety of routine duties which were grouped as “other.”

Reason(s) for leaving

Out of the 9 respondents who had been previously employed, 4 of them had left their jobs because their contracts had expired. Four had left either because their contracts ended and/or because they got better paying jobs elsewhere. Two had left because they were offered permanent posts somewhere else.

**Table 7**

Position held at time of survey

	Librarian	Assistant librarian	Library assistant	Other	Total
No.	5	3	11	3	22
%	23	14	50	14	100

Fifty percent (50%) of respondents were employed as library assistants, 23% as librarians, 14% as assistant librarians the remaining 14% had various titles, namely, abstractor, media librarian and resource centre manager.

**Table 8**

Duties performed

Task	frequency	%
circulation	13	59
information retrieval	9	41
shelving and shelf-reading	8	36
book processing	6	27
cataloguing and classification	5	23
book selection	5	23

Task	frequency	%
filing	4	18
displays	4	18
acquisitions	4	18
interlibrary loans	3	14
indexing and abstracting	2	9
monthly reports	2	9
other	24	109*

\*Multiple responses elicited

Duties performed by respondents covered a wide spectrum. The task that was performed by most diplomates was circulation of materials mentioned by 13 (59%) respondents. This was followed by information retrieval mentioned by 9 (41%) respondents, shelving and shelf-reading mentioned by 8 (36%) respondents, book processing by 6 (27%) respondents and book selection by 5 (23%) respondents. Other tasks including filing, acquisitions and display work were performed by 4 (18%) or less respondents. Respondents also performed a variety of tasks that could not be grouped under any of the categories listed above and these were then listed under the heading "other." There were 24 such tasks and these included budgeting, typing, collecting photocopying money, etc.

#### Question 10 Ratings according to levels of preparedness

The ratings used were as follows:

5 = most prepared

1 = least prepared

0 = not applicable

**Table 9(a)**

## Cataloguing

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) adding holdings and cataloguing information to records	8	2	1	1	-	9	22
(ii) verification and checking of cataloguing information	8	1	1	-	1	11	22
(iii) doing copy cataloguing using computerized networks	4	-	2	-	-	16	22
(iv) doing original cataloguing of straightforward monographs	7	1	-	-	1	13	22
(v) maintenance of authority files and public catalogues	2	1	1	-	-	17	22
(vi) supervision of the processing of materials	6	-	1	-	-	15	22
Average number of respondents <sup>1</sup>	6	1	1	,1 <sup>2</sup>	,3	14	22
%	27	5	5	1	1	64	100

Just under two thirds of diplomates (64%) did not perform cataloguing in their places of employment. Out of the 39% who performed this task, 27% of diplomates felt that they were “most prepared” and 5% gave a rating of 4. Only 1% felt that they were “least prepared” for cataloguing.

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<sup>1</sup>The mean of individuals per rating

<sup>2</sup>The use of fractions for individuals could not be avoided due to rounding error

**Table 9 (b)**

Classification

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) classification of straightforward monographs using the <i>Dewey decimal classification</i> scheme	11	-	-	1		10	22
Average number of respondents	11	-	-	1	-	10	22
Average %	50	-	-	5	-	45	100

Of the 55% of diplomates who performed this task, 50% felt that they were “most prepared” for classifying library materials while 5% gave a rating of 2. Just under half (45%) of diplomates rated this task as “not applicable.”

**Table 9 (c)**

Indexing and abstracting

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) assigning subject headings using a subject headings list (e.g. Sears’s list of subject headings)	5	5	1	-	-	11	22
(ii) writing precis of articles and books	1	5	3	-	-	13	22
Average number of respondents	3	5	2	-	-	12	22
Average %	14	23	9	-	-	55	100

Over half the number of respondents (55%) did not perform this task in their places of employment. Out of the 46% who performed this task, 37% were prepared with 14% of these being “most prepared” and 23% giving it a rating of 4.



**Table 9(d)**

## Selection of library materials

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) using appropriate selection aids like national bibliographies, book reviews, publishers' catalogues, etc. to select materials	9	2	2	-	1	8	22
(ii) the ability to select appropriate materials for the user group	10	2	2	-	-	8	22
Average number of respondents	10	2	2	-	,5	8	22
Average %	45	9	9	-	2	36	100

Of the 65% of diplomates who performed this task 45% felt that they were “most prepared” for this task, while 9% rated it at 4. Only 2% of diplomates felt “least prepared” while for 36% of diplomates this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 9(e)**

## Selection of audio-visual equipment and software

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) assist in the selection and purchase of equipment	2	4	1	1	-	14	22
(ii) maintain audio-visual equipment	4	4	1	1	-	12	22
(iii) operate audio-visual equipment	6	6	-	1	-	9	22
(iv) prepare audio-visual programmes	2	-	5	1	-	14	22
(v) supervise an audio-visual media centre	4	1	-	1	-	16	22
Average number of respondents	4	3	1	1	-	16	22
Average %	18	14	5	5	-	59	100

Out of the 42% who performed this task, 18% of diplomates felt that they were “most prepared” to select audio-visual equipment and software while 14% rated it at 4. 5% of

respondents rated this task at 2. For over half the respondents (59%) this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 9 (f)**

Acquisition of materials

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) verification of requests	9	1	-	-	-	12	22
(ii) preparation of purchase orders	5	3	1	-	1	12	22
(iii) receive and claim orders	6	1	1	-	-	14	22
(iv) administer serials records	4	4	1	-	1	10	22
(v) supervision of acquisitions department	2	3	1	-	-	16	22
Average number of respondents	5	2	1	-	,4	13	22
Average %	23	9	5	-	2	59	100

Acquisition of library materials was not done by the majority of respondents (59%). Out of the 39% who performed this task, 32% were prepared with 23% being “most prepared” while 9% rated it 4. Only 2% of respondents were “least prepared” giving this task a rating of 1.

**Table 9(g)**

Physical stock maintenance

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) supervise the re-shelving of materials	15	2	1	1	-	3	22
(ii) assist in weeding	8	3	2	-	-	9	22
(iii) delete catalogue entries	6	2	2	-	-	12	22
(iv) compile disposals lists	3	2	2	1	-	14	22
(v) prepare materials for binding	7	2	3	-	1	9	22
(vi) administer binding records	6	2	3	-	1	10	22

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
Average number of respondents	8	2	2	,3	,3	10	22
Average %	36	9	9	1	1	45	100

Of the 56% of diplomates who performed this task, 45% were prepared with 36% of them being “most prepared” and 9% giving it a rating of 4. Two percent (2%) of respondents were under prepared with 1% giving it a rating of 2 and the other 1% being “least prepared.” For 45% of respondents this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 9 (h)**

Reprography

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) assist in the selection and purchase of reprographic equipment	3	2	3	-	-	14	22
(ii) maintain reprographic equipment in good order	6	2	4	-	-	10	22
(iii) operate reprographic equipment	10	3	2	-	1	6	22
(vi) supervise a reprographic centre	6	2	1	-	-	13	22
Average number of respondents	7	2	2	-	,2	11	22
Average %	32	9	9	-	1	50	100

Of the 51% who performed this task, 41% were prepared with 32% “being most prepared” and 9% giving it a rating of 4. For half the number of respondents (50%) this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 9(i)**

Computer equipment

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) set up and operate simple systems	4	6	1	2	-	9	22
(ii) operate large computer systems	5	4	3	-	-	10	22
Average number of respondents	5	5	2	1	-	10	22
Average %	23	23	9	5	-	45	100

Sixty percent (60%) of diplomates performed this task. Out of this number 46% were prepared with 23% of them being “most prepared” and 23% rating it at 4. Only 5% were not prepared giving this task a rating of 2. Just under half (45%) of the respondents did not perform this task.

