Libary and information professionals' competencies: challenges in a changing socio-cultural environment

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Outline

- Introduction

- New educational challenges and obstracles

- Competent librarians and information professionals: a view from the EINFOSE project' perspective

Introduction

Educating librarians and information professionals

- The question of education for Library and Information Science (LIS) is undoubtedly also a question of
  - the identity of the discipline,
  - its relations and overlaps with Library Science, Computer Science, Digital Humanities, Information Management, Pedagogy, Linguistics, Language Processing, etc.
- While there is no doubt that it is possible to draw parallels between
  - Information Science (IS),
  - Library Science (LS),
  - Library and Information Science (LIS) etc.,
- there does not seem to exist a consensus on what the differences and similarities are, or where boundaries should be drawn.
  - EINFOSE. Policy Recommendations, 2018

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Looking back…

- some of the important sources to development of library and information science and information science are
  - Belkin (1978),
  - Capurro (1992),
  - Vakkari (1994),
  - Rayward (1996),
  - Buckland and Liu (1998),
  - Saracevic (1999),
  - Shera (1972),
  - Rayward (2004),
  - Tuomaala, Järvelin and Vakkari (2014) and
  - Hjørland (2017)…

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Academic education

- In the 1960s, many existing departments of information science and library science merged into the new entity of Library and Information Science (LIS).

- Some Library and Information Science schools have since the 1990s dropped "library", rebranding themselves simply as information science or information studies or as an information school (or iSchool).

- Information Science(s) can today be seen as very broad, covering the whole domains of Library Science, Documentation Science, Information Science, Archival Studies and even Museology.

- Researchers active within schools marked up with different labels such as information science, information studies, information and communication studies and information school work within the same research domain as those situated within Library and Information Science schools. (Sonnenwald, 2016).

Perspectives

- Information Science overlaps with numerous other disciplines with interest in studying communication process in which information is the main focus.

- Its unique character is in the fact that it tackles the entire communication chain with all its aspects and the interactions between these aspects.

  - Bawden and Robinson, 2013

New educational challenges and obstracles

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What do we need?

- We need something called **21st century skills**
- After many attempts, frameworks, frameworks of a frameworks,

    ➔ some convergence is identified

    4Cs or *super skills* for the 21st century:

    - **Creativity,**
    - **Communication,**
    - **Critical thinking, and**
    - **Collaboration**

    Jasmina Marić, EINFOSE Workshop, November 20, 2017, Boros, Sweden

Synthesis of 15 different 21st century learning frameworks

- **Foundational Knowledge**
  - Core Content Knowledge
  - Digital/ICT literacy
  - Cross-disciplinary Knowledge
- **Humanistic Knowledge**
  - Life/Job Skills
  - Ethical/Emotional Awareness
  - Cultural Competences
- **Meta Knowledge**
  - Communication & Collaboration
  - Problem Solving & Critical Thinking
  - Creativity & Innovation

    (Kereliuk et al., 2013)

Challenges for students

- **Six challenges** learners are facing in their class activities which indicate that there is something missing from their development of 21st century skills:
  - Interdisciplinary knowledge transfer problem
  - Cross-cultural setting difficulties
  - English reading difficulties
  - Safe group work settings preference
  - Uncomfortable with spontaneous verbal argumentation
  - Avoiding honest peer assessment
    - Cf Jasmina Marić, EINFOSE Workshop, November 20, 2017, Boros, Sweden

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Many steps taken

- Securing staff availability
- Devising new action plans
- Developing new approaches (flipped classrooms, OERs and MOOCs, learning by teaching etc.)
- Creating new learning environments – active learning classrooms, for instance
- Agreements with the platform providers
- Education of teachers, etc.

Bologna Process: the missed opportunities for HE?

- Frameworks
  - developing a list of learning outcomes and profiles that stakeholders at both national and international level can agree on

- Education needs and agreement on qualitative aspects of profiles, cycles and levels;

- Framework of qualifications with qualitative dimensions (subject benchmarking)

- Agreements and cooperation could be extended to critical pedagogy

- Learning materials, assessment rubric, exercises

From the idea to the EINFOSE project

- Some introductory thoughts related to the planning of the project submission:
    - How to plan and manage changes in HE for IS
    - What we can learn from each other
    - How to overcome differences – to what extent this is needed
    - Which new teaching approaches could be most usefull and efficient
    - How to be innovative...

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Introduction to the problem

- The European HE programs are
  - highly diverse and
  - offer different approaches to dealing with complex digital information systems
    - the contents and structures of courses can be very heterogeneous despite many efforts for harmonization

Overwiew of problems – (L)IS

- in general, both – LIS/IS and CS fields in Europe – have been characterized by
  - a great diversity and complexity which are bound to
    - different traditions,
    - approaches,
    - models,
    - program structures,
    - levels,
    - placements,
    - the duration of courses,
    - thematic profiles of curricula,
    - the content of courses,
    - ways of teaching and assessment,
    - and other factors

Differences in LIS/IS education

- Differences in Europe arised from
  - historical,
  - cultural,
  - social,
  - economic and
  - political factors
- As well as from
  - educational traditions,
  - epistemological frameworks, and
  - patchwork of national traditions.

Background – cont...

- the project's objectives are in line with Europe 2020,
  - especially its key priorities from the *Modernization agenda* that relate to the improvement of
    - the quality and relevance of digital teaching and learning,
    - promotion of student' and staff' mobility,
    - cross-border cooperation and
    - the emphasis on the importance of the "knowledge triangle (links between education, research, and innovation)

Background – cont...

