Invited Paper

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (LIS) EDUCATION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TOWARDS "EUROPEISATION"

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INTRODUCTION. EUROPEISATION OF LIS EDUCATION

Following the Bologna Declaration in 1999 (Bologna Declaration 1999), the growing interest in the internationalisation of higher education in Europe is mainly due to the Bologna Process (BP). Through this, politicians aim to create an integrated European Higher Education Area (EHEA)[1] , in which
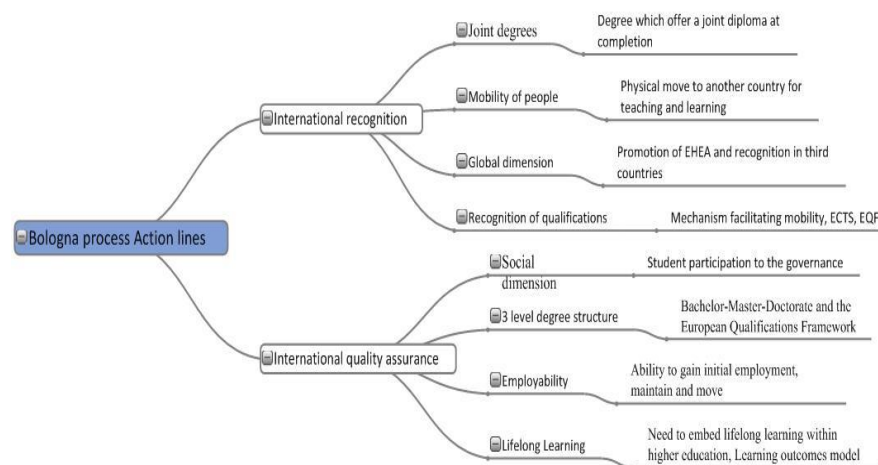
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1. The ten Bologna Action lines list:
   I. Three cycle degree structure: Bachelor-Master-Doctorate and the European Qualifications Framework (related and listed also with Recognition);
   II. Recognition: mobility facilitating mechanism and tools as equivalences
   III. Mobility: implies a physical move to another country for purposes of study or teaching;
   IV. Quality Assurance: refers to all the policies, review processes and actions designed to ensure that institutions, programmes and qualifications meet and maintain a specified standard;
   V. Social dimension: aims at equality of opportunities for students and student participation in higher education governance;
   VI. Joint degrees: international degrees which confer a joint or double certification at completion;
   VII. Employability: the ability to gain initial employment, to maintain such and to be able to move around within the labour market;
   VIII. Lifelong learning: need to embed lifelong learning within higher education;
   IX. Stocktaking: concerns with aspects of self-administration, regular evaluation of progress towards the achievement of BP objectives;
   X. Global dimension of EHEA: comprises a mixed set of items, such as the provision of information about BP outside Europe, marketing and promotion of EHEA in the world, recognition between EHEA and the rest of world.
   Accessible at website of the current Bologna Secretariat:
   http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/

the staff and students could be more inter-culturally skilled and internationally knowledgeable. The BP approach to "europeisation" is characterised by the internationalisation of procedures, in general nationally based (Knight, 2003), such as those for the recognition of qualifications and quality assurance. Of the ten BP Action Lines (see Fig. 1), four could be classified as belonging to the objective of recognition of qualifications: mobility, recognition, joint degrees and global dimension. Five of the remaining BP Action Lines belong to the category of procedures for the enhancement of quality and educational reform: quality assurance, social dimension, employability, lifelong learning and the three-cycle degree architecture (Watcher, 2008).

Fig. 1. BP Action lines

Europeisation of Library and Information Science (LIS) education

The issue which is central to this BP approach is how to develop "zones of mutual trust", stimulating quality enhancement in the European Higher Education Area. The European experiences of internationalisation in LIS achieved up until now have emphasised the concept of individual mobility and curricular harmonization (Abdullahi and Kajberg, 2004). European Commission higher education programmes (such as Socrates, Tempus and Erasmus) have contributed to stimulating these experiences, financing scholars and students exchange and more recently supporting joint degree

courses (with the programme Erasmus Mundus). More recently, some cooperative agreements concerning the LIS sector have experimented with accreditation systems, dictated by the need to assess and ensure the quality of the international dimension of teaching.

However, there are different approaches to the LIS programmes and these create a problem for international students in establishing the equivalence of specific course elements and recognising study periods in other schools. Procedural complications are also met by those European co-ordinators who embark on solving problems for students wishing to continue, and complete their education in other European LIS education institutions (Kajberg, 2002).