**Table 9(j)**

Management

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) leadership and supervision	6	7	3	-	-	6	22
(ii) understanding of staff functions in the library organizational structure	9	5	1	2	-	5	22
(iii) basic budgeting	3	3	4	2	1	9	22
(vi) understanding of communication channels in an organization	13	4	1	1	-	3	22
Average number of respondents	8	5	2	1	,3	6	22
Average %	36	23	9	5	1	27	100

Of the 74% of diplomates who performed this task 59% were prepared with 36% being “most prepared” and 23% giving it a rating of 4. A small number of respondents were not prepared with 5% giving it a rating of 2 and 1% being “least prepared.” For 27% of respondents this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 9(k)**

Circulation

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) administration of all aspects of circulation control both manual and computerized including reserve systems	13	3	1	-	-	5	22
(ii) statistical reporting	8	7	-	1	-	6	22
(iii) interlibrary loans	7	2	2	1	-	10	22
Average number of respondents	9	4	1	1	-	7	22
Average %	41	18	5	5	-	32	100

Of the 69% of diplomates who performed this task, 59% were prepared with 41% being “most prepared” and 18% giving it a rating of 4. Only 5% of respondents were not prepared giving it a rating of 2. For 32% of respondents this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 9(l)**

## Reference work

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) conduct the initial reference interview	10	4	-	1	-	7	22
(ii) answer basic reference questions using standard reference tools	10	3	1	2	-	6	22
(iii)conduct database searches using a given search strategy	6	4	1	1	-	10	22
(iv) compile bibliographies on defined subjects	6	4	2	-	-	10	22
(v) administration of pamphlets and similar information files	7	1	4	-	-	10	22
(iv) assist in current awareness services	3	3	2	2	1	11	22
Average number of respondents	7	3	2	1	,1	9	22
Average %	32	14	9	5	1	41	100

Of the 61% of diplomates who performed this task, 46% were prepared for reference work with 32% being “most prepared” and 14% rating it at 4. A small number of respondents were not prepared with 5% giving this task a rating of 2 and 1% being “least prepared” with a rating of 1. For 41% of respondents this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 9(m)**

Publicity

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) assist in library orientation programs	13	2	2	-	-	5	22
(ii) assist patrons to use catalogues and find materials	15	1	1	-	-	5	22
(iii)assist in planning and setting up library displays and exhibits	17	-	2	-	-	3	22
Average number of respondents	15	1	2	-	-	4	22
Average %	68	5	9	-	-	18	100

An overwhelming majority of respondents (73%) were prepared for this task with 68% being “most prepared” and 5% giving it a rating of 4. For 18% of respondents this task was “not applicable.”

On whether there were skills that should have been developed but were not  
Half the respondents (50%) agreed that there were skills which they felt should have been developed in terms of the jobs they held but were not. Forty one percent 41% felt that skills that needed to have been developed were in fact developed. Nine percent9% of respondents did not respond to this question.

**Table 10**

Skills that needed to be developed

Skill	Frequency	%
communication skills e.g. handling difficult patrons, conflict management	5	45
computer literacy	3	27
practical work	2	18
displays	1	9
report writing	1	9
Total	11	108*

\*Multiple responses elicited

The 11 respondents who indicated that there were skills that should have been developed but were not identified a variety of these skills. These varied but the skill which was mentioned by 5 (45%) of the respondents was communication skills followed by computer literacy mentioned by 3 (27%) of the respondents, “practical work” mentioned by 2 (18%) of the respondents, displays and report writing each being mentioned by 1 (9%) respondent.

**Table 11**

Usefulness of the course in relation to job requirements

Areas of “usefulness”	Frequency	%
knowledge of technology	4	18
reference work	3	14
cooperative training	2	9
Practical psychology (subject)	2	9
Human studies (subject)	2	9
cataloguing and classification	1	5
information retrieval	1	5



Areas of “usefulness”	Frequency	%
communication skills	1	5
abstracting and indexing	1	5
management	1	5
everything	3	14
nothing	1	5
Total	22	103*

\*Multiple responses elicited

The area that diplomates found most useful was the knowledge of technology with a frequency of 4 (18%) followed by reference work with a frequency of 3 (14%). Cooperative training, Practical Psychology and Human Studies had a frequency of 2 each (9%). Cataloguing and classification, information retrieval, communication skills, abstracting and indexing and management had a frequency of 1 each (5%). Three respondents (14%) felt that everything that was taught was useful to them while another respondent (5%) felt that he/she was not using any of the skills taught because “ my present job does not give room to prove my abilities.”

**Table 12**

Suggestions for programme improvement

Suggested area of improvement	Frequency	%
the course should be more practical	5	23
cooperative training should be extended	4	18
nothing	4	18
more focus on different types of libraries, especially special libraries	2	9
people skills	1	5
information technology	1	5
current library issues	1	5
abstracting, indexing and precis writing	1	5
Practical Psychology (a course offered)	1	5
Human Studies (a course offered)	1	5
Total	22	100

To the above question, 23% of respondents felt that the programme should be more practical, 18% suggested that cooperative training should be extended, 9% suggested that there should be more focus on different types of libraries in particular special libraries. Other suggestions included emphasis on different subjects and skills which respondents felt have helped in their current work situations. These were people skills, information technology, current library issues, abstracting, indexing and precis writing, Practical Psychology and Human Studies. Eighteen percent (18%) of respondents felt that nothing in the programme needed to be improved.

#### 4.3 RESPONSES BY EMPLOYERS

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, a total of 19 employers responded to the questionnaire. Also as indicated respondents were immediate supervisors of diplomates except in the case where a local authority was the employer. Three diplomates were

employed by local authorities and the only person who could provide the necessary information was a representative of the KwaZulu Natal Provincial Library Services as explained in Chapter One. Their responses are outlined below.

**Table 13**

Type of agency

Type of agency	No.	%
Public library	8	42
Academic library	6	31
Special library	4	21
School library	1	5
Community Resource Centre	-	-
Total	19	100

Forty two percent (42%) of the total number of employers who responded came from the public library sector,(as opposed to only 6 diplomates from public libraries who completed the questionnaire) followed by academic libraries at 31%. Special libraries formed 21% of respondents while 5% of respondents were from school libraries. There were no respondents from community resource centres.

**Table 14(a)**

## Cataloguing

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) adding holdings and location information to records	-	1	3	1	-	14	19
(ii) verification and checking of cataloguing information	1	1	2	3	3	9	19
(iii)doing copy cataloguing using computerized networks	-	3	1	1	-	14	19
(iv) doing original cataloguing of straightforward monographs	-	3	1	1	1	13	19
(v) maintenance of authority files and public catalogues	1	1	-	-	-	17	19
(iv) supervision of the processing of materials	2	2	-	-	1	14	19
Average number of respondents	,1	2	1	,3	1	14	19
Average %	1	11	5	2	5	74	100

Of the 24% of diplomates who performed this task, 12% were prepared with only 1% rating diplomates as “most prepared” and 11% obtaining a rating of 4. Seven percent (7%) of employers were not happy about the preparedness of diplomates for this task with 2% giving a rating of 2 and 5% rating them as “least prepared.” According to employers 74% of diplomates did not do cataloguing.

**Table 14(b)**

## Classification

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) classification of straightforward monographs using the Dewey decimal classification scheme	-	3	1	-	1	14	19
Average number of respondents	-	3	1	-	1	14	19
Average %	-	16	5	-	5	74	100

Out of the 26% of diplomates who classified library materials, 16% were rated at 4 by employers. None of the employers felt that diplomates were “most prepared” for this task. Five percent (5%) felt that diplomates were “least prepared” for classification. Again according to employers, 74% of diplomates did not perform this task.

**Table 14(c)**

## Indexing and abstracting

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) assigning subject headings using a subject headings list (e.g. Sears’s list of subject headings)	1	2	3	-	-	13	19
(ii) writing precis of articles and books	-	6	3	-	-	10	19
Average number of respondents	,5	4	3	-	-	12	19
Average %	3	21	16	-	-	63	100

Out of the 40% of diplomates who performed this task, 24% were prepared to do indexing and abstracting with only 3% rating them as “most prepared” and 21% obtaining a rating of 4. None of the employers felt that diplomates were under prepared. For 63% of diplomates this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 14(d)**

Selection of library materials

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) using appropriate selection aids like national bibliographies, book reviews, publishers' catalogues, etc. to select materials	1	2	3	-	-	12	19
(ii) the ability to select appropriate materials for the user group	-	6	3	-	-	10	19
Average number of respondents	1	4	3	-	-	11	19
Average %	5	21	16	-	-	58	100

Employers felt that out of the 42% of diplomates who performed this task, 26% were prepared with only 5% being “most prepared” and 21% being rated at 4. There were no ratings of either 2 or 1 for this task. For 58% of diplomates this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 14 (e)**

Selection of audio-visual equipment and software

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) assist in the selection and purchase of equipment	-	1	1	-	-	17	19
(ii) maintain audio-visual equipment	2	5	2	-	-	10	19
(iii) operate audio-visual equipment	5	1	4	-	-	9	19
(iv) prepare audio-visual programmes	1	4	-	-	-	14	19
(v) supervise an audio-visual media centre	1	2	2	-	-	14	19
Average number of respondents	2	3	2	-	-	13	19
Average %	11	16	11	-	-	68	100

Of the 38% of diplomates who performed this task, 27% were prepared with 11% of them being “most prepared” and 16% getting a rating of 4. There were no ratings for either 2 or 1. According to employers 68% of diplomates did not perform this task.

