

16. 'This is what you want, this is what you get'

Matching real training needs to delivery

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There are limited training options for audiovisual archivists, with most formal courses centred in Europe or the United States of America, but high costs can prevent people working in audiovisual archives from accessing these opportunities. However, there are significant collections of audiovisual heritage spread across the globe, not the least in Southeast Asia and the Pacific region, that are at risk of loss due to a number of factors, including staff competencies. In 1996 audiovisual archivists formed the Southeast Asia–Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA) to advocate on their behalf and to provide networking and other assistance to develop and sustain their respective collections. A key part of SEAPAVAA's work has been to provide training. Over the past 20 years the association has developed and delivered educational programmes on all aspects of audiovisual archiving. Over this time its trainers have developed an analytical approach to prioritizing needs and optimizing delivery methods in a region that has many distinct languages and cultures and where one size does not fit all. This paper looks at how SEAPAVAA went about discovering those needs and developing training priorities around them.

Audiovisual archive training has traditionally been driven from a syllabus point of view. UNESCO's *Curriculum development for the training of personnel in moving image and recorded sound archives* (Harrison, 1990) proposed a syllabus that built on a basis of formal education in related fields such as librarianship or chemistry. The proposal was an outcome of a recommendation "For the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images" passed at a UNESCO General Conference in 1980 that concluded:

It soon became evident, that although in-house training, summer schools, seminars and symposia can impart knowledge to students and also the know-how and skills needed for certain jobs, they will never be a substitute for professional education based on scientific methods (Harrison, 1990).

The UNESCO document remains a valuable model for formal education. However, the size of the global market for audiovisual archive education is small. Consequently, in the past 25 years very few tertiary-level courses have become available. Additionally some courses that were developed have folded due to low student numbers and the high cost of running such specialized programmes. Therefore short training exercises provide the overwhelming majority of education for audiovisual archivists.

Using the proposed broad syllabus offered by the UNESCO document, the development and delivery of training may not necessarily focus sufficiently on the real need of a particular archive or even a region. To determine the most cost-effective use of limited resources, the Southeast Asia–Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA) has adopted a needs-analysis approach to identifying training needs using surveys of members and a case studies approach to provide the most crucial areas of training and to effectively deliver practical skills that cross the language differences that exist in the region.

Regional collaboration

The concept of a regional association germinated during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Audio/Video and Film Retrieval, Restoration and Archiving Conference Workshop held in Manila in 1993. Participants drew up a

framework for a comprehensive programme for film and video archiving, including a recommendation to form an ASEAN confederation of film archivists to promote the development of film and video archiving in the region. SEAPAVAA was inaugurated in 1996 with an expanded scope to include the Pacific as well.

Since 1996 one of SEAPAVAA's key strengths has been training. Training projects from half-day to four-week residential intensive courses have covered topics relating to all aspects of audiovisual collections and archives management. The first major SEAPAVAA training initiative was in 1997, with a month-long intensive course held at the Philippines Information Agency (PIA) in Manila. Students were drawn from countries across the region to gain technical knowledge and skills from international trainers from Australia, Germany and the United States of America. The course was structured in a traditional, formal way, with lectures and directed practical sessions covering the basics of film, video and audio materials as physical objects, handling practices, modes of deterioration, best practice storage, duplication and developing long-term management strategies. Over the four weeks students were constantly engaged, and occasionally challenged, by the sheer amount of information provided. Participants went on to form the nucleus of the 'next wave' of audiovisual archivists, with many eventually taking up senior roles in major audiovisual archives in the region.

SEAPAVAA's approach to training development and delivery

From the earliest days of SEAPAVAA's training efforts it was recognized that the region had many common problems that were not reflected in the practices of western audiovisual archives. The extreme climate was at the core of the problem, closely followed by lack of access to current information and technology. The access challenge was not only an issue of financial resources but also the lack of local suppliers and service providers to support the purchase and maintenance of equipment that suited audiovisual archives' needs. To explore these issues, SEAPAVAA encouraged organizations to share their approaches to these problems. These experiences were fed into the list of topics for later training projects.

Despite including the specific issues of the region, the structure of courses remained based in the traditional methodology with a syllabus designed to cover the topics course designers felt were important or necessary based on accepted international practice. This approach was an 'easy' process because it was based on widely accepted instructional design practices used by audiovisual archives at that time. However, it became clear that while the essential information was being transmitted, the training

was not as effective as was first thought. Responses to formal course evaluations could be overly polite, and therefore not reflective of the instruction; culturally it was not considered good manners to be critical of teachers. Once the cultural issue had been identified, the analysis of the problem was not complex. We were attempting to use a style that was not being translated successfully into the language or general culture of the region. We needed an approach that could overcome at least the language issues.

Slowly our methodology changed to be more responsive to the needs of the members. We shifted from a core set of training topics and curricula to a more tailored approach tackling one issue at a time. The training incorporated related knowledge and skills that would be required to solve that particular issue. In this way each training project became focussed on problem solving rather than downloading information. This shift in thinking eventually led us to the case study method.

