An Analysis on the IL Skills of LIS Students: Curricular Reflections

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Introduction

- continuous change - today’s societies characteristic
- lifelong learning skills - to keep up with changes
- IL – among key competencies for LL
- IL competencies are necessary for any individual
- IL competencies appear among student outcomes and performance indicators
Introduction

- large body of literature

- Project Information Literacy (PIL) (Head & Eisenberg, 2009)

- similar studies from around the world

- relatively little research on IL competencies of LIS students
IL for LIS Students

- more crucial for LIS students than for students from other disciplines
- necessary to succeed in educational, personal and professional life
- LIS students are expected to develop advanced level IL skills to perform their profession effectively
- LIS students are expected to be expert searchers to navigate the vast world of information
- LIS students are expected to employ IL skills to assist and educate their future patrons
Multinational Study - Aim

- to demonstrate LIS students’ information literacy competencies within an international context (how they search for, evaluate, and use information)

- to explore the differences and similarities among LIS students from different countries

- to highlight the gaps in LIS students’ information literacy competencies

- to address these gaps from curricular perspective
Curricular Benefit

- we can see to what extend LIS students possess core IL skills
- we can see how LIS students approach information problems
- we can see what kind of difficulties they experience when they employ IL skills
- we can use this understanding to develop or strengthen courses and inform curricular decisions
Multinational Study

- 18 countries (mostly from Europe) included
- 21 researchers involved
- Data collected through a web based survey
- PIL survey instrument was adapted to the LIS field
- Instrument translated in to all languages
- Lime Survey platform was used
- Data collected during 2012-2013 academic year
Fellow Researchers

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- Angela Repanovici (Transilvania University of Brasov, Romania)
- Jurgita Rudžionienė (Ins.titude of Library and Information Science, Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania)
- Rene Schneider (Department of Information Science, Haute Ecole de Gestion, Chur, Switzerland)
- Anna Lucia Terra (Information Science Department, Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Portugal)
- Tania Y. Todorova (State University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, Sofia, Bulgaria)
## Survey Distribution and Response Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Student’s level</th>
<th>Survey distributed via</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Estimated response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Internal communication channel</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>BA &amp; MA</td>
<td>E-learning platform</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>BA &amp; MA</td>
<td>Student listserv</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Filled in classroom</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Internal communication channel</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Printed version</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Internal communication channel</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>BA &amp; MA</td>
<td>E-learning platform</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>E-learning platform</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>BA &amp; MA</td>
<td>Student listserv</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>MSc</td>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Mailing List</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Internal communication channel</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Internal communication channel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Student listserv</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic Information

- 1249 participants

- bachelor’s and master’s levels

- response rates - 10% - 92%

- majority (63%) - ages of 18 and 23

- majority (80%) - female
Starting Assignments and Searching for Resources - Perceived Difficulty

- Getting started
- Defining a topic
- Narrowing down a topic
- Coming up with search
- Building up the search
- Deciding which database
- Finding articles in the library
- Finding sources in the library
- Determining the
- Finding sources on the Web
- Finding up-to-date materials
- Finding gray literature
- Finding sources in the library
- Finding articles in the library
- Building up the search
- Coming up with search
- Narrowing down a topic
- Defining a topic
- Getting started

Categories:
- No experience
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither
- Agree
- Strongly agree
Strongly agree + Agree (cross-country analysis)

- Getting started
- Defining a topic
- Narrowing down a topic
- Coming up with search terms
- Building up the search strategy
- Deciding which database to use
- Finding sources in the library
- Finding up-to-date materials
- Finding gray literature
- Eliminating irrelevant results
- Determining the credibility of a Web site
- Finding sources on the Web
- Finding articles in library databases
Preparing Assignments – Perceived Difficulty

Deciding whether well done
Deciding whether "done"
Determining plagiarism
How to cite
When to cite
Re-phrasing
Writing
Integrating different sources
Taking notes
Reading through the material
Evaluating the sources

0 10 20 30 40 50

No experience
Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neither
Agree
Strongly agree
Strongly agree + Agree (cross-country analysis)

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- Reading through the material
- Taking notes
- Integrating different sources
- Writing
- Re-phrasing
- When to cite
- How to cite
- Determining plagiarism
- Deciding whether "done"
- Deciding whether well done

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80
Consulting Resources for Providing Information

- Library shelves
- Personal collection
- Online forums
- Slide sharing sites
- Video sharing sites
- Social networking sites
- Wikipedia
- Blogs
- Gray literature
- Research databases
- Governmental Web sites
- Encyclopedias
- Library catalogs
- Search engines
- Course readings

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
Often
Almost always
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- Video sharing sites
- Slide sharing sites
- Social networking sites
- Personal collection

Almost always
Often
Sometimes
Rarely
Never
Consulting People for Providing Information

![Bar chart showing consultation preferences]

- **Friends/family**
  - Never: 5
  - Rarely: 20
  - Sometimes: 30
  - Often: 15
  - Almost always: 0

- **Classmates**
  - Never: 0
  - Rarely: 0
  - Sometimes: 40
  - Often: 40
  - Almost always: 0

- **Instructors**
  - Never: 0
  - Rarely: 0
  - Sometimes: 20
  - Often: 20
  - Almost always: 0

- **Librarians**
  - Never: 5
  - Rarely: 20
  - Sometimes: 30
  - Often: 15
  - Almost always: 0
Limitations & Discussion & Conclusion

- study relied on students’ perceptions and self-reporting
- some patterns of IL levels and behavior common to LIS students in general
- some significant differences in their perceived difficulty
- these findings have implications for LIS faculty, who must decide whether their students are achieving the necessary level of mastery in IL related areas
Discussion & Conclusion & Recommendations

- they are comfortable with certain skills (developing search strategies, choosing search terms, and finding resources in libraries and on the Web)
- they are not all using resources that would require or even allow for sophisticated searching (course readings)
- some have difficulties (nearly one-third of students in some countries) on deciding which database to use and finding articles in a databases

- LIS faculty in all programs must incorporate use of databases into their courses and programs and find ways to ensure that students are using them
- LIS faculty might consider using exercises to determine whether students’ confidence in searching is justified, and that they actually are performing high impact searches
- LIS faculty should take into account that some students might have less experience with research databases and might need additional support and guidance
Discussion & Conclusion & Recommendations

- some students (more than one-third in some countries) express difficulty in evaluating Web sources
- they will be expected to guide their patrons in the selection and evaluation of Web (and other) resources for research and decision-making

- LIS faculty should ensure that all LIS students build up the confidence and skills to evaluate Web resources
- utilization of pre-tests, clickers, or poll in the classes can help to get a sense of student abilities and understanding of source evaluation
- faculty might incorporate Web evaluation exercises into their courses
Discussion & Conclusion & Recommendations

- Plagiarism and source citation are areas of concern for many survey respondents.

- LIS faculty might assume students already know these.

- At least in some countries, students might need more explicit instruction in how to avoid plagiarism.
Conclusion & Recommendations

- LIS students might not always master all IL skills

- LIS students display at least some of the same information-seeking behaviors and attitudes as other populations

- Differences among students from different countries serve as a reminder to LIS faculty who work with students from abroad

- Faculty need to be prepared to offer support to those students whose information literacy skills and behaviors or background knowledge may not conform to local expectations
Conclusion & Recommendations

- results prove
  - the importance of studies on core skills of LIS students
  - the importance of multi-national comparative studies
  - the necessity of international bodies such as EUCLID to facilitate such studies
  - the necessity of collaboration