**Table 14 (f)**

Acquisition of materials

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) verification of requests	1	6	2	-	-	10	19
(ii) preparation of purchase orders	1	1	2	-	-	15	19
(iii) receive and claim orders	1	1	2	-	-	15	19
(iv) administer serials records	2	5	4	-	-	8	19
(v) supervision of acquisitions department	1	1	-	-	-	17	19
Average number of respondents	1	3	2	-	-	13	19
Average %	5	16	11	-	-	68	100

Of the 32% of diplomates who performed this task, 21% were prepared for the acquisition of materials. 5% of respondents gave a rating of 5 and 16% rated it at 4. There were no

ratings for either 2 or 1. For 68% of diplomates this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 14 (g)**

Physical stock maintenance

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) supervise the re-shelving of materials	4	7	3	-	-	5	19
(ii) assist in weeding	4	6	2	-	-	7	19
(iii) delete catalogue entries	2	2	2	-	-	13	19
(iv) compile disposals lists	1	1	-	-	-	17	19
(v) prepare materials for binding	3	2	2	-	-	12	19
(vi) administer binding records	2	1	-	-	-	16	19
Average number of respondents	3	3	2	-	-	12	19
Average %	16	16	11	-	-	63	100

Of the 43% who of diplomates who performed this task, 32% were prepared with 16% of them being rated as “most prepared” and another 16% being rated at 4. There were no ratings of either 2 or 1. For 63% of diplomates this task was “not applicable.”



**Table 14(h)****Reprography**

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) assist in the selection and purchase of reprographic equipment	1	-	1	-	-	17	19
(ii) maintain reprographic equipment in good order	1	4	-	-	-	14	19
(iii) operate reprographic equipment	5	3	1	-	-	10	19
(vi) supervise a reprographic centre	1	2	-	-	-	16	19
Average number of respondents	2	2	,5	-	-	14	19
Average %	11	11	3	-	-	74	100

Only 22% of employers felt that diplomates were prepared for this task with 11% of these employers rating them as “most prepared” and another 11% giving rating of 4. The majority of diplomates (74%) did not perform this task.

**Table 14 (i)****Computer equipment**

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) set up and operate simple systems	3	2	3	-	-	11	19
(ii) operate large computer systems	3	2	-	-	-	14	19
Average number of respondents	3	2	1	-	-	13	19
Average %	16	11	5	-	-	68	100

Out of 38% of diplomates, 27% were prepared for setting up and operating both simple and large computer systems with 16% being rated as “most prepared” and 11% getting a rating of 4. There were no ratings of either 2 or 1. For 68% of diplomates this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 14 (j)****Management**

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) leadership and supervision	-	4	4	1	-	10	19
(ii) understanding of staff functions in the library organizational structure	4	2	4	-	-	9	19
(iii) basic budgeting	1	-	2	-	-	16	19
(vi) understanding of communication channels in an organization	4	4	6	-	-	5	19
Average number of respondents	2	3	4	,2	-	10	19
Average %	11	16	21	1	-	53	100

According to employers, out of 49% of diplomates, 27% were prepared in understanding the various aspects of management with 11% of employers rating diplomates as “most prepared” and 16% giving a rating of 4. Only 1% of respondents gave a rating of 2 and for 53% of diplomates this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 14 (k)****Circulation**

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) administration of all aspects of circulation control both manual and computerized including reserve systems	4	8	2	-	-	5	19
(ii) statistical reporting	3	5	1	-	-	10	19
(iii) interlibrary loans	3	1	2	3	-	10	19
Average number of respondents	3	5	2	1	-	8	19
Average %	16	26	11	5	-	42	

Out of 58% of diplomates who perform this task, 42% were prepared for circulation with 16% being rated as “most prepared” and 26% obtaining a rating of 4. 5% of employers gave a rating of 2 and for 42% of diplomates this task was “not applicable.”

**Table 14 (I)**

Reference work

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) conduct the initial reference interview	3	1	9	-	-	6	19
(ii) answer basic reference questions using standard reference tools	3	1	8	1	2	4	19
(iii)conduct database searches using a given search strategy	4	2	5	-	-	8	19
(iv) compile bibliographies on defined subjects	2	2	1	-	-	14	19
(v) administration of pamphlets and similar information files	1	2	2	-	-	14	19
(iv) assist in current awareness services	3	3	3	-	3	7	19
Average number of respondents	3	2	5	,2	1	9	19
Average %	16	11	26	1	5	47	100

Twenty seven percent ( 27%) of the respondents felt that diplomates were prepared to do reference work with 16% rating them as “most prepared” and 11% rating them at 4. Some employers felt that diplomates were under prepared with 1% giving a rating of 2 and 5% giving a rating of 1. Forty seven percent (47%) of diplomates did not do reference work.

**Table 14 (m)**

Publicity

	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
(i) assist in library orientation programs	7	2	2	1	1	6	19
(ii) assist patrons to use catalogues and find materials	9	2	4	1	1	2	19
(iii) assist in planning and setting up library displays and exhibits	7	4	4	-	-	4	19
Average number of respondents	8	3	2	1	1	4	19
Average %	42	16	11	5	5	21	100

Out of the 79% of diplomates who performed this task, over half of them (58%) were prepared for publicity work in the library with 42% being rated as “most prepared” and 16% being rated at 4. Ten percent (10%) of employers felt that diplomates were under prepared for this task with 5% giving a rating of 2 and another 5% giving a rating of 1. Twenty one percent (21%) of diplomates did not perform this task.

Areas that should have been developed but were not?

As to whether there were any areas that employers felt should have been developed but were not, 8 respondents (42%) answered in the affirmative while 7 respondents (36%) replied in the negative. 4 employers (21%) did not respond to this question.

**Table 15**

Shortcomings of the programme

Area	Frequency
service ethic - do's and don'ts in the work place	2
making signage in the library	1
book knowledge	1
story telling	1
community information services	1
interpersonal skills	1
more cataloguing experience	1
layout/organization of a library	1
dealing with mixed race groups	1
school librarianship	1
on-line searching	1
report writing	1
Total	13*

\*Multiple responses elicited

The 8 employers who responded in the affirmative in 3 (a) above identified a variety of areas which they thought should have been developed but were not. In all but one case (service ethic which had the frequency of 2), the frequency of each area was 1.

The following were identified as strengths of the diploma by employers:

**Table 16**

## Strengths of the diploma

Strength	Frequency	%
the course provides a fundamental understanding of library work	3	21
the practical nature of the course	3	21
the in-service training	3	21
diplomates understand storage and retrieval procedures	1	7
overall exposure to trends in library science is good - from displays to technology	1	7
diplomat has a good grounding worth at least 3-4 years on the job experience	1	7
excellent community skills	1	7
classification and cataloguing	1	7
Total	14	100

Out of the 19 employers who responded to the questionnaire, 5 of them did not respond to this question. Three areas had the frequency 3 (21%) each. These areas are the ability of the course to provide a fundamental understanding of library work, the practical nature of the course and in-service training. A wide spectrum of other areas were identified as strengths of the diploma and each of these had a frequency of 1 (7%).

On whether the diplomate is usefully employed in the library/ information centre

Only two respondents did not answer this question. Of the 25 responses (some employers said both “yes” and “no”) 17 employers gave the following comments:

**Table 17**

Comments:

Positive	Negative
Yes, the diplomate is used in all aspects of the library especially reference work and special projects	No, in our library organization they do not hold “librarian” positions and their skills are underutilised.
Yes, for running community libraries	No. The diplomate is not functioning at either a professional or a para-professional level and reaches boredom threshold quickly.
We are pleased with the diplomate’s performance at library assistant level. To what extent he is a product of the technikon or of his own making I am not sure. My personal opinion is that this person should be a Senior Library Assistant.	No, Library Assistants do not do a lot of professional work so they may feel their skills are underutilised.
The diplomate has good interpersonal relations and patrons like her very much.	No, in that student expectations for working in the library are considerably higher than what they are ready for.
Yes, in that diplomates accomplish tasks in book binding and processing.	No. In our library technikon diplomates are currently employed as Library Assistants/ Senior Library Assistants whose tasks are of a clerical nature.
Yes. Although school libraries are less sophisticated , I have found Sheila ( fictitious name) of great assistance. I have come to rely on her as my second in command.	No. This person does book processing which is not catered for in the questionnaire.