Case study is well defined within education circles. Two definitions SEAPAVAA has used are: "complex examples which give an insight into the context of a problem as well as illustrating the main point" (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall, 1999, p. 408) and "student centred activities based on topics that demonstrate theoretical concepts in an applied setting" (Davis and Wilcock, 2003). Case studies have been used for many years in higher education. The case study models we studied were based on adult learning, or andragogical, principles

An andragogical approach is based upon the principles defined by Malcolm Knowles (1975). Knowles postulated that children and adults differ in the way that they best respond to learning. Adults

- need to know why they need to learn something,
- need to learn experientially,
- approach learning as problem solving and
- learn best when the topic is of immediate value.

SEAPAVAA's approach to developing case studies examined the lessons of higher education and was also strongly influenced by the science arm of the Nuffield project in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the 1960s, which focused on secondary education. The aim of the Nuffield project was described as:

the need to make science intellectually exciting and to ensure that pupils understand the nature of science. There was to be stress on encouraging attitudes of critical inquiry and on developing ability to weigh

evidence, assess probabilities and become familiar with the main principles and methods of science (Meyer, 1970, p. 283).

The Nuffield project was aimed at students aged 11–16, and hence would be more based on pedagogical principles rather than andragogy. However, the basic concept of encouraging investigation and weighing of evidence to enable effective problem solving was still at the core. Many of the students at SEAPAVAA training have only had experience of secondary-level education before commencing their careers, and the training they had undergone had been the traditional ‘chalk and talk’ style. The Nuffield approach was seen as being able to provide students with a more familiar entry to the way we wished to provide training than would be espoused by a purely andragogical approach.

There were also time constraints. To be most effective, self-directed learning requires time to explore the subject, whereas due to financial constraints our training time frames are measured in days. An approach combining elements of pedagogy and andragogy was established as providing a good compromise.

In our work we developed case studies that would be familiar for people working in the region. We used environmental conditions, infrastructure and resource levels that we had observed over the years of working with archives in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Although the situations used for the case studies may have been familiar, the details were modified so no single event or archive was clearly identifiable. The culture of the region is such that identifying a particular organization or event would in all probability lead to embarrassment of the people involved, even though in general conversation such incidents are discussed.

One case study scenario for a disaster preparedness training workshop involves a fictional national television broadcaster, NCT1. The story follows NCT1 from its establishment in 1978 through the development of its technology and production capacity. These details indicate the station’s capabilities and collection profile. Information is also given on its current infrastructure, as well as its location, topography and climate statistics. The first part of the workshop requires students, in groups, to identify the risks facing the collection and develop a disaster management plan. The second part unleashes a major disaster to test their plans.

Serendipitously, the case study approach in groups also partly solved one of the issues we had faced: providing effective training in what was at best a second language for many archivists in the region. English is the official language of SEAPAVAA and the language most common to trainers and

students of audiovisual archiving across the region, but actual proficiency varies. Our experiences of teaching through interpreters had been patchy. The problem was not so much the ability of translators to translate from English as their ability to understand the technical concepts we were trying to introduce and explain. Over the years we have worked with excellent translators who had a background working with museums or other related fields, and on other occasions the translators had no background in either a cultural or technical field found themselves lost and unable to provide the necessary clarity. Working in groups in their first language, students were able to more thoroughly explore the case study scenarios and work collaboratively to develop solutions to the questions posed. Each member of the group is more able to contribute to the development of the solution regardless of his or her proficiency in English.

The case study approach was first tested in 2008 as part of a three-day workshop at the University of the Philippines in the main campus at Diliman, Quezon City. The workshop was organized by the Society of Filipino Archivists, with students drawn from a variety of backgrounds, including trained archivists, librarians and broadcasters. The workshop was sufficiently detailed and of sufficient duration to give the approach a good trial. Feedback on the case study structure of the workshop was very positive. The ability of this method to test the use of language was not so relevant since English is widely spoken in the Philippines. The encouraging feedback was sufficiently positive to warrant a second trial using the case study method at an ASEAN-sponsored workshop in Singapore. At the ASEAN workshop students were given a case study scenario and challenged to use the information provided over the previous days to develop a strategic plan for the case study collection. The final presentation from each group provided a clear indication that the students were able to apply the information provided and use it to solve complex problems. The final feedback from each workshop was that students had found that the method allowed them to comprehend the information’s relevance. This helped them understand and contextualize the knowledge. Overall, the trials were very positive, and from that point case study became an integral part of SEAPAVAA’s training strategy.

Needs analysis

At this stage the training was still based on a broad syllabus, albeit developed on our assessment of levels of skills and knowledge we had observed. The next step was to determine the real needs of archives and prioritize the topics offered for training. To obtain this information we developed a skills gap / training-needs-analysis survey tool. While surveys have notoriously poor response rates, this was the only option available to us.

