Preparing Emerging Professionals: Whether and How LIS Faculty Teach "Soft Skills"

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ABSTRACT

Studies show that LIS employers seek professional or "soft" skills such as communication, teamwork, and interpersonal skills, making these skills essential to the employability and success of emerging professionals. This panel shares the preliminary results of a national study examining the extent to which LIS faculty are teaching and assessing these skills in their courses. Survey questions focused on skills and areas previously identified as important to employers, including, interpersonal skills; writing; communication; teamwork; cultural competence; reflective practice; customer service commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; presentation skills; and flexibility and adaptability.

The presenters will provide some brief background on previous studies that highlight the demand for soft skills by employers and share the findings of the current study. The results of this study provide a baseline of the extent to which LIS faculty are addressing these important skills, as well as insight into the specific instructional strategies they use to these skills. They also offer an overview of faculty perceptions the importance of soft skills for career success, and their role in helping students develop such skills. The findings could help guide curriculum at the individual faculty level by providing insight and inspiration for lesson planning and course design, and could also inform curriculum decisions at a programmatic level by providing an overview of the extent to which these skills are currently addressed and identifying potential gaps in the curriculum.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

curriculum; pedagogy; teaching faculty; education programs/schools

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

LIS education; competencies; soft skills; professional skills; curriculum; teaching methods; faculty