Positive	Negative
Yes. Diplomates are dedicated to librarianship as a career and have the necessary understanding of what is involved to make them successful employees.	
He is able to do most of his tasks without supervision and has had an input in the development and improvement of the library and its services.	
Yes, because of the in-service training, they are employable. The technician diplomate can walk in and do the rudiments of the job immediately.	
Yes, with the skills they attained and with more training they have become invaluable assets.	

Most employers felt that diplomates were usefully employed in their agencies and conceded that the training received by diplomates contributed to this. A few employers felt that diplomates were not usefully employed in their agencies because, among other reasons, positions held by diplomates did not allow them to utilise all their skills.



## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the results of the study as described in Chapter 4. Before the discussion there are some general observations that will be made regarding responses of both diplomates and their employers.

#### 5.1 GENERAL OBSERVATION

Diplomates tended to have higher ratings regarding their preparedness for various tasks than those given by their employers. Some of the diplomates' ratings were high even for duties that they did not perform in their current positions. For example, the number of diplomates who indicated that they did cataloguing in their current positions was 5 (Table 8) but the average number of respondents who felt that they were "most prepared" to do cataloguing was 6 (Table 9(a)). On the other hand, the average number of diplomates who were rated as "most prepared" to do cataloguing by employers was 0,1 (Tables 14(a)). Diplomates' rating of tasks which they did not perform could have been a result of their expectations which were not fulfilled, that is, they had been trained to perform certain tasks in information supplying agencies and they felt prepared to do so but their current positions did not allow them to carry these out. Evidence of this is the large number of diplomates for whom certain tasks were "not applicable." Having said that, it should also be pointed out that in some large public library systems like the Durban Metropolitan Libraries (which has a number of branch libraries) and the KwaZulu- Natal Provincial Library Services (which provides a service to the majority of libraries in the province) some tasks like cataloguing and classification are done centrally. This could result in diplomates not performing these tasks in libraries where they are stationed.

#### 5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

As indicated in Chapter 3, just under half of the diplomates (46%) who responded completed their studies in 1996 (Table 1). This might have an effect on the answers

provided because of the time span between studying and working. For example, diplomats who have been working in information supplying agencies for a longer period are likely to have a better understanding of the dynamics of a working environment and their own strengths and weaknesses . On the other hand people who have just started are more likely to remember what happened during their period of education and training and may therefore be in a better position to compare what they were taught to what they are required to do in the work place.

Just under a third of the respondents (32%) were employed in academic libraries, 27% were employed in public libraries and a further 27% were employed in special libraries (Table 3). This is also likely to influence the ratings by respondents. It should however be pointed out that cross tabulations were not made, firstly, due to the small size of the population under study and the even smaller sizes of the subsequent categories. Secondly that was beyond the scope of the present study. The nature of the institution in which one works determines which skills are most appropriate. For example special libraries tend to use high technology compared to small public libraries resulting in the need for more competence in the use of technology in the former than in the latter. The size of the organization could also influence ratings because in smaller organizations workers tend to do a bit of each of the library tasks. Larger organizations tend to have structures which may dictate who is responsible for which task. The complexity of each task could also be determined by the size and type of organization. For example, cataloguing and classification of materials tends to be less detailed in smaller libraries (which do their own cataloguing and classification) than in large ones or in academic libraries

The large number of diplomats employed in urban libraries (68%) (Table 3) could also have had an influence on the skills required of diplomats. Clientele in urban libraries tend to be more diverse in terms of needs and urban libraries have a better infrastructure than those in peri-urban and rural areas. This demands emphasis on certain skills that are not necessarily in demand in peri-urban and rural libraries. For example, urban areas tend to

use technology more. Workers in urban libraries interact with a variety of users and therefore it could be argued that they need to have better communication skills given that people in urban areas need to contend with various languages.

Forty one percent (41%) of respondents had been employed in information supplying agencies before. Prior exposure to a working situation could also have had an effect on ratings as these diplomates were more “mature” as far as the work environment was concerned. Their expectations could have been more realistic than those of their counterparts who had never been exposed to a working environment before. Of the 9 diplomates that were employed before, only 3 of them catalogued and classified library materials. The rest performed a variety of tasks (Table 6).

The position held by diplomates can also affect the nature of the job done. The researcher’s personal observations and experience show that in smaller libraries and special libraries in particular, diplomates are employed as librarians and assistant librarians and they tend to perform duties that are different from those performed by their counterparts who work in large public and academic libraries. At the time of the survey, half of the respondents (50%) were employed as Library Assistants ( Table 7) and this is evident in the nature of duties performed by the majority of these Library Assistants (Table 8). Although it can be argued that in librarianship, unlike in other fields such as medicine, law and others, there is no general agreement on the designations and job descriptions of incumbents, the results of the study showed that most diplomates’ skills were not fully utilised in terms of the tasks they were performing. Circulation of library materials has the highest frequency (performed by 59% of respondents) because in most libraries this task is performed by Library Assistants. This is followed by information retrieval. In the sense used here, information retrieval involves the use of the catalogue in helping users to locate materials in the library (Table 9(m) (ii) ). Shelving and shelf-reading had the third highest frequency. This is not surprising because the researcher’s personal experience has shown that most library staff, including senior staff engage in

shelf- reading. Another duty that had a higher frequency was book processing, which involves the stamping of materials, inserting date sheets and doing minor repairs (performed by 27% of diplomates) although diplomates were not trained for this aspect, hence its exclusion from the questionnaire.

Diplomates also performed a variety of tasks which could not be placed under any of the categories mentioned in Table 8. Examples of these tasks are collecting photocopy coins, typing borrowers cards, filing catalogue cards, etc. This again seems to be dependent on the nature and size of the library but seems also to reflect reluctance on the part of some employers in giving diplomates opportunity to perform tasks for which they were trained. This was corroborated by the study conducted by Van Aswegen (1997:54) where she described comments made by the Cape Technikon alumni regarding their positions in the work place. She maintains that “the most negative remarks pertained to the library and information community’s reluctance to accept the qualification, employers not having post descriptions and salary structures to accommodate the qualification...”

### 5.2.1 CATALOGUING

According to diplomates, a majority of them (64%) did not perform this task in their places of employment (Table 9(a)). This could be attributed to various factors. First, large libraries have central stations where materials are catalogued. Second, in some libraries, cataloguing is regarded as a “professional” task which can only be performed by university graduates. Academic libraries in particular require in-depth subject knowledge which diplomates tend to lack. Large public libraries also seem to be reluctant to give this task to diplomates. Out of the 39% of diplomates who rated this task, 27% regarded themselves as “most prepared” (rating of 5) to do cataloguing while 5% gave their preparedness for this task a rating of 4. Only 1% of diplomates felt that they were “least prepared”(a rating of 1). Employers felt that only 1% out of the 24% of diplomates who performed this task were “most prepared” and 11% were given a rating of 4 for this task (Table 14(a)), ratings which differ markedly to those given by diplomates. A further

discrepancy in the ratings for cataloguing occurs in the “not applicable” part. While 64% of diplomates rated cataloguing “not applicable” a larger number of employers (74%) rated it as “not applicable.” This discrepancy in rating could probably be a result of certain expectations which diplomates may have of this study. Diplomates could have seen this study as an opportunity to voice out their dissatisfaction with their conditions of work. It is also possible that they felt they would be discrediting themselves if they admitted they were not prepared for certain tasks. The low number of diplomates who did cataloguing of materials could have been the result of employers’ reluctance to let diplomates perform this task as it is considered one of the “professional” tasks.

### 5.2.2 CLASSIFICATION

An enormous discrepancy between employers on the one hand and diplomates on the other is evident here. Of the 55% of diplomates who performed classification, 50% of them regarded themselves as “most prepared” (Table 9(b)). In contrast, no diplomates were rated as “most prepared” for this task by employers (Table 14(b)). However, out of the 26% who performed this task, 16% of diplomates were given a rating of 4 by their employers but still well below the 50% of diplomates who gave themselves a rating of 5. The reason for this discrepancy could again be that diplomates felt “most prepared” for this task although they were not performing it. Possibly, employers’ perceptions of this task as one of the “professional” tasks as well as other reasons mentioned under “cataloguing”, could have had an effect on the ratings given. According to 45% of diplomates this task was “not applicable” for them as opposed to 74% of “not applicable” given by employers. Mixed reactions were given by employers regarding the preparedness of diplomates for this task. While one employer from an academic library maintained that diplomates’ general knowledge was limited thus making it difficult for them to assign classification numbers another employer from a school library was pleased and made the following remark: “Shows a good understanding of classification . She has been well trained.” The different reactions could be dependent on the nature of the organization in which the diplomate works. School libraries do not require as much depth in classification

as would academic libraries. It is not clear whether the diplomates' understanding of the classification tools and the process itself (which the training addressed), or whether their lack of general knowledge is the main problem. If the main problem is lack of general knowledge then there is not much that can be done by trainers. It should be realised that the majority of diplomates come from disadvantaged communities where libraries and reading are not prevalent and this could possibly impair their general knowledge. Furthermore, and as already noted, training of diplomates does not include in-depth subject knowledge and cognisance of this factor should always be taken when assessing them.