This paper will analyse the main findings of the EUCLID project *European Curriculum Reflections* (Kajberg and Lorring, 2005) led by the Royal LIS School of Copenhagen. The participants to this project discussed their opinions on a possible conceptual framework in European LIS education as a means of establishing quality of LIS education and guidelines for equivalency and reciprocity of LIS professional qualifications. The discussions about the conceptual framework has included:

1. The field of LIS and LIS education in Europe,

2. Programme content: overview of LIS typical degree,

3. Programme learning and teaching: replies to the required new approaches to learning and teaching.

THE FIELD OF LIS AND LIS EDUCATION

What is a librarian?

In the discussions inside the EUCLID project *European Curriculum Reflections* (Kajberg and Lorring, 2005), there was no common understanding of the LIS professional role.

The concept of the mediator role prevailed while other roles. All the LIS schools involved in the EUCLID project agreed on this definition (suggested by Tor Henriksen):

> *All the information professionals have to organise collections, both physical and/or virtual. Their role is that of mediator between authors and users.*

This makes LIS studies a field which prepares for practical work and for teaching and research in librarianship and the book trade, in archives

administration, in museums or any other physical or virtual collection or archive-based activity – also outside cultural institutions or organizations (Kajberg and Lorring, 2005). Can the LIS community agree on this role of mediator in the Society?

The purpose of an education in library and information science centres on the following positions to be filled by graduates (Kajberg and Lorring, 2005):

- Education and research positions for the designation and extension of principles about information, its acquisition, processing, utilization and transfer;

- Technical positions for the design and implementation of information systems;

- Functional positions to ensure adequate use of automated storage facilities in information environments.

In replying to this question: why librarian is doing his job? The discussion pointed to an active role such as educators role supporting learning, or social roles facilitating citizenship. These active roles were debated within the EUCLID project, without reaching any agreement. The complex process of internationalising the LIS curriculum is related not only to what we teach and how we teach, but also to the implications of differences in value judgement. Different perceptions of quality in LIS have to be related to different library concepts.

Kajberg states (Kajberg Transcript, 2002) that an authentic internationalisation of LIS signifies a shared concept of library and common tools. He affirms that we have to focus on the Information Society and reply to questions such as:

- What is a library? What is the role of a library in the community?

Library paradigms

The reply to this question is implicit in the values that the LIS Schools transmit to the professionals. Such values are coherently expressed in what is considered the core of the profession, what ought to be of permanent value in time and space. While the details of the international curriculum must differ somewhat from one place to another, the core content and the disciplinar principles should be the same. The main problem of the BP reform application in LIS is theoretical and is related to the concept of "Library" as currently understood in Europe. The

participants to the EUCLID project *European Curriculum Reflection* agreed on the "core" of the discipline: LIS has been defined as the "science" of organising mediation, using the term science as a special kind of science in the sense defined by Ranganathan (Kajberg and Lorring, 2005).

What are the real values underlying the concept of library in the LIS schools? While agreeing with "core" content, LIS education institutions in Europe have traditionally had two different approaches: one more focused on collection organisation and one more focused on information management. These values appear to be linked to two different paradigms: the first can be called the "archival paradigm" focused on the object to be mediated (book, document, information etc.); the other paradigm can be called "information management paradigm" with a functional approach to facilitating user access to information.

The archival approach has the organisation of knowledge as the core of the profession, with the function of managing the documents for rapid retrieval. It covers three basic subfields of study (Kajberg and Lorring, 2005): a) Source: the study of document, b) Organisation: information retrieval and knowledge organisation, c) System: the management of institutions.

a) The study of documents

This subfield covers the two main genres : fiction and non-fiction, their typology and the structure of the main kinds of documents. For some kinds of user, a specific user orientation is recommended e.g. children, visually handicapped, researchers, music listeners or performers.

The document being a combination of text and medium, the various media should be dealt with, from the oldest forms to the electronic ones.

It is assumed that it is not possible to standardise the content at a European level. Each institution must make its priorities according to the traditions of the country and the labour market for the candidates

b) Knowledge organization and information retrieval

This subfield has already reached a certain amount of standardisation and consists of the following items:

Formal and subject analysis

Formal (bibliographic) and content representation (with or without

indexing languages)

Storage (cataloguing, shelving, databases)

Searching and retrieval (including search behaviour)

Evaluation of performances.

Diachronic aspects to be dealt with could be - e.g. classification history

c) Organization and management. Cultural and information policy and legislation

This item covers primarily documentary institutions or organizations, but also issues related to the document flow in institutions or organization in general (information management). Central topics will be the building up of collections or archives through acquisition policies or deposition schemes. The study of the users to be served and the organization of the various services.

An obvious diachronic approach will be the history of institutions- e.g. library history or scenarios for the future.

General topics like planning, staff administration, budgeting and maintenance of buildings should be dealt with here.

