Research on Innovative Practice Teaching in Library and Information Science (Post-print)

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Date: 2023-07-26T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

[目的/意义] In the new era of data environment, to accomplish the fundamental mission of library and information science (LIS) education in universities—tapping student potential, meeting personalized development needs, and providing higher-quality education.

[方法/过程] Through an open-ended questionnaire survey of 48 undergraduate LIS students at Northeast Normal University and analysis of the raw questionnaire data using NVivo software, the professional needs of LIS students were identified.

[结果/结论] In response to student recommendations, strengthening and improvement measures for library and information science education are proposed from the perspectives of practical teaching methods and content, and a basic reference framework for practical teaching evaluation methods is presented.

Full Text

Preamble

ChinaXiv Partner Journal
Vol. 63, No. 19, October 2019

Research on Practical Teaching Innovation in Library and Information Science

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] In the new era of data-driven environments, the fundamental mission of library and information science (LIS) education in

higher education institutions is to unlock student potential, meet individualized development needs, and provide students with higher-quality education. [**Method/Process**] Through an open-ended questionnaire survey of 48 LIS undergraduates at Northeast Normal University, this study employed NVivo analysis software to analyze the raw questionnaire data and identify the professional needs of LIS students. [**Results/Conclusions**] Based on student suggestions, the paper proposes measures to strengthen and improve LIS professional education in terms of practical teaching methods and content, and provides basic reference ideas for evaluating practical teaching effectiveness.

Keywords: library science; information science; professional education; practical teaching
Classification Number: G250
DOI: 10.13266/j.issn.0252-3116.2019.19.006

1. Introduction

In the digital information environment, the mission and responsibility of LIS education is to cultivate professional talent that meets societal needs. LIS educational institutions worldwide have undergone many similar changes in curriculum design, skills training, and teaching method improvements. In recent years, China's library and information science education has also made considerable progress, delivering a large number of professionals to the field. However, many problems persist in teaching processes and content, particularly the noticeable disconnect between theoretical education and practical work, which fails to meet the actual needs of libraries. Many scholars have discussed LIS teaching reform, but most research has focused on curriculum design, with relatively few studies addressing practical teaching.

A search in the CNKI full-text journal database using the query "SU='library science OR information science' AND (SU='practical teaching') AND Year between (2010, 2019)" retrieved 25 research papers on LIS practical teaching from the past decade. These studies concentrated on two aspects: first, drawing on foreign experiences to propose the necessity and importance of LIS practical teaching, such as Si Li and Jia Huan's work suggesting that domestic LIS education should expand and enrich talent cultivation methods to provide students with more flexible and diverse options, emphasizing the development of practical and research capabilities. Cheng Huanwen et al. emphasized that Chinese LIS education in the new era should comprehensively embed practical teaching content in the curriculum system and provide superior practical teaching environments, such as mentors and experimental bases. Second, exploring LIS practical teaching models and strategies, such as Yang Jiulong and Wu Qiong's investigation of students and instructors from the perspective of internship bases to analyze problems and benefits in practical teaching and propose corresponding countermeasures, and Wang Yunbin and Li Jian's construction of a LIS practical teaching model under the "Internet+" background. These studies employed comparative methods, questionnaire surveys, web surveys, and

case analysis to reveal the current state of LIS practical teaching research in China. However, most remained at the level of discussing importance, particularly regarding practical teaching in the context of LIS master's programs, with relatively few specific discussions on suggestions and implementation methods.

LIS is a discipline with strong theoretical and practical components. Theoretically, it draws on excellent achievements from many other disciplines and combines them with extensive practice in library and information-related fields to form its relatively independent disciplinary system. Therefore, various practical activities have inevitable connections with the foundational theories of LIS. Similarly, in LIS teaching activities, fully demonstrating the significance of practice and innovatively developing practical teaching can build a better platform for talent cultivation in this field. Based on a survey of LIS students' needs and according to their personalized requirements and suggestions, this paper specifically discusses the current situation and improvement suggestions for practical teaching methods and content, while also providing reference ideas for selecting evaluation indicators for practical teaching.