### 5.2.3 INDEXING AND ABSTRACTING

Indexing and abstracting are regarded as “professional” tasks in many libraries. This may account for the lower rating of “most prepared” by both diplomates and employers. Out of the 45% of diplomates who rated this task, only 14% rated themselves as “most prepared” for this task and 23% gave themselves a rating of 4 (Table 9(c)). Only 3% of the 46% who performed the task were given a rating of 5 by employers while 21% of these were rated 4 (Table 14(c)). According to both groups of respondents a large number of diplomates do not perform abstracting and indexing in their places of employment. In addition to reasons stated under “cataloguing”, another possible reason for the small number of diplomates performing this task could be that not all libraries have the need or resources for such a service. For example some large public libraries, community resource centres and school libraries might not need to do any indexing and abstracting as opposed to academic and special libraries where this could be essential.

### 5.2.4 SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Selection of library materials met with mixed reactions from employers. Only 5% of the 42% of diplomates who performed this task were regarded as “most prepared” by employers. Twenty one percent (21%) of diplomates were given a rating of 4 (Table 14(d)). One employer from a school library made the following remark: “selection is in

the hands of the teacher-librarian who is more familiar with the syllabus.” In contrast, another employer from a public library commented thus: “his involvement in the selection process has proved helpful in that he has been able to indicate which areas are not sufficiently covered in the collection.” As with cataloguing and classification, a significant discrepancy exists between employers’ ratings on preparedness and those of diplomates themselves as mentioned above. In contrast to the 5% of “most prepared” by employers, 45% of diplomates out of a possible 63% who performed this task, regarded themselves as “most prepared” while 9% rated themselves at 4 (Table 9 (d)). This again could be a reflection of the view that material selection is considered a “professional” task.

#### 5.2.5 SELECTION OF AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE

There seems to be a slight correlation between the ratings of diplomates and employers in regard to the selection of audio-visual equipment and software with ratings for “most prepared” being 18% by diplomates (out of a possible 42% who performed the task) while 8% of diplomates rated themselves at 4 (Table 9 (e)). Eleven percent (11%) out of the 37% that performed this task were rated as “most prepared” by employers while 16% obtained a rating of 4 (Table 14 (e)). The higher number of diplomates who are prepared for this task according to both groups of respondents could be attributed to the strong emphasis and exposure to technology during their training. As indicated in Chapter 2, technikon training in general emphasises the efficient use of technology. The high rate of “not applicable” could possibly be attributed to the high cost of audio-visual materials and software that is beyond the reach of some libraries and also to the emphasis on traditional print media in libraries.

#### 5.2.6 ACQUISITION OF MATERIALS

While 23% of diplomates out of a possible 39% who performed this task rated themselves as “most prepared” and 9% gave themselves a rating of 4 for this task (Table 9(f)), only 5% out of a possible 32% were rated as “most prepared” and 16% were given a rating of 4 by employers (Tables 14(f)). Acquisition of materials is routine in nature and therefore

it has come as a surprise to the researcher that so many diplomates do not perform this task. This could be attributed to employers' reluctance to give diplomates opportunities to perform certain tasks (Van Aswegen,1997:54). It could also be a result of the centralization of certain tasks in large libraries as indicated under general observations.

#### 5.2.7 PHYSICAL STOCK MAINTENANCE

According to diplomates' ratings just under half of them (45%) out of a possible 56% who performed this task were prepared with 36% of them being "most prepared" (Table 9(g)) According to employers, out of a possible 43% who performed this task, only 16% were "most prepared" and the other 16% were given a rating of 4 (Table 14(g)). Again here, many diplomates do not seem to perform this task with 45% of diplomates rating it as "not applicable" and employers rating it as "not applicable" for 63% of diplomates. Many aspects of this task are routine in nature and it is again surprising that the majority of diplomates do not perform it. A large discrepancy is noticeable in one aspect of this task, namely, to supervise the re-shelving of materials where 15 out of 22 diplomates felt that they were "most prepared" while only 4 employers out of 19 rated diplomates "most prepared" to undertake this task. This again shows reluctance on the part of employers to provide diplomates the opportunity to undertake tasks for which they were trained.

#### 5.2.8 REPROGRAPHY

Diplomates' ratings indicated that for 50% of them this task was "not applicable" in contrast to employers' 74% of "not applicable"(Tables 9(h) and 14 (h)). Thirty two percent (32%) of diplomates (out of a possible 50% who performed this task) felt that they were "most prepared" while 9% rated themselves at 4. Out of a possible 25% who performed this task, 11% of diplomates were rated 5 and another 11 were rated 4 by employers. The "not applicable" ratings for this aspect by both diplomates and employers could be a result of lack of these facilities in some organizations.



### 5.2.9 COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

The question on computer equipment elicited a rating of 23% for “most prepared” and another 23% a rating of 4 from diplomates (out of a possible 55% who performed this task) (Table 9 (i)). Employers gave a rating of 16% for “most prepared” and 11% gave a rating of 4 out of the 36% of diplomates who performed the task (Table 14(i) ). This indicates that although just under half (45%) according to diplomates and over two thirds (68%) according to employers are not currently performing this task, diplomates felt quite confident about performing the various tasks associated with computer equipment. The confidence of diplomates in this regard could be attributed to their exposure to technology, and in particular computer applications. On the other hand, employers seem to be displaying a reluctance in affording diplomates the opportunity to undertake computer-related tasks. Another possible reason for the high rating of non- applicability could be that some libraries do not have these facilities.

### 5.2.10 MANAGEMENT

Employers felt that out of a possible 48% of diplomates who performed this task, only 11% were “most prepared” while 16% of these diplomates obtained a rating of 4 from employers (Table 14(j)). In contrast, 36% of diplomates gave themselves a rating of “most prepared” and 23% a rating of 4 out of a possible 73% who performed this task (Tables 9(j)). According to one employer, diplomates understand “the basic concepts of management but find it difficult to understand the dynamics in the practical work place. Personally took offence at certain issues and didn’t know how to deal with them.” Management is a difficult area to assess as there can be a variety of contributory factors. Certain reactions to situations do not necessarily indicate a lack of understanding of the dynamics of the work place but could be attributed to several other factors as well, namely, personality, management’s approach, maturity of individuals concerned, etc. As indicated in Table 1 the majority of diplomates surveyed completed their studies in 1996, which means that they are fairly “young” in terms of experience and their understanding of the dynamics of a work environment

A further observation is the fact that for 27% of diplomates (diplomates' ratings) and for 53% of diplomates (according to employers) this was "not applicable." A large discrepancy in ratings is again noticeable here. It is evident that diplomates felt confident that they could perform the various tasks associated with management while employers did not share the same sentiment. However, one diplomate felt that they "should have been taught more about the hierarchical structure within the library and who is responsible for what." This is obviously not an easy thing to do as an individual's responsibilities in an organization are dependent among other things, on the position held and the nature of the organization itself. The researcher's personal experience has indicated that libraries use designations differently, for example, a person who is called a "Librarian" in one library may be designated an "Assistant Librarian" in another, although their duties and responsibilities are similar. In smaller libraries, diplomates often get the opportunity to put into practice some of the management skills taught during their training because they are sometimes in charge of these libraries. This is the case in some of the libraries that are affiliated to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Library Service. As one diplomate remarked "I am responsible for implementing any ideas I might have about the library. I even helped in designing the mission statement of the library with the help of management."

#### 5.2.11 CIRCULATION

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, many diplomates indicated that they were employed as Library Assistants (50%) and worked in circulation (Table 9(k)). However, ratings provided by employers indicated that only 16% of the 53% of diplomates who worked in circulation were "most prepared" and 26% of them were given a rating of 4 (Table 14(k)). According to diplomates, out of a possible 68% who performed this task, 41% of them were "most prepared" and 18% gave a rating of 4 (Table 9(k)). This shows a possible difference in the terms of reference, that is, "most prepared" seems to have different meanings to both groups of respondents. While it is possible that employers were looking at the whole person, e.g. personality, dealing with patrons, etc., diplomates could have been just concentrating on the actual execution of the task only. A remark

made by one employer regarding this question was: “although diplomates do many tasks involved in part (k) (circulation), the administration and control is the responsibility of a graduate with experience.” The reluctance to afford diplomates more responsibility becomes evident again here. This seems rather strange because if not given opportunities, diplomates will never gain experience. A significant number of diplomates did not perform this task (32% according to diplomates and 42% according to employers).

