

Toward a Framework for Preparing Leaders in a Global Information Context

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ABSTRACT

This proposal addresses a framework for conceptualizing the preparation of leaders for the library and information science (LIS) profession. The framework has three components – *curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment (CPA)*. Moreover, this framework is mirrored in examples from two LIS programs in both Finland and the U.S., and discusses how the future expertise of library and information professions can be foreseen in educational programs. This study demonstrates how LIS programs can utilize this framework in developing an intentional and holistic approach to guide, review and impart leadership education in a global information context.

TOPICS

administration; curriculum; education programs/schools; pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

The library and information service field is undergoing constant change. In IFLA's trend report (2017, 2018), the future will entail new technologies that will both expand and limit access to information, online education will democratize and disrupt global learning, while hyper-connected societies will empower new voices and groups, to mention a few challenges. Further, digitalization has brought new challenges meaning that library management also needs to balance new tasks with already existing services (Le, 2014). Thus, all these changes make it incumbent on library and information science (LIS) programs to equip prospective students with leadership and change management skills to lead their organizations into the future. Effective leaders are reflective, adaptive, visionary, innovative, and challenge the professional staff to be creative (Riggs 2008; Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009). This makes it imperative for LIS programs to take these skills into consideration and plan for suitable pedagogical approaches to support the leadership skills of students.

This proposal addresses a framework for conceptualizing the preparation of leaders for the library and information science (LIS) profession. Moreover, this framework is mirrored in examples from two LIS programs in both Finland and the U.S., and discusses how the future expertise of library and information professions can be foreseen in educational programs. The framework has three components – *curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment (CPA)*. Curriculum means specific content that students learn, pedagogy refers to how content is delivered, and an assessment is how students' learning is evaluated (Capper, Theoharis & Sebastian, 2006; Miele, 2019).

APPLICATION OF THE CPA FRAMEWORK IN PREPARING LEADERS

We aim to demonstrate an international approach in presenting how leadership skills are addressed in the U.S. and Europe. As the LIS education has long roots in both Finland and the U.S., we present how two LIS programs utilize the CPA framework in preparing prospective leaders. The Master's program in "Governance of Digitalization" from Finland prepares students for leadership positions in digitalization. Similarly, the advanced "Certificate in Management for Information Professionals (CMIP)" in the U.S. focuses on developing the leadership potential of mid-level information professionals and MS LIS students. Thus, the overall goal is not to compare these two programs but to present an intentional and holistic approach to guide, review and impart leadership education in LIS programs.

Curriculum

The Master's program in "Governance of Digitalization" focuses on the management of digital processes. Students also learn about information and knowledge management, new business models, and understanding changing information behavior, in addition to new participatory information services through various courses. The CMIP program consists of the management course required for the MS LIS, courses in knowledge management, marketing/advocacy, project management, as well as a project leadership capstone course.

Pedagogy

Leadership is part of several courses and not a separate topic in the Master's program in "Governance of Digitalization." Leadership is addressed in relation to different activities of an organisation, while relevant theories and research are presented. More importantly, leadership is put into practice through project work and seminars, with a peer-to-peer learning approach, and where the students are made aware of the importance of observing leadership skills to be able to better develop these skills. The CMIP program specifically focuses on developing students' leadership potential in all of its courses. Learning activities include problem solving with case studies on a variety of management topics. Additionally, students develop skills in creating a variety of highly relevant artifacts, including but not limited to a strategic plan, marketing plan,

project charter, knowledge management action plan, advocacy campaign proposal, change management plan, and so forth.

Assessment

Students work in various individual and collaborative projects. Their leadership skills are evaluated through several measures in both programs, as students document their learning reflections as a leader and a team member of the group. Through peer evaluation, students also evaluate their peers' work in collaborative projects, while teachers provide feedback on students' learning activities and presentations.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In the era of ongoing and rapid changes in the information environment, it is important to emphasize and develop visionary, creative, and adaptive leadership (Riggs 2008, Ammons-Stephens et al. 2009). In keeping with this approach, both the above programs provide leadership skills in identifying, analysing, and solving complex management-level problems and how these are communicated professionally and in an international context. It is interesting to see that in spite of some differences in their pedagogical approaches, both of these programs provide a balance of theory and practice through various learning activities that require students to demonstrate a blend of creativity, collaboration, negotiation of ideas, and reflections of their own leadership learning. Furthermore, these programs put deliberate efforts in assessing students' leadership potential at the course level, program level, and in conjunction with LIS leaders and practitioners.

This framework offers several implications for leadership preparation in a global information context. For instance, LIS program administrators can use the framework in evaluating curriculum content by reflecting on how their program addresses leadership knowledge and skill. To what extent is this knowledge integrated throughout all the courses? To what extent do their courses and internship experiences help evolve students' leadership potential (Capper, Theoharis & Sebastian, 2006)? LIS educators can also use this framework to guide the assessment of their pedagogical approaches. Are the instructional methods adequate for developing leadership knowledge and skill development? In terms of assessment, questions to evaluate leadership potential can include: How are we measuring the leadership knowledge and skills of prospective leaders in our program? What data do we have to show that a particular course in the program, set of courses, or an entire program has increased the leadership knowledge and skills of students in a global information context (Capper, Theoharis & Sebastian, 2006)?

While it is obvious that lifelong learning is a crucial cornerstone of the LIS profession, the CPA framework can provide a deeper grounding of what it means to prepare leaders in a

global information context and can support the ability of future LIS professionals to lead and manage organizational activities. This study demonstrates how LIS programs can utilize this framework in developing an intentional and holistic approach to guide, review and impart leadership education to their students.

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