2. Survey Analysis

In current LIS teaching processes, a common problem among students is their habitual, passive listening to instructors with minimal active thinking or expression of personal opinions. They excel at memorizing theoretical provisions and taking exam-oriented tests, yet cannot creatively analyze and solve specific problems using theoretical knowledge. What are the root causes of this situation, and are they related to the content and methods of professional teaching?

To address these questions, the authors conducted a professional needs survey among senior LIS undergraduates at Northeast Normal University ("our university"), primarily soliciting their opinions on curriculum content design, teaching formats, and providing effective suggestions. To ensure authentic and objective survey results and avoid any suggestive effects or subjective bias, the questionnaire contained no preset options, allowing students to provide personalized, open-ended feedback. The questionnaire achieved a 100% response rate, with all 48 questionnaires valid. The authors extracted key information from these responses and conducted cluster coding analysis using NVivo qualitative analysis software, with results summarized in Table 1 .

Table 1. Summary of Survey of LIS Students at Northeast Normal University

Open Coding	Categories	Specific Demands
Foundational LIS Theory	Basic knowledge; Systematic theory	39 reference points from 27 sources

Open Coding	Categories	Specific Demands
Field Development Status and Trends	Domain knowledge; Trend status; Talent requirements; Field figures	27 reference points from 27 sources
Research Status and Frontiers	Frontier information; Research status	27 reference points from 27 sources
LIS Specialized Methods	Data analysis methods	27 reference points from 27 sources
Interdisciplinary Knowledge	Mathematics; Statistics; Computer science	27 reference points from 27 sources
Professional Skills Needs	Practical tool learning; Actual situation introduction	27 reference points from 27 sources
On-site Visits and Inspections	Teaching + Internship; Teaching + Operation	27 reference points from 27 sources
Software Usage Skills	Content novelty; Method novelty	27 reference points from 27 sources
Computer Programming Technology	Adding courses; Deepening classroom content	27 reference points from 27 sources
Instructor or Librarian Teaching	On-site visits; Volunteer inspections	27 reference points from 27 sources
Classification and Cataloging; Information Retrieval	Conferences and lectures; Invited lectures	27 reference points from 27 sources
Business Software; Analysis Software	Self-study and self-teaching; Discussion and exchange	27 reference points from 27 sources
Consulting Services; Data Analysis and Processing Ability	Professional internships; Hands-on practice	27 reference points from 27 sources
Full-time Faculty Teaching; Librarian Teaching	Combining theory and practice	27 reference points from 27 sources

Open Coding	Categories	Specific Demands
Computer Basics; Programming Technology; Data Processing Technology	Increasing teaching method interest	27 reference points from 27 sources
	Strengthening practicality	27 reference points from 27 sources
	Strengthening novelty	27 reference points from 27 sources
	Strengthening richness	27 reference points from 27 sources

Note: Each valid questionnaire served as one source material, with each demand point counted as a reference point. For example, row 2, column 3 indicates that there were 39 demand points regarding foundational LIS theory knowledge needs, sourced from 27 materials.

The analysis revealed that students are not satisfied with their current learning status, and their ideas are highly practical. Regarding the study of LIS foundational knowledge and basic theories, students still hold high expectations while also wanting to learn more about industry development trends, indicating that a considerable number of students are concerned about their potential future fields, including future trends and talent requirements that affect their career choices—content that cannot be fully obtained through classroom instruction alone and requires practical experience tailored to individual circumstances.

In terms of skills, student-proposed learning content can be divided into basic technical skills (including computer programming), professional processing skills, and data analysis skills, with professional processing skills being significantly more prominent than other areas. This suggests students have considerable interest in future professional engagement, yet our university's current curriculum system fails to adequately meet these needs, particularly in providing hands-on practice opportunities.