#### 5.2.12 REFERENCE WORK

A correlation seems to exist between diplomates’ and employers’ rating of “not applicable” for this task (41% and 47%, respectively) (Tables 9(l) and 14(l)). The reason for the high number of diplomates who do not perform this task could be that reference work is regarded as a “professional” task and therefore cannot be performed by diplomates who are not regarded as “professionals”. The researcher acknowledges the fact that some aspects of reference work could be beyond the level of diplomates. However, there are other aspects of reference work such as compilation of bibliographies and the administration of pamphlets and similar information files that could be undertaken by diplomates although the rating of “not applicable” for the two aspects is 14 out of 19 (73%) according to employers. It is again acknowledged that many diplomates might not have been stationed in centres where these tasks were necessary. Out of a possible 59% of diplomates who performed this task, reference work received a rating of 32% from diplomates for “most prepared” and 14% gave a rating of 4. Out of the 53% of diplomates who performed this task according to employers, 27% were prepared with 16% of these being “most prepared” and 11% obtaining a rating of 4. Employers felt that diplomates knew the theory of reference work but needed practice. This could be attributed in part to the fact that, as indicated in Table 1, and as mentioned, a number of diplomates completed their studies fairly recently and thus had had little work experience. However there was one employer who felt that diplomates had a “limited understanding of reference sources especially encyclopaedias and indexing/abstracting services.” This might have been a weakness in the training of diplomates or could have been a weakness

on the part of the diplomate(s) concerned because on completion of their training, diplomates should be fairly acquainted with basic reference sources, especially encyclopaedias. One diplomate was dissatisfied with what was covered in the reference interview during her training. She felt that they “should have been taught more on how to determine the users’ needs and also what types of questions to ask.” This is a difficult area to teach because each user is unique with unique needs. Whereas the observation is valid, it should also be noted that what takes place in the teaching situation is determined by, amongst other things, the time and the resources available.

#### 5.2.13 PUBLICITY

Publicity received the highest rating given by diplomates. Out of the possible 82% who performed this task, 68% of diplomates were “most prepared” while 5% rated it at 4 (Table 9(m)). On the employers’ side, out of the 69% who performed this task, employers rated it at 42% for “most prepared” and 16% were given a rating of 4 (Tables 14(m)). All aspects of publicity received high ratings from diplomates. This could be attributed to the fact that publicity is one of the most practical courses that diplomates study and where their own creativity is encouraged. Only 18% and 21% of diplomates, according to diplomates and employers, respectively did not perform tasks associated with publicity.

#### 5.2.14 AREAS OF UNDER-PREPAREDNESS

Generally there were very few areas where diplomates felt that they were under prepared. There is consistency in the ratings of both diplomates and employers regarding this. The highest rating of under prepared by employers is on cataloguing (Table 14(a)) where out of the 24% of diplomates who performed this task 5% were rated as “least prepared” while 2% obtained a rating of 2. On the other hand, diplomates’ highest rating of under prepared was in management (Table 9(j)) where out of the possible 74% who performed this task, 6% felt that they were under prepared with 1% being “least prepared” and 5% giving themselves a rating of 2. The high ratings of “not applicable” for certain tasks does not necessarily mean that diplomates are adequately prepared or alternatively under

prepared. It does mean that they had not had the opportunity to perform these tasks and therefore could not be assessed in terms of their tasks.

#### 5.2.15 SKILLS THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED

On the question of whether there were any skills that respondents felt should have been developed but were not (Questions 3 and 11 for employers and diplomates, respectively), 50% of diplomates responded in the affirmative, 41% responded in the negative while 9% did not respond to this question. Forty two percent (42%) of employers felt that there were skills that should have been developed but were not, 36% thought that skills that should have been developed were in fact developed while 21% did not respond to this question. A matter of interest in this question was that although diplomates gave higher ratings for “most prepared” generally, half of them felt that there were skills that should have been developed but were not. This could possibly be partly attributed to the type of libraries where diplomates were employed, where certain skills which were not necessarily emphasized during training, were found to be essential by diplomates, for example, conflict management.

In terms of the above, a variety of skills which needed to be developed were identified by both groups of respondents (Tables 10 and 15). It was apparent that the nature of the library demanded the application of certain skills as indicated earlier on in the discussion. Public libraries for example would put emphasis on aspects such as story telling. Skills that were common in both groups included report writing, displays/signage in the library, and interpersonal skills. Two employers indicated that the service ethic of diplomates needed to be developed. Of the 50% of diplomates who indicated that there were skills which should have been developed, 45% mentioned communication skills. This could be a valid point because working with people demands good communication skills. Surprisingly, given that diplomates undergo extensive computer training during their period of training, 3 diplomates indicated that their computer literacy skills were lacking, e.g. they expressed the need for further development in areas like SABINET and Internet.

#### 5.2.16 STRENGTHS OF THE DIPLOMA

On the strengths of the diploma (Tables 11 and 16), respondents identified a variety of areas. Consensus was in the following areas: classification and cataloguing, cooperative education, the ability to provide fundamental understanding of the library, the practical nature of the programme and exposure to technology. There were other areas which again seemed to be strongly linked to type of library, for example story telling, community information service and school librarianship.

#### 5.2.17 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Diplomates made various suggestions for the improvement of the programme (Table 12). 23% of diplomates suggested that the “course should be more practical” and 18% suggested that the period of cooperative training should be extended to at least one year. The above suggestions were made despite the practical nature of the training both at the technikon and through cooperative training itself. These remarks confirm the generally held view that there can never be enough practice in library and information work.

#### 5.2.18 DIPLOMATES USEFULLY EMPLOYED?

On whether they thought diplomates were usefully employed in their organizations, employers had mixed responses. Some employers felt that in some respects diplomates were usefully employed while in others the same employers felt that diplomates were not usefully employed (Table 17). For example one employer made the following response: “Yes, (the diplomate is usefully employed) for running community libraries. No- in our organization because they (diplomates) do not hold ‘librarian’ positions and their skills are underutilised.” Another employer commented that the diplomate in her organization was not usefully employed because he was not functioning at either a professional or a para-professional level and therefore reached boredom threshold quickly. Of the 15 employers who thought that diplomates were usefully employed, the following remarks were made: “Yes, with the skills they attained during in-service training, they have become invaluable asserts.” Another employer said that “circulation provides more scope

than all other questions asked. We are pleased with diplomate's performance at Library Assistant level. To what extent he is a product of the technikon or of his own making I am not sure." While it is true that to a certain extent man is master of his destiny, it is also true that credit should be given to other forces that play a contributory role in the process. The employer's comment further supports the researcher's view that some employers acknowledge the difference between diplomates and other Library Assistants in terms of prior knowledge of the job but show a reluctance to provide them with the opportunity to undertake more responsible tasks. However, other employers take advantage of this without giving the recognition that should go with it. This seems to be a source of dissatisfaction among diplomates about their employment conditions.

### 5.3 SUMMARY

Results of the study were discussed with the aim of providing possible explanations for responses provided. A general observation was made where it was stated that diplomates seemed to have rated tasks which they were not performing. Ratings of both groups of respondents were discussed in order to determine their perceptions regarding the preparedness of diplomates. Aspects that were considered to be weaknesses of the diploma and those that were regarded as strengths of the diploma by both groups were also discussed. It was found that generally, most diplomates do not perform tasks for which they were trained. Reference was made to the literature review to support what emerged in the study, that is, the reluctance of most employers to give diplomates responsible tasks.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

In this chapter a brief summary of the study will be provided. Conclusions drawn from the findings of the study as discussed in Chapter 5 will also be made and, lastly, recommendations for further research will be made.

#### 6.1 SUMMARY

The aim of the study was to establish the preparedness of technikon trained library and information science diplomates for the work situation. The focus group was diplomates who completed their diplomas at M.L.Sultan Technikon between 1994 to 1996 inclusive.

The training of library and information science diplomates at technikons is undertaken in order to supply staff that can occupy support positions in libraries and other information supplying agencies. In order to do this effectively, it is necessary to know what skills employers seek and also to know what diplomates think they need based on their work experiences.

The study was undertaken because the researcher felt that an information gap existed in curriculum development as a result of non-participation of some stakeholders in this development. Stakeholders referred to were the diplomates themselves and their employers. In this evaluative study, opinions of diplomates and their employers were sought to determine the preparedness of diplomates for the work situation. This was done in the form of mail questionnaires sent to both groups of respondents.