We were aware that archiving organizations are multifaceted and carry out tasks on a huge range of collections objects, and therefore our training needed to cover a wide variety of topics. Additionally there was a different focus applied to a task depending on the level of the person within the organization. The levels we needed to consider were broadly described as technical (desk-level), supervision and senior managerial levels. Additionally there are practical, theoretical and strategic skills within these employment subsets. The final survey was therefore split into four sections:

1. Background information on the nature of the organization seeking information on the legislative basis, staff structure and collections profile.
2. Professional (librarianship) and technical staff, focusing on theory and practical/hands-on skills.
3. Supervisory and middle-level management, with less focus on practical skills and introducing project planning and topics of a more strategic nature.
4. Senior management, directors and CEOs – strongly based on strategic topics and advocacy skills.

Section 1 was broadly based in order to capture a regional profile of collecting organizations. This provided current data on the sort of organizations that were responding in respect to size, mandate and collection profile. This section was intended to be used for normalizing responses, and also as a benchmark to test responses further in the survey for consistency.

Sections 2–4 contained set questions outlining specific topics from a broad syllabus of topics that were either based on the 1990 UNESCO document (Harrison, 1990) or experience gained from anecdotal evidence or previous training exercises. Each of these sections contained 20–30 tick-box questions with the option for free text comments as well.

To simplify the analysis of the responses there was offered a simple choice based on the organization's perceived needs, with three possible responses to each question.

- *Urgent need.* This indicated a key skill required by the organization to operate, and the skills required do not exist.
- *Some need.* The skill or knowledge is required but not crucial to overall operations, or staff already have some skills, and training is required to refine the existing staff skills.
- *No need.* The skill is not required for operations, or staff are already well trained and competent.

A second response for each question sought the depth of training required:

- *Detailed.* Respondents desired an intensive workshop with interactive exercises and/or hands-on practice.

- *Basic.* A component of a broader workshop would suffice. It may involve an interactive exercise, some hands-on practice as well as a lecture or a knowledge resource (e.g. web-based information).

Even using this simplified response method resulted in a large questionnaire, with 11 pages in total.

The survey was distributed to all SEAPAVAA members in 2013 via e-mail with a covering explanatory letter. We also collaborated with the Pacific Area Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA) for the distribution and return of surveys in the Pacific region. PARBICA has a larger membership, and this enabled more returns than SEAPAVAA members alone.

The immediate return rate of 50 percent was very satisfactory. The results were collated and analysed to prioritize the most urgent topics across each of the three employment sectors.

The highest priority topic across all the staff profiles was disaster planning and recovery. This result was not altogether unexpected; it was a frequent topic of conversation at SEAPAVAA conferences. The other sought-after topics were standards for digitization, metadata and project planning.

Accordingly, a two-day disaster planning and recovery workshop was developed. The timetable included a mix of working with case studies, hands-on practical sessions and planning exercises to hone skills. The workshop was held immediately prior to SEAPAVAA's annual conference in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic, in 2014. The timing and location was intended to reduce costs to members in terms of travel and time away from work. The workshop was fully subscribed with Lao and foreign students, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

To ensure that training remains targeted to the needs of the region, the survey will be repeated at regular intervals.

Broadening the scope

The survey questionnaire has proven to be a valuable tool in planning. So much so that in 2015 the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA), a SEAPAVAA member, used the tool, with slight revisions, to accommodate additional questions on indigenous cultural intellectual property management, as part of the UNESCO-sponsored Pacific Region Preservation Needs Analysis. This project used two survey tools, the training needs survey and a risk analysis survey, with the risk analysis being used to identify specific drivers of preservation needs.

These two surveys dovetailed well to give a greater detail to the syllabus of the training identified for a specific location/organization. The Pacific survey, although covering part of the region surveyed by SEAPAVAA in 2013, was able to target more organizations than just SEAPAVAA and PARBICA members. Perhaps not surprisingly, given both the physical and economic environment, the results of this Pacific survey closely matched those of the broader SEAPAVAA regional survey.

Assessing the benefits of training that has been identified by needs analysis and delivered using a case study approach is more easily determined and reported. There is clear evidence of the need from the survey, and this can be matched to the training syllabus. The completeness and understanding shown in the results of the practical exercises demonstrate quite clearly whether the training goals have been achieved and offer a metric for reporting.

Observation of the training provides another way to evaluate engagement and effectiveness. Students remain focussed for the full duration of the training, especially in the traditionally difficult period after lunch break! At one workshop held in Bangkok not all the working groups had sufficient opportunity to give a full presentation of their results. The following day the delegated presenter for one of the groups sought me out and insisted on running through their presentation and getting my feedback so he could report back to his group. The motivation of the group and pride in their work had demanded this follow-up.

Conclusions

By accurately determining the real needs for training and using a training method that responds to those needs, training projects can be more accurately formed and have a greater benefit. By matching the training to a specific need the effectiveness of the training project in terms of cost benefit and ongoing impact can be more easily assessed and reported. In a region where one size does not fit all,

SEAPAVAA training programmes are offering the knowledge and training that its member organizations request and require.

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