- In line with the *Transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications to facilitate learning, employability and labor mobility*

- EINFOSE project could
  - contribute to an easier recognition of digital skills and qualifications across borders and could serve as a reference point for non-EU countries as well
  - it could also put the main ideas of this priority to work in practice by addressing digital skills at policy level, strengthening national and international coalitions for digital jobs and modernizing education

As to the Computer Science (CS) education →

- not all of the CS departments
  - had found new digital area of special interest in the direction of educating for digital information (such as digital humanities, for instance),
  - but continued to focus upon the technical matters or act closer with mathematics departments!

Diversity as a strenght?

- Some authors believe that the pluralism is a strength that future scientific and professional developments should be built upon

- Some are concerned that the diversity
  - might hampere transparency and student mobility,
  - and present obvious difficulties to intentions of working together and organizing joint programs

- Kajberg: such a diversity
  - „definitely has its charm, while at the same time a valuable asset"

Core content

- Wide discussion at the European level about the core content of educational programs for future new profiles in Social Sciences and Humanities

- They were expected to
  - encompass areas of knowledge and skills needed, including those based in social science, cultural studies, computer science, etc., and
  - be included in curriculum

Approaches

- Development of curricula for digital humanities, for instance, has been also challenging
- Attempts had brought in
  - a growing diversity of topics potentially relevant to the field
  - as well as to the increasing integration of computing with other disciplines.
- From the other side, globalization implicitly effected
  - content of curricula,
  - teaching,
  - learning and delivery methods,
  - staff competences and
  - quality.

Approaches – cont...

- New courses such as
  - Information Property Rights,
  - Information and Computer Ethics,
  - Digitale devide,
  - Digital Heritage, Digital Curation,
  - Information Assurance and Security,
  - Graphics and Visualization,
    - to name but few of them,
- attracted students regadless of their preference in choosing the program.

Tuning consultation – EINFOSE reflections

- What does particular **competence mean for our students**?

- How do we help students to achieve this competence in our **teaching methods**?

- What learning **activities** do our students engage with in order to develop this competence?

- How do we **assess** whether, or to what degree, they have achieved this competence?

- How do our students know **whether or to what degree** they have achieved this competence, and if not, why they have not achieved it?

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Desired competences

- creative and adaptive thinking,
- cooperative problem solving,
- compassion and mutual respect, and
- devotion to learning and knowledge stewardship.

- Common and specific values are integral part of the identity of the profession as well as the basis for quality services:
  - Common values: excellence, creativity, curiosity, and passion for learning.
  - Values derived from Library Science: Organization of information, Universal access, Collaboration, Intellectual freedom, Self-directed learning, Stewardship.
    - Marchionini and Moran, 2012

EINFOSE – starting points

- set of competencies IS HEIs must ensure in order to
- achieve the desired level of harmonisation and internationalisation of their students.
- Various professional institutions define core competencies in the field of Library and Information Science
  - Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa LIANZA, 2012;
  - American Library Association ALA, 2009;
  - Special Libraries Association SLA, 2016;
  - Australian Library and Information Association ALIA, 2014;
  - Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals CILIP, 2013…
- Next to those general set of competencies there are also numerous special competencies defined for sub-fields within LIS.
  - for instance,
    - data management – Confederation of Open Access Repositories COAR, 2012,
    - information, document and records management field – Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2009
    - Records and Information Management Core Competencies, 2017

Cont...

- In addition – IS HEIs must also take into account
- qualifications frameworks that are defined by administration at national and/or international level such as:
  - International Standard Classification of Occupations – ISCO;
  - Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community – NACE;
  - European Qualifications Framework – EQF;
  - European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens – DigComp, ...

IFLA BSLISE Working Group, 2018

- following key findings were identified from the data analysis:
  - A formal undergraduate or graduate degree is required in many countries; however, there is no correspondence/equivalence among degrees; for many programs, there is no international or recognized standard against which they can be benchmarked for transferability or reciprocity.
  - Certification is required in many responding countries; these are local certifications that are not internationally recognized, that is, there is no correspondence/ equivalence among certifications; hence, reciprocity becomes an issue, and the local certification practices do not have an international or recognized standard for Quality Assurance (QA).

Cont…

- Many countries have formal local structures/systems for QA (i.e., governmental or higher education accrediting body; professional association; professional charter/ council/union, etc.), or regulatory mechanisms; however, other countries may have none.

- Different LIS professional qualification structures are in place; however, there is insufficient international knowledge about them and they may not always be recognized or understood.

- Most responses from around the world indicate that certification is not needed for the broader LIS field. In Europe, the situation is mixed.

key recommendations

- Identify core and other competencies for transferability and reciprocity.
- Develop an international framework for the assessment of quality standards in LIS education.
- Create a local structure where there is none, building on local strengths.
- Develop an international resource that identifies local structures.
- Develop a "system" of qualification/accreditation inclusive of the areas in the broader LIS field.
- Define and understand what the broader LIS field means and its implications for LIS education and professional development.

Instead of conslusion

- The library field and the broader LIS or IS(s) field may have been, at one time, understood as separate disciplines

- however, the evolving nature of librarianship has blurred the boundaries in terms of scopes of practice, skills, and knowledge.

Thank you for your attention

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