How International Are We?
Mapping of "Global" Intersections in the LIS Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

This paper presentation highlights how truly international is library and information science (LIS) education in the United States and Canada based on content mapping of "global" intersections in the LIS curriculum. The exploratory mixed-methods study reports on occurrence of varied synonymous/related terms (e.g., diversity, global, international, multicultural, world) in bibliographic course titles and course descriptions on the webpages of 48 graduate programs in the United States (3787 courses) and five in Canada (487 courses). Evidence-based potpourri of best practices and course case studies help develop a roadmap for LIS programs to integrate international/global content in their curricula beyond isolated, ad hoc individual program-based efforts.

TOPICS

curriculum, pedagogy, social justice.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presentation highlights select evidence to address how truly international is library and information science (LIS) education in the United States and Canada as represented in publicly available course descriptions on the websites of their LIS programs. Data collection is based on the mapping of "global" intersections in content and vocabularies within the contextually rich information landscape (i.e., infoscape) of their LIS curriculum (Mehra & Tidwell, 2014; Pearson & Somekh, 2003). The data collected paint a detailed picture of the actualities and identify potentialities of "global" representations in existing LIS required and elective courses. Methods used in the research included semantic metadata-mapping (Alemu, Stevens, & Ross, 2012; Van Uytvanck, Stehouwer, & Lampen, 2012) and content analysis (Aharony, 2012; Spurgin & Wildemuth, 2017) of LIS bibliographic course titles and course descriptions that were available during fall 2018 on the webpages of 48 graduate programs in the United States (offering 3787 courses) and five graduate programs in Canada (offering 487

courses). The list of LIS programs was compiled from institutional members of the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) (2018).

The exploratory mixed-methods study reports both its quantitative assessment of the counts and numbers as well as a qualitative discussion of the categories, themes, trends, and patterns (Bazeley, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Fidel, 2008) based on occurrence of varied synonymous/related terms (e.g., diversity, global, international, multicultural, world, and others). Selective LIS course syllabi (where publicly available) were also studied. Findings map the existing infoscape surrounding the teaching of "global" intersections in LIS education. They also identify future directions for inclusion of international content in all aspects of the teaching of information creation-organization-management-dissemination-research-advocacy processes and activities (Buckland, 2012). Evidence-based potpourri of best practices and course case studies help develop a road-map for LIS programs to integrate international/global content in their curricula beyond isolated ad hoc individual program-based efforts (Hirsh et al., 2015). Strategies identify possibilities of cross-cultural "two-way" learning where LIS educational programs in the United States and Canada can also learn of, and from, information practices and content in countries around the world, integrating those into their course offerings (Mehra, 2008; Mehra & Bishop, 2007). This will facilitate greater global collaborations and deeper exchanges between the internationally dispersed LIS collegiate body, instead of adopting uni-directional approaches of only teaching the world of Anglo/Euro-centric LIS content as reflected in the past (Mehra, 2005; Virkus, 2007).

CONNECTION TO THE CONFERENCE THEME

The paper presentation provides an exploratory assessment of the existing "global" content represented in LIS curricula in the United States and Canada. Accurately identifying existing scope of LIS coverage taught is important to identify gaps and future directions of learning.

RELEVANCE TO CURRENT AND EMERGING ISSUES IN LIS EDUCATION

"Hits and misses" in existing LIS curricula of "global" information content is relevant for future growth and strengthening of the professions to further diverse representations of (and from) around the world. LIS education and information teaching and learning is global in nature. The paper findings will further inclusivity of international content to strengthen validity and existence of the LIS professions (including LIS education) in the United States and Canada (Abdullahi, Kajberg, & Virkus, 2007).

ORIGINALITY

Evidence-based evaluation is important to support accurate and authentic claims, descriptions, and analysis of internationalization of LIS education for real and meaningful growth beyond lip-service. A challenge with the method is that concepts of diversity, global, international, etc. may be woven into the course, but not mentioned in the course descriptions and syllabi. The suggestion for course instructors who adopt this practice is to integrate the relevant vocabularies into their course descriptions and syllabi to provide better visibility and representation to "global" content.

SELECT VISUALIZATION OF FINDINGS

Figure 1 provides a glimpse of findings using various terms to search in LIS bibliographic course titles and course descriptions on the webpages of 48 graduate programs in the United States and Canada. Owing to space limitations, future publications will reveal detailed analysis, thematic assessment, and visualizations related to these findings.

Term and Name of Univ. With Highest No. of LIS Courses	No. of LIS Courses	No. of Universities Offering LIS Courses	Term in LIS Course Title and LIS Course Title Only	Term in LIS Course Descript. And LIS Course Descript. Only	No. of LIS Elective Courses and No. of LIS Required Courses	University With Only One LIS Course	No. of Universities With More Than One LIS Course
Global [Syracuse Univ. = 9]	69	28	17 [7]	62 [52]	62 [7]	16	12
Divers* [Univ. of British Columbia = 14]	134	44	27 [9]	125 [107]	118 [16]	17	27
International [Univ. of British Columbia = 17]	124	39	20 [5]	119 [104]	120 [4]	13	26
Multicultural* [Texas Women's Univ. = 4]	39	27	16 [6]	33 [23]	38 [1]	18	9
World [Univ. of Toronto = 16]	157	45	3 [2]	155 [154]	146 [11]	16	29

Figure 1: Summary of findings using various search terms in LIS bibliographic course descriptions and course titles on the webpages of graduate programs in the United States and Canada.

SIGNIFICANCE/POTENTIAL IMPACT

Findings and discussion of themes to further "global" intersections might help generate greater impact in terms of identifying best practices to expand LIS education in the United States

and Canada beyond its current parochial shortcomings which reflect critical ethical, social justice, and practical imperatives (Abdullahi & Kajberg, 2004; Carbo and Smith, 2008). It might lead to the development of systematic, cohesive, and deliberate actions in LIS education to diversity the focus of its curricula beyond its current North American geographical focus (Mehra, Olson, & Ahmad, 2011).

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