Regarding interdisciplinary research methods, tools, and application technologies, some students also show strong interest. The LIS field is now inseparable from data management and quantitative analysis. Whether conducting routine business activities or in-depth research, learning and mastering these foundational contents—such as mathematics, statistics, and data analysis methods—is essential. Moreover, this knowledge has broad applicability, not only in LIS but also in other industries, with practical significance for expanding employment channels and strengthening talent exchange.

In terms of learning approaches, most students still value conventional classroom teaching. While acknowledging the necessity of practical teaching, they propose

new requirements for specific forms and measures, including inviting practicing librarians to teach, and combining visits with independent exchanges. This indicates student dissatisfaction with the current disconnect between theoretical teaching and real-world content. They hope to interact with LIS professionals, understand actual industry conditions, and use this as an important basis for formulating their own development directions. Some students sharply pointed out problems in the teaching system itself, specifically concerning curriculum structure and professional objectives.

From this analysis, the low classroom engagement affecting teaching effectiveness is not entirely the students' fault. Without work experience or firsthand exposure to LIS business processes and content, students lack necessary primary materials beyond textbook theories and cannot propose targeted questions. Therefore, widely developing practical teaching activities and strengthening practical teaching components can provide students with sufficient perceptual knowledge, enhance their ability to understand and analyze problems, greatly benefit their future development in theoretical research and practical work, and facilitate the smooth implementation and innovation of teaching activities.

3. Elements for Improving Practical Teaching

The fundamental goal of practical teaching is to enable students to extensively and deeply engage with LIS work processes, experience their content, scope, and characteristics, thereby improving understanding of the discipline's nature and enhancing their ability to solve professional problems to meet personalized needs. Against the backdrop of extensive integration between LIS and other disciplines, new measures must be continuously explored to improve practical teaching effectiveness and adapt to changing talent demands.

From a systematic perspective, effectively conducting practical teaching activities requires first enhancing and improving various elements involved in the teaching process to better meet practical teaching requirements. The basic elements of the teaching process include teaching content, teaching environment, teachers, and teaching methods. Teaching content comprises the primary information exchanged between teachers and students, including knowledge, skills, ideas, and viewpoints, and serves as the main material for achieving teaching objectives. The teaching environment involves all conditions affecting teaching activities, including physical and psychological aspects. Teachers are the subjective factor in the teaching process and the key role in organizing teaching content and various resources. Teaching methods refer to both the specific measures teachers adopt to organize teaching rationally and the specific methods students employ to achieve knowledge acquisition.

3.1 Teaching Content

Many LIS courses in China have long followed a teaching content pattern that begins with concept introduction, followed by nature, principles, and processes. While this seemingly classic approach appears to progress from simple to complex, it contains certain unreasonable elements. Concepts originate from human 实践活动 and carry strong abstract meanings that deepen with time and understanding. Without necessary examples, concepts disconnected from reality do not conform to cognitive patterns. Therefore, posing questions based on the special environment and development status of matters allows students to conduct scientific logical comparison, induction, and judgment based on objective facts. Through discussion, debate, and even argumentation, better cognitive and teaching effects can be achieved in understanding external descriptions and essential exploration of a class of phenomena.

Some objective facts can be indirectly provided by teachers or books, while others can be directly obtained by students through practical activities. First-hand materials gained through actual observation or experience often yield deeper understanding. Particularly, the experiential process of comparison, identification, and refinement brings discovery 乐趣 and a sense of achievement, more easily stimulating students' inner recognition of the profession and generating motivation to explore disciplinary content.

3.2 Teaching Environment

The teaching environment is the basic venue for implementing teaching processes. While the classroom is the fundamental teaching environment, it does not constitute the entire environment. Classroom space and resources are limited, primarily comprising textbooks, instructors, teaching aids, and necessary equipment—resource allocation mainly prepared to meet theoretical teaching needs and lacking some practical effects compared to real LIS business activities.

