



The Library Resources – a Support for Senior Teachers: Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

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Abstract

The National Library of Latvia has acquired the status of an accredited educational institution. High quality information resources, a convenient learning environment, experience in teaching work and the desire to transfer this experience leads the library to design the information literacy curriculum for senior teachers. The aim of the program is to provide teachers with the knowledge, skills and understanding of information search strategies and methods: how to find, select, evaluate, manage and use information, thus enabling them to apply in the development of information literacy (information, media and digital). The program provides competences in the use of online subscription databases available in the library on-site and remotely, as well as to master the skills to use the e-Book platform and the diverse interactive capabilities of full-text databases. Basis for the course is designed in accordance with the teaching of school subjects in social sciences. It has the opportunity to see the diversity of library resources and link them to the effectiveness of educational work at school. Teachers can transfer the acquired content to school program. Therefore, intermediate target audience are senior students. The acquired knowledge can be used in the classroom by working with students, enriching teaching work with the library resources. At the same time, it is an encouragement for future students to understand the ability to use library resources. The outcome for librarians are awareness of school needs and information searching habits. Through this approach to teaching, librarians can gain a better understanding of how to best govern learning process, implement instruction, teaching methods and connect with audience.

Keywords: *Information literacy, library resources, curriculum, teachers, learning process*

1. Introduction

Media and Information Literacy consists of the knowledge, the attitudes, and the sum of the skills needed to know when and what information is needed where and how to obtain that information, how to evaluate it critically and how to use it in an ethical way [1]. Libraries are responsible for ensuring people for proper use of information and opportunities offered by new media. Implementation of formal and non-formal education activities can enhance the innovative capacity of the library to provide digital literacy as a core service. In accordance with the key competences set by the European Commission, it is essential to ensure appropriate infrastructure for continuing education and training of adults including teachers and trainers [2].

2. The National Library of Latvia. Collection and functions

The National Library of Latvia (NLL) is a universal scientific research library - the national cultural institution of importance under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia. The NLL has a collection of more than 4 million printed materials. The mission of the library is to promote a free and inventive usage of the national cultural and scientific heritage as well as to foster education and research. According to the educational strategy of the library, it maintains and promotes the culture of reading and writing in society as an intellectual development process in computer-aided communication and multimedia-rich information environment [3]. The library collection embraces all branches of science, its basic profile being Social Sciences and the Humanities, as well as holds special collections - rare books, manuscripts, digital library *Letonica*, the Baltic Central Library, maps, scores, sound recordings, graphic documents, small prints and periodicals. Currently the emphasis of the library activities is to supporting education in all levels, as well as research and life-long education [4]. The Library provides access for its members to subscription databases, electronic journals and e-books. Remote access to subscribed databases for study purposes access are available to registered library users who submit access application. There are structured information and the library database section contains structured information and links to scholarly content of open access resources [5]. The National Digital Library ensures the availability of digitised Latvian cultural and historical heritage. [6].

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3. The National Library of Latvia as an educational institution

In 2016, the National Library of Latvia became an accredited educational institution with the right to implement formal education programmes and to provide an assessment of non-formal learning outcomes as a basis for allocating the qualification level to the EQF level 4 (in Latvia - QF level 3). The Competence Development Centre (CDC) as a structural unit of the NLL offers vocational continuing education programs and training courses to employees of libraries and provides support and consultations on matters of vocational education possibilities for Latvian librarians [7]. The Reference Centre staff works in close cooperation with the CDC. The staff who are engaged in educational activities acquires a level B pedagogical certificate. The program allows understanding the specifics and methods of adult learning. The pedagogical certificate allows the staff members of the Reference Centre to develop the content of the program, to teach and grade the 960-hour learning program *Basics of Information and Library Science* and to provide professional development courses. Information literacy activities in the Reference Centre are non-formal education. NLL has over 20 years of experience providing training services to library users. The essential part of the content of learning activities is practical trainings in searching and retrieving information in the library e-resources. The staff of the Centre also provides training programs in accordance with the request or chosen subject of study participants. The target groups include pupils, students, graduates and doctoral candidates. The library has a comfortable and modern learning environment, computer classrooms are integrated in the reading rooms. The study process is complemented by library collections available in the reading rooms as well as specialized collections. Additionally, after the completion of the course, an educational tour in the library's reading rooms and exhibition halls is offered.