In Chapter 1, the introductory chapter, the aim of the study was outlined and the motivation for conducting such a study was provided. Concerns of some educators in the field of library and information science were outlined. One educator was concerned about the relevance of what is taught at library schools for the work situation. This concern re-emphasized the need for the present study. Terms used in the study were defined and put



into context for purposes of this study. The limitations of the study were also outlined.

Chapter 2 was an attempt to review the literature related to this study. It was established that evaluative studies of this nature had not been conducted in any of the South African technikons that were offering training of para-professionals in the fields of library and information work. This also confirmed the need for this study. This chapter started off by outlining the history of LIS training in South Africa. This was followed by a discussion of the role of the para-professional in the library. Trends for the training of library and information para-professionals in selected Sub-Saharan countries including South Africa were outlined. A detailed discussion of the technikon curriculum was made with the aim of placing the role of para-professionals in its proper context. An attempt was also made to place the technikon curriculum within the context of the National Qualifications Framework.

Chapter 3, which concentrated on the methodology, provided a detailed discussion of the concept “evaluation” and special emphasis was placed on curriculum evaluation. Aims of evaluation were discussed and the various evaluation methods were outlined. The present study was placed within the framework of illuminative evaluation which tries to examine the rationale, development, progress and success and the problems encountered in a programme. The survey method which was used in this study was discussed and the rationale behind its use was provided. It was noted that because of the small number of potential respondents, no sampling was done for purposes of this study. The concepts of “validity” and “reliability” were discussed. The mail questionnaire, which was the data collection technique used in the study was discussed and its advantages and disadvantages were outlined.

In Chapter 4 the results of the study were presented in table format and described. These results were discussed in Chapter 5. Concluding remarks concerning this study as discussed in Chapter 5 will now follow.

## 6.2 CONCLUSIONS

As mentioned above, the aim of the study was to determine the preparedness of technikon trained library and information science diplomates for the work situation. Preparedness was to be determined by, on the one hand, perceptions of diplomates regarding their preparedness for the various tasks for which they were trained and, on the other hand, by perceptions of employers regarding diplomates' preparedness for the same tasks.

As observed in Chapter 5, 50% of diplomates were employed as Library Assistants (as defined in Chapter One) and were therefore not performing many of the tasks for which they were trained. This has had an impact on the ratings given by diplomates because some of them were not based on the actual work experiences but on what they (the diplomates) thought they were equipped to do. This does not however affect the value of these results because it provides an indication of the diplomates' perceptions concerning their preparedness. An analysis of the ratings for various tasks indicates that the few diplomates who are in positions where they perform tasks for which they were trained are in fact prepared. Although ratings of diplomates are higher than those given by employers, there is consensus by both groups that diplomates are prepared in terms of their skills. The difference arises when it comes to the extent of this preparedness with diplomates ratings being higher than those given by employers. Having said that, there are areas where, although prepared, diplomates seem not to be rated highly by employers. These areas include cataloguing and classification, management, selection of library materials, and reference work. Employers' ratings for the above-mentioned tasks are much lower than the other ratings, for example, half the diplomates that do cataloguing of materials received ratings of less than 4.

As far as weaknesses of the diploma are concerned, there was no area where the majority of respondents agreed. Here, the nature of the library appeared to have played an important role. For example, respondents (employers) from the public library sector were concerned about aspects such as story telling and community information services while

respondents from special libraries were concerned with aspects such as on-line searching. This can be seen to imply that there seems to be balance in the curriculum because there is no major area of discontent from the employers' side. The training of diplomates tries to prepare them to fit into any information supplying agency in terms of the skills taught, hence each type of agency receives more or less equal attention. The result of this is that aspects that are peculiar to a specific type of information supplying agency are not covered in detail as this can put other types of agencies at a disadvantage. Possibly some aspects of the programme do need to be more practical, for example, reference work, where employers gave a low rating for aspects such as the ability of diplomates to conduct reference interviews and answer basic reference questions, but as mentioned above, training attempts to be general so that diplomates are equipped to work in any type of agency in which they may be employed.

The diploma was found to be useful by diplomates because it provided them with an understanding of technology. Employers felt that the strengths of the diploma lay in its practical nature and the fact that diplomates did not need to undergo vigorous training when joining the establishment for the first time. This has also been confirmed by librarians who have hosted diplomates during cooperative training. Finally, cooperative training was mentioned by both groups of respondents as a strength of the diploma.

It also emerged that some employers' understanding of the role that should be played by technikon diplomates in libraries is somewhat lacking. The overwhelmingly positive response as to whether employers felt that diplomates were usefully employed (Table 24) in their respective organizations is an indication of this. Although some employers realized that some diplomates were not employed either in a professional or para-professional level in their organizations, they did not necessarily perceive this as a problem. The professionalization of librarianship as discussed by Kerkham (1988:7) does not seem to have been effected in some libraries because some employers do not seem to see the difference between diplomates and administrative staff who do not have any library

qualifications.

The non-applicability of many tasks to diplomates is further indication of the lack of appropriate job descriptions and structures for diplomates in many libraries as supported by Van Aswegen (1997:54). The frustrations that result from this state of affairs can be summed up by a comment made by one diplomate who indicated that he was not using any of the skills that he had acquired during training. He wrote “my present job does not give room to prove my abilities.”

### 6.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It is necessary that curriculum development and evaluation should always include the views of diplomates and employers because of the valuable input that these two stakeholders can provide. It is therefore suggested that other technikons that train library and information science diplomates duplicate this study to see whether similar results would be obtained.

As regards the identification by diplomates of areas which need to be developed in the course, it is essential that these problem areas be investigated to determine if they are particularly related to certain types of libraries. This was beyond the scope of the present study.

In view of the fact that many respondents indicated that they were employed as Library Assistants, it is suggested that a survey of all technikon trained library and information science diplomates be made to determine the positions they occupy in their places of employment as well as their job descriptions. This will enlighten educators and future students on the opportunities available for diplomates once they graduate. A survey of agencies that provide opportunities for para-professionals can also help provide this information.

Allied to the above is the need to investigate why employers are reluctant to give

diplomates the kind of work for which they are trained. Such findings would have obvious implications for curriculum development.

Finally, it was noted that ongoing evaluation of the technikon diploma does take place. However, a mechanism allowing for on-going employer and diplomate involvement into curriculum development process needs to be investigated.

#### 6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In terms of the present study diplomates were largely prepared for the work situation as rated by the diplomates themselves and their employers. However, the high rate of non-applicability of tasks to diplomates is cause for concern. Frustrations of diplomates in their work places is another factor for further concern.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

Department of Library and Information Studies  
M.L.Sultan Technikon  
P.O. Box 1334  
DURBAN  
4000  
Tel. (031) 308 5423  
E-mail [manedm@wpo.mlsultan.ac.za](mailto:manedm@wpo.mlsultan.ac.za)  
27 August 1997

Dear .....

In partial fulfilment of my Masters Degree I am conducting an evaluation of the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice in order to determine whether it has met its objectives.

In order to do this I am conducting a survey among diplomates of this diploma who completed their studies between 1994-1996. It is essential that I get feedback from diplomates as this will assist the department in developing a curriculum that prepares them to cope with the demands of the work situation.

I would appreciate it if you could take the time to complete the following questionnaire as honestly as possible and send it back by 10 October 1997. Your confidentiality in this regard will be respected and your input will be highly appreciated.

Enclosed is a self-addressed envelope which can be used to return the completed questionnaire.

If you have any queries with regard to the questionnaire please contact me at the telephone number or e-mail address above.

Thanking you in advance

Maned Mhlongo

Lecturer: Department of Library and Information Studies

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DIPLOMATES

*Questionnaire to determine whether the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice has prepared diplomates to deal with the demands of the work situation.*

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AS HONESTLY AND AS COMPLETELY AS POSSIBLE. YOUR INPUT WILL BE HIGHLY APPRECIATED AND YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY WILL BE RESPECTED.**

**PLEASE PLACE A CROSS OR TICK IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK.**

1. Year in which diploma completed:

1994	1995	1996
------	------	------

2. Are currently employed in an information supplying agency?

YES	NO
-----	----

If the answer to question 2 is NO, go to question 14

3. Type of agency:

Public library	
Academic library	
Special library	
School library	
Community Resource Centre	
Other ( please specify)	

4. Area where agency is situated (name of city / town / village)

.....

5. How long have you been employed in this agency? (Years and Months)

.....