To meet practical teaching requirements, universities need to establish an open teaching environment. On one hand, they should actively introduce external resources to keep students informed about changes in their future industry, allowing theoretical knowledge to "oxidize" with actual workplace content to facilitate better "digestion" and "absorption." This includes hiring part-time LIS practitioners as instructors and organizing business exchange lectures. On the other hand, specialized internship positions should be established in libraries and information institutions to move students beyond the classroom and enable close contact with practical work content. Through internships, students can enhance their actual experience of business activities and establish long-term cooperative relationships between LIS institutions and teaching units. Simultaneously, simulated business scenarios or work platforms should be created to complement classroom instruction, allowing students to conduct effective simulations with experimental materials anytime and anywhere to improve un-

derstanding of teaching content under limited conditions.

3.3 Teachers

The teacher element is crucial in professional classrooms. In modern education, teachers' roles extend beyond mechanically transmitting existing knowledge or conclusions to correctly guiding students to actively discover, deeply explore, and positively analyze to independently obtain results. What teachers can provide students is awareness of problem discovery, research methods, analytical techniques, and gradually cultivate their problem-solving abilities. As the saying goes, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Cultivating and exercising learners' active and correct thinking represents a fundamental concept in contemporary society.

Teachers' basic qualities and knowledge structures are key to improving practical teaching quality. Currently, among China's LIS full-time faculty, most enter the teaching profession after completing academic studies, obtaining advanced degrees, and acquiring certain certifications. While possessing high theoretical cultivation, many lack experience in specific application positions, resulting in practical deficiencies. This is a primary reason why many courses emphasize textbook theories or web-based resources while lacking support from real cases and actual effects—precisely the important aspect that this specialty should strengthen in practical teaching.

To improve and enhance the teacher element, one approach is to hire LIS practitioners as part-time distinguished or on-site instructors. Another is for full-time faculty to maintain regular communication with key practitioners or lead students into actual work environments to synchronously experience content difficult to cover in classrooms, using these acquired cases for teaching research and instruction to create the most vivid and powerful examples.

Teachers frequently receive information about students' inadequate self-assessment of their abilities, with some even feeling lost at advanced stages. Beyond negative psychological impacts from poor test scores, there is also pessimism about uncertain future prospects. Behind these phenomena lies students' uncertainty and lack of confidence about what abilities they possess and to what degree during their studies. After learning systematic theoretical knowledge, without practice to verify how much real ability they have gained and what they can actually do in the future, students remain in a state of disconnect between theory and reality, leading to confusion.

3.4 Teaching Methods

If the above three elements constitute the hardware of practical teaching, then teaching methods represent the software and hold even greater importance. Hardware conditions are objectively fixed, while teaching methods embody the concentrated expression of professional teaching philosophy and constitute the

key to achieving teaching objectives and maximizing the comprehensive advantages of teaching resources. They should evolve with changes in teaching content.

Transforming teaching concepts should begin with students' first class. Traditional LIS instruction typically uses theory as a guide, followed by various cases to provide empirical illustration. While this may be acceptable and understandable for students with certain professional foundations, placing it at the forefront of the entire professional teaching stage violates human cognitive patterns and is not the most effective teaching introduction method. Based on the authors' recent classroom observations and multi-party feedback analysis, many students entering LIS studies do not yet fully understand the overall disciplinary landscape but passively receive large amounts of conceptual, abstract theoretical content, easily creating an impression of dry and dull subjects that negatively impacts subsequent learning.

Adopting more lively and engaging teaching methods is therefore crucial. Starting with typical cases selected from library development scenarios, current major practical achievements, and future trend predictions can attract student attention, stimulate interest, and create positive impressions and aspirations for further exploration. This original motivation should not be underestimated—many accomplished experts and scholars in various fields are individuals with special interests in particular professional directions. This guidance mechanism, utilizing people's innate curiosity and exploratory psychology, significantly reduces students' resistance and instinctive fear of difficulty, even though subsequent theoretical learning remains somewhat abstract.