4. Information literacy curriculum for teachers

4.1 The importance of learning

Students could acquire the information literacy skills effectively, if the knowledge is directly integrated in to the school curriculum plan. Thus, target groups of school information literacy and media pedagogy programs are not just students themselves but also teachers and school librarians, who transfer their knowledge to pupils. Teachers are those who skillfully encourage students to work with information resources efficiently. In order to promote the acquisition of new knowledge, cultural and memory institutions must cooperate with educational institutions, in order to help ensure the study process with encyclopaedic resources of the digital culture heritage [...]. Cultural and memory institutions in cooperation with institutions of higher education must draw up methodological materials [...], which would promote the competence of children and youth as regards different sources of information, the ability to find the necessary information and assess its quality [8]. Implementing the learning programs, the library contributes to the development of the teacher's competencies and skills. The teachers expand their knowledge becoming as a potential content enhancers to develop the competences and skills of their students. [9].

4.2 The planning and objectives of the curriculum

The Reference Centre staff developed the curriculum Information resources of the National Library of Latvia: support for general education learning process. The curriculum has gained approval from Education and Information Services of Riga City (RIIMC). It is included in the formal education program; the duration is 12-hours. On the completion of the course, teachers receive a certificate issued by the CDC of NLL. The target audience are teachers of general education schools of Latvia. The mediated target audience are students of general education schools of Latvia. The aim of the curriculum is to offer teachers knowledge, skills and comprehension about strategies and methods of information retrieval – how to find, select, evaluate, administer and use information, therefore, providing possibility to use them in developing information, media and digital competencies. The program offers insight in all of the resources available in the NLL, which are necessary in a qualitative learning process.

4.3. The content of the curriculum

The content of the curriculum is designed to let teachers receive a perception about the public resources of the NLL collections (on-sight and remote) and comprehension about the use of these resources in the learning process and the improvement and diversification of the learning content. The participants will acquire detailed knowledge about the structure and possibilities other electronic



catalogue as well as strengthen skills on how to use the union catalogue of scientific libraries, the electronic catalogue of the NLL and the databases, included in the catalogue system for finding and acquiring the necessary resources and full texts. The teachers have a detailed insight about the diverse collections and content of the Latvian National Digital Library. Teachers know how to use these resources in order to enrich the learning program with appropriate digital culture-historical materials from the collections of the library. The acquiring of the study of the content of the local lore of collections allows assessing the advantages of the resources in the development of the research activity of students. The practical use of the diverse functionality of search and retrieval tools will develop digital skills. By acquiring this program, teachers have comprehension and knowledge about the possibilities of using digital resources remotely. The participants of the course are proficient about the use of the online subscription databases of the NLL on-sight and remotely. They will acquire skills on how to use the e-book platform and the diverse interactive possibilities of full-text databases. Teachers acquire practical skills in online text reading, downloading to computer or other data carriers, e-book readers or tablets. The participants of the curriculum learn how to use the linked information of the subscribed e-resources and digital library in the electronic catalogue of the NLL and databases. Teachers are able to freely use the information communication technology tools in order to share with the selected and saved information resources. The curriculum *Information resources of the National Library of Latvia: support for general education learning process* enhance the level of information skills in the development of information, media and digital competencies. The content of the curriculum includes following topics: search for information in the NLL electronic catalogue, in the unified catalogue of state importance, in Analytics (magazine, newspaper article) database, in the NLL Digital Library, in the NLL Subscribed online databases, Google and other free online tools, as well as importance of copyright in the learning process of schools. The content of the program corresponds to the standard of general secondary education. By adapting library curricula and teaching strategies with the educational standards, librarians can provide learning activities and practical experiences to teachers according to their needs and interests in relation to the learning process of schools. During the program coordination phase with RIIMC, it was necessary to indicate how the course would be appropriate to the needs of teachers and how it would cope with the knowledge that teachers could apply for students. The largest part of the curriculum is task-based learning approach. The acquisition of the functionality of catalogues, databases and digital collections is more understandable when the instructor gives the task and the trainee search for answers. In addition, a study material that provides the content, functionality of each database and digital collection and search tips and tricks has been developed.

4.4. Evaluation of the curriculum

During the training, the instructor looks at the participant's ability to complete a practical task. More attention is paid to progress of difficult tasks. Therefore, it is possible to rank the curriculum as learner-centred and learner-friendly. The course assessment surveys at the end of each part of the curriculum measure knowledge gained by course participants. To assess outcomes of the curriculum as a whole, we are using the questionnaire method. The test consists of open and closed questions. It is anonymous. Most of the participants give a positive rating. Among the reviews, there are also remarks about content of the course subjects and technical issues. Teachers are quite direct with answers, if any part of the curriculum did not satisfied their needs. We are considering developing an e-learning curriculum. The benefits would be the following: more teachers would be able to complete the curriculum, a wide scope of training materials would be possible to provide in e-learning space.

The true value of the curriculum appears, when graduated teachers come back to the library with their students to let them acquire the knowledge.

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