The "information management approach" is illustrated by Johnson (1998, 2000) who states that the LIS profession seeks to highlight its role in the service of society, impacting not only on learning but also the economic development of the country. The author suggests that our professional aims include enhancing the impact of library and information services on: Social inclusion, Learning, Economic development. However there appears to have been little investigation of the evidence for the economic impact of information.

Thus in response to the question What is a library? there are two possible replies, leading to different values. The EUCLID project *European Curriculum Reflection on LIS education* (Kajberg and Lorring, 2005) has sought to define an intermediate model between the two paradigms. The Nordic countries tend to place the Information Society at the centre of the LIS sector, where the role of the library is to foster multiculturalism and citizenship.

In conclusion, the reply to the question "What is a library?" implies another question:

- What is the purpose of the LIS school?

OVERVIEW OF TYPICAL DEGREE IN LIS

Transparency is a leading objective of the BP and can be achieved using common tools. An international quality framework can foster clearer thinking about the core of LIS programmes. This is what EUCLID has begun to do, realising a survey about the core elements of LIS curriculum in Europe, whose findings in percentage of presence in LIS programmes are illustrated in Table 1. The EUCLID Guidelines which have been developed, to date as drafts, indicate a common structure which could be used for the benchmarking of European programmes. They define a conceptual model that can facilitate reciprocal understanding at international level. This model indicates the component elements of the curriculum as:

- *Sources*: what we mediate: real or virtual documents, data, broadcasts, etc. Including content and specialists. How we communicate them to users.

- *Organisation*: principles and theories of the profession, including IT. This includes how we organise, store, search and retrieve the documents and other sources

- *System*: organisation and development. How we develop and organise the user services and other tasks – including management, relevant legislation, social role and information politics.

Table 1. Overview of LIS Typical Degree

LIS subject areas	EUCLID comments	Degree of presence
Source		
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND DIGITALISATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE	This seems to represent the compound of a part of the first subfield (documents in its widest possible sense) and a special theme : digitalisation *programme*s. *This includes the digital asset management and access to the digital library.* Administrative or organisational matters should be added.	62%
Organisation		
INFORMATION LITERACY AND LEARNING	This represents the user approach to search competence, behaviour and use within Knowledge organisation /retrieval.	76%
INFORMATION SEEKING AND INFORMATION RETRIEVAL KNOWLEDGE ORGANISATION	The discussion in EUCLID was that these to items should be dealt with together. In most programmes, this subfield dominates in allocated time – up to 50 %.	100% and 82%
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT	This term is used when LIS methodology is applied in other kinds of organisations. It is a compound of all three of the basic subfields with special emphasis on the needs of the particular kind of organisation. Knowledge management is often organised as special courses.	86%
System		
LIBRARY MANAGEMENT AND PROMOTION	This is an important part of the third subfield, including not only promotion towards the users, but also works at a political level.	96%
LIBRARY AND SOCIETY IN A HISTORCAL PERSPECTIVE	This is the diachronic approach to the third basic subfield, but may include aspects from the two others.	66%
MEDIATION OF CULTURE IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT	Again we have a compound of all three basic subfields – perhaps with emphasis on the first one (what is a European context ?)	26%
THE LIBRARY IN THE MULTI-CULTURAL INFORMATION SOCIETY	Multiculturalism is obviously a theme to take into all basic subfields. It concerns the variety of documents, the special user needs when organizing the aggregates of documents and the service organisation for a multicultural society in general.	42%

These elements are considered the "core" of the curriculum to which everyone ought to align. The greater importance attributed to one or more elements, for the participants to the EUCLID project, distinguishes the different cultural traditions in LIS training.

However, we should recognise the fact that European countries have different traditions in teaching LIS and this is evidenced in the methodology and principles which are taught (Kajberg and Lorring 2005). In LIS schools in Europe we can find different methodological approaches to LIS discipline, as:

- Epistemology;
- Research methods;
- Computer science;
- Linguistic/Philology;
- Historical Research;
- Bibliometrics.

REQUIRED NEW APPROACHES REGARDING "STUDENT CENTERED LEARNING"

The first objective of the BP approach to "europeisation" is the change from a teacher centered to a student centered learning. This move can be expalined as follows: the notion of student-centered learning means to get students fully engaged in the curriculum, both rationally and affectively: so, small teams, discussions, shared class projects, production, performance, debate, conceptualisation – are all suitable for various topics. The following considerations are not the results of the discussions inside EUCLID project, but based on the exchange of opinions between LIS professors in several Conferences and meetings held in Europe .

In order to start a "student centered approach", a careful guide through the introductory literature is good preparation: students can discuss what they have read in class. This can be tied to assessment in various ways – through presentations in class, discussion on listservs, maintaining blogs, or whatever. Individual research-like projects can also be encouraged, and the class as a whole invited to critique these projects – once again, this can be done through websites, blogs, etc. In this way, students can become involved in performing what they are being taught. Explaining and defending topics or issues facilitates deeper understanding and learning, on the whole.