Furthermore, another measure to strengthen learning effects is to enhance students' self-awareness and sense of achievement in professional learning through practical operations. When students receive a certain degree of recognition, their satisfaction becomes stronger. The objective facts students obtain can be indirectly provided by teachers or books, or directly acquired through their own practical activities. First-hand materials obtained through actual observation or experience often yield deeper impressions, especially when the experiential process of comparison, identification, and refinement brings discovery 乐趣 and achievement, more easily stimulating inner recognition of the profession and generating motivation to explore disciplinary content.

4. Methods and Content of Practical Teaching

4.1 Practical Teaching Methods

LIS practical teaching methods can be flexibly implemented according to actual professional courses and the characteristics of content at different stages.

(1) **Inviting or hiring experienced LIS practitioners into the classroom**: Based on professional characteristics, introduce students to basic information about LIS work content and nature through actual processes

or cases from business activities. Since these examples come from the speakers' personal experiences, they are vivid and memorable. Delivery can be diverse, including not only scheduled course sessions but also special lectures, symposiums, and consultation sessions. Our university's LIS program annually hires key library staff for such activities. While simple to implement, this approach still provides experiential information, which differs somewhat from student field observation or personal experience.

(2) **Bringing students into real LIS business environments**: Through visits, business observations, or inspections, senior librarians can provide intuitive demonstrations of professional activities combined with actual operations to enhance perceptual understanding. This method is limited to general understanding and should not occupy excessive time. Due to insufficient depth, it can easily become superficial—suitable for beginners to create initial positive impressions that may inspire their professional thinking.

(3) **Providing students with hands-on operation opportunities**: While many departments arrange fixed internships of about two months before graduation, few arrangements exist beforehand. Consider replacing this with multiple short-term sessions interspersed throughout semesters, conducting themed internships according to course content with timely assessments. Alternatively, cooperate with professional LIS institutions or data information service companies to establish fixed student internship positions with either fixed or rotating job arrangements. Our university has established such cooperative relationships with the Jilin branch of "Beijing Century Superstar Information Technology Development Co., Ltd.," with related activities currently underway.

(4) **Establishing professional simulation venues**: Based on business content and work nature of LIS institutions, create simulation spaces such as practice labs in teaching units, with environmental configuration and role-playing referencing real scenarios. This allows students to experience activities anytime according to course progress. While this approach integrates well with teaching activities, it requires initial investment. Our LIS program's Information Integration Laboratory concentrates some modern library business functions and serves both internship and experimental purposes.

(5) **Encouraging active discovery and autonomous learning**: Motivate students to discover information, acquire resources, and search literature independently; strengthen mutual communication through self-directed study and discussion; and utilize online professional interactive platforms for extensive experience exchange and sharing of practical learning insights. Teachers can also participate, providing targeted guidance through these platforms.

(6) **Encouraging participation in professional public welfare and vol-**

unteer activities: Engage students in school or social institutions' specialized public welfare initiatives, library work-study programs, faculty research projects, and student innovation projects. This open practical atmosphere cultivates comprehensive professional qualities and abilities in independent thinking and collaborative research.

4.2 Practical Teaching Content

(1) **Professional ethics**: Cultivating student qualities and abilities should begin with helping them understand and commit to the LIS profession. Various teaching methods serve not only ability development but also professional spirit shaping and quality cultivation. Content can involve famous figures, outstanding scholars, role models, cultural 典故, historical events, classic quotes, and renowned libraries—combining knowledge, interest, and subtle guidance.

(2) **Professional knowledge**: LIS practical teaching should not reduce systematic theoretical learning but strengthen the combination of theory and method, emphasizing practical significance of theories. This includes basic domain knowledge, frontier research trends, professional development prospects, scientific management measures, and analytical research methods—essentially deepening and expanding theoretical foundations. Combining relevant professional knowledge learning with specific applications makes classroom knowledge more vivid.

(3) **Professional skills**: LIS professional skills mainly manifest in specific business operations, including basic business, user services and training, reference consultation, and digital resource management. While reflecting daily professional practices, these demonstrate staff professional qualities, knowledge levels, and communication abilities—essential qualities for future LIS practitioners.