6. Did you work at another agency before working in this one?

YES	NO
-----	----

If the answer to question 6 is NO, go to question 8.

7. If the answer to question 6 is YES, please furnish details

- a) Type of agency ( as per 3 above) .....
- b) Area where agency is situated (as per 4 above).....
- c) How long did you work in that agency? (as per 5 above).....
- d) Position held .....
- e) Duties performed ( list tasks). If more than 5 please list what you considered to be the 5 most important tasks.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

f) Reason for leaving:

End of contract	
Got a better paying job	
Got a permanent job	
Other (please specify)	

8. Position held at present: .....

9. Duties performed (list tasks). If more than 5, list what you consider to be the 5 most important duties.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

10. How much did the following aspects of the syllabus prepare you for your current job?  
Please rate them on a scale of 1 to 5.

*Good job*

**RATE AS FOLLOWS: 5 FOR "PREPARED ME THE MOST", 1 FOR "PREPARED ME THE LEAST" AND 0 IF THE ASPECT IS NOT APPLICABLE TO YOUR CURRENT JOB**

a) *Cataloguing*

adding holdings and location information to records

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

verification and checking of cataloguing information

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

doing copy cataloguing using computerized networks

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

doing original cataloguing of straightforward monographs

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

maintenance of authority files and public catalogues

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

supervision of the processing of materials

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....



**b) Classification**

Classification of straightforward monographs using the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

**c) Indexing and abstracting**

assigning subject headings using a subject headings list (e.g. Sear's list of subject headings)

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

writing précis of articles and books

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

**d) Selection of library materials**

using appropriate selection aids like national bibliographies, book reviews, publisher's catalogues, etc. to select materials

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

the ability to select appropriate materials for the user group

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

e) *Selection of audio-visual equipment and software*

assist in the selection and purchase of equipment

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

maintain audio-visual equipment in good order

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

operate audio-visual equipment

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

prepare audio-visual programs

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

supervise an audio-visual media centre

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

f) *Acquisition of materials*

verification of requests

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

preparation of purchase orders

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

receive and claim orders

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

administer serials records

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

supervision of acquisitions department

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

g) *Physical stock maintenance*

supervise the re-shelving of materials

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

assist in weeding

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

delete catalogue entries

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

compile disposals lists

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

prepare materials for binding

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

administer binding records

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

h) *Reprography*

assist in the selection and purchase of reprographic equipment

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

maintain reprographic equipment in good order

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

operate reprographic equipment

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

supervise a reprographic centre

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

i) *Computer equipment*

set up and operate simple systems

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

operate large computer systems

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

j) *Management*

leadership and supervision

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

understanding of staff functions in the library organizational structure

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

basic budgeting

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

understanding of communication channels in an organization

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

k) *Circulation*

administration of all aspects of circulation control both manual and computerized including reserve systems

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

statistical reporting systems

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

interlibrary loan systems

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

1) *Reference work*

conduct the initial reference interviews

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

answer basic questions using standard reference tools

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

conduct database searches using a given search strategy

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

compile bibliographies on defined subjects

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

administer pamphlet and similar information files

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

assist in current awareness services

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

m) *Publicity*

assist in library orientation programs

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

assist patrons to use catalogues and find materials

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

assist in planning and setting up library displays and exhibits

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

11. In your opinion, and in terms of your work, are there any other skills which you think should have been developed but were not?

YES	NO
-----	----

If the answer is YES, please elaborate

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. What did you find most useful about the course in terms of your present work?

.....

.....

.....

.....

13. What suggestions would you make in order to improve this course for your present type of work?

.....

.....

.....

.....

If you are not employed in an information supplying agency, please answer question 14.

14. In your opinion, is your not being employed in an information supplying agency due to any shortcomings in your training towards the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice?

YES	NO
-----	----

If the answer is YES, please elaborate

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for time and cooperation



## APPENDIX B

Department of Library and Information Studies  
M.L. Sultan Technikon  
P.O. Box 1334  
DURBAN  
4000  
Tel. (031) 308 5423  
E-mail [manedm@wpo.mlsultan.ac.za](mailto:manedm@wpo.mlsultan.ac.za)  
27 August 1997

Dear Sir/ Madam

In partial fulfilment of my Masters Degree I am conducting an evaluation of the National Diploma: Library and Information Practice in order to determine whether it meets its objectives.

In order to do this I am conducting a survey among employers of our diplomates to assess how prepared the diplomates are to cope with demands of the work situation. It is essential that we get feedback from employers as this will help in developing a curriculum that prepares the student to deal with the demands of the work situation and also with the needs of the industry.

According to my information you have in your organization a diplomate of the M.L. Sultan Technikon who completed her diploma between 1994 and 1996. I would appreciate it if you could kindly complete the following questionnaire as honestly as possible. The diplomate concerned is .....

I would appreciate it if you could take time and complete the following questionnaire as honestly as possible and send it back by 10 October 1997. Your confidentiality in this regard will be respected and your input will be highly appreciated.

Enclosed is a self-addressed envelope which can be used to return the completed questionnaire.

If you have any queries with regard to the questionnaire please contact me at the telephone number or e-mail address above.

Thanking you in advance

Maned Mhlongo  
Lecturer: Department of Library and Information Studies

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE EMPLOYER

*The purpose of this questionnaire is to elucidate the views of employers regarding the preparedness of National Diploma: Library and Information Practice diplomates for the work situation.*

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE AS HONESTLY AS POSSIBLE. YOUR INPUT WILL BE HIGHLY APPRECIATED AND YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY WILL BE RESPECTED.**

**PLEASE PLACE A CROSS OR TICK IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK.**

1. Name of organization .....

2. How prepared are diplomates (in terms of skills) to perform the following tasks?

**PLEASE RATE ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5 WHERE THE RATINGS ARE AS FOLLOWS: 5 "FOR MOST PREPARED", 1 FOR "LEAST PREPARED" AND 0 IF THE ASPECT IS NOT APPLICABLE TO THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE DIPLOMATE.**

### a) *Cataloguing*

adding holdings and location information to records

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

verification and checking of cataloguing information

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

doing copy cataloguing using computerized networks

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

doing original cataloguing of straightforward monographs

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

maintenance of authority files and public catalogues

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

supervision of the processing of materials

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

b) *Classification*

classification of straightforward monographs using the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

c) *Indexing and abstracting*

assigning subject headings using a subject list (e.g. Sear's list of subject headings)

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

writing précis of articles and books

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

d) *Selection of library materials*

using appropriate selection aids like national bibliographies, book reviews, publishers' catalogues, etc. to select materials

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

the ability to select appropriate materials for the user group

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

***e) Selection of audio-visual equipment and soft ware***

assist in the selection and purchase of equipment

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

maintain audio-visual equipment in good order

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

operate audio-visual equipment

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

prepare audio-visual programs

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

supervise an audio-visual media centre

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

f) *Acquisition of materials*

verification of requests

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

preparation of purchase orders

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

receive and claim orders

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

administer serials records

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

supervision of acquisitions department

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

g) **Physical stock maintenance**

supervise the re-shelving of materials

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

assist in weeding

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

delete catalogue entries

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

compile disposals lists

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

prepare materials for binding

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

administer binding records

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

h) **Reprography**

assist in the selection and purchase of reprographic equipment

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

maintain reprographic equipment in good order

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

operate reprographic equipment

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

supervise a reprographic centre

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

.....

.....

.....

i) *Computer equipment*

set up and operate simple systems

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

operate large computer systems

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

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.....

j) *Management*

leadership and supervision

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

understanding of staff functions in the library organizational structure

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

basic budgeting

5	4	3	2	1	0
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understanding of communication channels in an organization

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

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k) ***Circulation***

administration of all aspects of circulation control both manual and computerized including reserve systems

5	4	3	2	1	0
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statistical reporting systems

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

interlibrary loan systems

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

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l) ***Reference work***

conduct the initial reference interview

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

answer basic reference questions using standard reference tools

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

conduct database searches using a given search strategy

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

compile bibliographies on defined subjects

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

administration of pamphlets and similar information files

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

assist in current awareness services

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

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m) **Publicity**

assist in library orientation programs

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

assist patrons to use catalogues and find materials

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

assist in planning and setting up library displays and exhibits

5	4	3	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please provide comment, particularly if the rating is 2 or 1

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3. In your opinion, are there any areas that should have been developed during training but were not?

YES	NO
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If yes, please elaborate

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4. In your opinion what are the strengths of this diploma?

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5. Do you feel that the technikon diplomate is usefully employed in your library / information centre?

YES	NO
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Please elaborate

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Thank you for your time and input