This approach stresses the importance of research methods in teaching and learning. There are several levels at which this can be discussed. Firstly, there needs to be a relationship, or nexus, between teaching and research. In other words, teachers in LIS should be actively engaged in research – preferably various forms of research, using a range of methodologies. Secondly, students should understand the processes of research, and should be able to read and critique research, or how knowledge is created and communicated. It is only in this way that 'information' itself can be evaluated, and that suitable or 'relevant' information can be provided to an information seeker. Thirdly, students should be encouraged to engage in a research project of some kind, so that they are more critical consumers of research.

Experience versus seeking

A present problem is in the gap between academic and professionals. One of the current trends is to separate the discipline from the profession. Ragnar Audunson writes (Audunson, Nordlie et al., 2003):

We can distinguish between the discipline-oriented approach and the profession-oriented approach. For some, becoming an academic field implies developing an academic discipline like sociology or history or chemistry. Such disciplines are not linked to any specific and institutionalized field of practice. Hence LIS becomes a generalized information science studying the phenomenon and practice of information in general without any links to a specific professional field. Hence references to librarianship tend to be omitted. Others have developed a profession-oriented perspective and aim at developing an academic and research-based profession like medicine and law. A profession is here defined as a field where practice is based upon a body of scientific knowledge, and where a degree in this field of academic knowledge of study from an accredited university or college is that which certifies a person to perform as a practitioner and defines him or her as a member of the field.

The issue of "theory versus practice" and of "academics perspective versus vocational education" was one of the first to come up in the working groups discussion of the EUCLID project *European curriculum reflections on LIS education* (Kajberg and Lorring, 2005). In the words of Ton de Bruyn, we have to consider the integration between the architect and the builder,

to stress that we have to build a palace and if we want this palace to be strong and effective, we need both of them. Ton de Bruyn was also very useful to the discussion for distinguishing curriculum design from its delivery and describing the competences-based approach achieved by Dutch LIS schools (Kajberg and Lorring, 2005).

How can research and education be stimulated and enriched by practice? The EBLIDA and EUCLID joint conference in Lisbon in September 2007 (EBLIDA and EUCLID, 2007) sought to bridge this gap.

Lars Qvortrup (Qvtorp, 2007), Rector of the Royal School of Library and Information Science of Copenhagen, presented the stimulating idea of Triple Helix, formed by the Public Sector, Labour Market and Research, in which all the stakeholders involved in education collaborate, even if they have different objectives. Innovation is based on user driven research, building innovation clusters.

To open the dialogue, one could also ask: How can practice be enhanced by research? LIS professionals should use research in practice to enhance services and facilities for users and evaluate services using appropriate methods and techniques. Equally, exploring the answer to solutions in practice does not require the academic researcher's experience and expertise. More modest efforts can be rewarded through efficient literature searching and the application of others' findings. The author affirmed that the ability to do and understand research will be one of the critical skills of the practitioner of the future.

The first tenet of an international course is that it should be student centered; the second tenet of LIS education in an international course is that it should have a "research orientation". This is why good teachers are those doing research. Students should be familiar with quantitative and qualitative research methods and be able to define the problem to be investigated. Doing research means being able to pose both questions (definition of the problem) and possible solutions (quantitative and qualitative methods). Research is strictly linked to good teaching. Teaching methods are designed to stimulate students, facilitate their understanding and help them to achieve learning objectives.

To recapitulate: learning and teaching in European courses should be linked to research: the research done by teachers, the research done by students, and the mastering of research methods on the part of the students.

As an immediate consequence of this approach to learning and teaching, we have to ask ourselves: can this teaching innovation resolve the age-old dichotomy of theory and practice?

CONCLUSION

The necessary "mutual trust" between Library Schools in Europe can stem from quality systems, which are appropriately compatible and credible, so that they can be validated. The identification of appropriate learning outcomes and competences would facilitate international quality assurance and equivalency of qualification guidelines in the European world of library and information professionals. The international consideration of a European model in LIS programmes involves:

- *Conceptual definition of LIS*: getting the concept of LIS related to quality is to be agreed correctly, including what is core and what innovation in curriculum,
- *Learning and teaching*: the student centered approach pushes to using the best educational practices for facilitating learning,
- *Learning outcomes*: ensuring that the student has an active role in the achievement of appropriate learning outcomes.

However, different library paradigms, different learning and teaching approaches, skills based or knowledge based outcomes are barriers to the application of a European model in LIS schools. In conclusion of this paper, the agreement about quality criteria and learning outcomes statements is missing until now but there is an ongoing dialogue of LIS schools and stakeholders in Europe about the impact of the BP on LIS education.

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