(4) **Technical skills**: Modern information management has high requirements for technology application. As LIS students, mastering professional foundational knowledge alone is insufficient; they should also understand and grasp computer network technology. Although students may not necessarily engage in system development in the future, they should understand basic programming concepts, database structures, and data resource management methods. Combining this knowledge with LIS management and service objectives will better complete their knowledge structure.

5. Evaluation of Practical Teaching Effects

Evaluation of LIS practical teaching activities and effectiveness primarily examines student gains during practical teaching and subsequent impacts on further study or employment. Due to the comprehensive nature of factors involved in practical teaching, using single methods or one-time evaluations may affect

scientific objectivity. Therefore, comprehensive evaluation from multiple perspectives should be considered.

5.1 Combining Teacher Evaluation and Student Self-Evaluation

Teacher evaluation includes assessments from both classroom instructors and practical supervisors, who can conduct objective comprehensive examinations of student performance in practical activities, including professional performance, knowledge application ability, and comparisons before and after practical participation. Students can also provide self-evaluations of their performance in these activities. Although such evaluations may contain subjectivity, they reflect students' internal feelings from certain perspectives and will influence their future learning or work, making them valuable and necessary.

5.2 Combining One-Time and Staged Evaluation

One-time evaluation refers to assessments conducted after completing a practical activity period, but this approach has limitations as the impact of practical teaching is not generated through one or two specific activities. Therefore, staged follow-up evaluations should be conducted for students participating in practical activities, using semesters or academic years as cycles and integrating evaluation results with regular teaching assessments or as part of regular grades. For graduated students, their initial workplace performance can also be incorporated into the evaluation system to provide reference for continuously optimizing practical teaching methods and content.

5.3 Selection of Evaluation Indicators

Evaluation indicators for practical teaching effectiveness can be selected from three aspects: practicality, knowledge, and value, ensuring comprehensive rationality.

- **Practicality evaluation** examines students' ability to apply basic theories and principles, work independently, and cooperate and coordinate during practical teaching implementation.
- **Knowledge evaluation** examines improvement in professional levels, logical thinking ability, and capacity to accept new knowledge.
- **Value evaluation** examines overall quality improvement, changes in problem understanding, and impact on self-confidence.

These three integrated evaluation indicators can multi-directionally verify changes in students' professional awareness and behavioral patterns resulting from practical teaching, comprehensively examining practical teaching effectiveness.

Conclusion

LIS practical teaching is a major initiative in professional education reform. It not only significantly impacts current teaching activities but also concerns student cultivation quality and the future development of the LIS field. How to effectively implement practical teaching is a topic of common concern for professional teaching institutions and the industry. Based on a survey of LIS student needs, this study identifies four major elements—teaching content, environment, teachers, and teaching methods—as the foundation for current status and improvement needs in LIS practical teaching. Combining student suggestions, it proposes strengthening and improvement measures for LIS education from the perspectives of practical teaching methods and content, and provides basic reference ideas for practical teaching evaluation methods. The authors' exploration of LIS practical teaching continues, with subsequent in-depth empirical research to be conducted in conjunction with courses.

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Author Contributions

XU Kuan: Proposed research ideas, designed research framework, revised and polished the paper.
PENG Xiang: Collected and analyzed data, drafted and revised the paper.

Study on Practical Teaching Innovation of Library and Information Specialty

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Abstract: [Purpose/significance] Under the data environment of the new era, in order to fulfill the fundamental task of library and information specialty teaching in colleges and universities, which is to tap student potential, meet their personalized development needs, and provide them with better quality education. [Method/process] This paper conducted an open questionnaire survey on 48 undergraduates majoring in library and information science at Northeast Normal University, used NVivo analysis software to analyze the original questionnaire data, and identified the professional needs of library and information students. [Result/conclusion] Combining with students' suggestions, this paper puts forward strengthening and improvement measures for library and information professional education from the aspects of practical teaching methods and contents, and proposes basic reference ideas for practical teaching evaluation methods.

Keywords: library science; information science; professional education; practice teaching

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.