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The important thing is to recognise and take opportunities when they present themselves.

I have seen a lot of time and energy spent trying to quantify and measure learning. Yet, most people realise that it's quality of individual learning that counts and that it can happen even at the most unexpected moments.

Who would ever dream, for example, that going to a Committee meeting could be a learning experience? But in fact, the benefits of attending meetings can be quite definite. Apart from building up a picture of the issues involved in your profession, it increases your contact with the movers and shakers who may be helpful to know—and may ultimately encourage and inspire you to be one yourself.

Involvement is the key to learning. If you would like to be involved in any of the local ALIA groups, look in *Vital Link*.

The Training and Development (T&D) program at ALIA aims to support and facilitate on-going learning for members in many shapes and forms. Support is offered at three equally important and integrated levels:

- 1 **The ALIA Training and Development Committee** addresses the larger questions about training and development across the profession. It is currently watching the competency debate unfold (with a strategy up its sleeve in case T&D needs to be included); keeping contact with people conducting research in the T&D area for this profession; and keeping abreast of potentially useful technological developments;
- 2 **ALIA Branches and Regional groups**—through teleconferences to support local T&D

activity. National Office works with ALIA Divisions, giving guidance on how to make their events and activities successful and also providing products such as certificates, evaluation forms, etc. In return, these groups offer invaluable help to the T&D program by focusing on what is important and feeding back information;

- 3 **Individual members** contact the ALIA Office for guidance, products and services. At this level, the T&D program has much to offer. Apart from information about the association, if you want to know what is available to you in the way of continuing professional education, there are a number of ways I can help:
- **the T & D Database** lists courses, workshops, seminars, conferences T&D events relevant to the library and information area. Extremely useful to people who want to know about T&D opportunities in a particular subject area, or for groups who are intending to organise an event to find out about guest speakers, topics etc. The information is collected from a wide range of sources and is available to members by contacting the T&D Officer at National Office on (008) 02 0071 or by leaving a request on our ILANET connection mln 205700.
  - **Self-Education Courses**—Learn new and relevant concepts at your own pace with our range of courses which have assessment and conclude with a certificate. The nuts and bolts of conservation are covered by *Preserving Our Heritage* assessment module, a

worthwhile investment at \$75 (assessment only). *Automating a Small Library* has been excellent for those wanting to learn the jargon, concepts and gaining some understanding of what is involved in moving across to an automated system.

*Marketing Strategies for Library and Information Agencies* is great food for thought. Getting a group together to work on the discussion questions provides motivation to complete the assessment. And there is a price reduction for multiple copies sold to a study group.

- **Publications**—*ALIA Guidelines on Staff Training and Development* and *A guide to the Training Guarantee Scheme* are two publications that offer clarification of the basic concepts of these vexing issues, with useful checklists (\$10 members, \$15 non-members).

A number of projects are in the pipeline, including information and training on the issue of *Enterprise Bargaining*, self-education on cataloguing, using CD-ROMs and much more. Watch this space!

The important thing is to recognise and take opportunities when they present themselves.

Your Association is working hard to offer learning experiences and opportunities in a number of ways but these can only be really effective if you take up the opportunities.

For more information, contact the T&D Services Officer at ALIA House. For those with ILANET connection, the ALIA T&D Bulletin Board has more information. ■