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## **Bridging research and library practice: Global perspectives on education and training**

This fine volume looks once again into the serious and everlasting problem of breaching the gap between library and information science research and practice. This time the suggested instrument for this breach is education and training of future and existing librarians in research methods.

The volume includes an impressive number of chapters – namely, 24 – written by researchers and practitioners from all over the world. This is what I like about IFLA series in general. They are always genuinely international, i.e., including authors and perspectives from the countries on different continents and from various cultural perspectives. Though one third of the chapters represent perspectives of the North American authors, this would not be an overwhelming presence, especially, having in mind that most of leading library and information science higher education institutions are found there. There is no lack of articles from different countries on other continents. However, if we look for the specific educational and professional perspectives there is a palpable absence of Scandinavian authors and lack of British ones (only one is found as a co-author of a chapter on search guidelines in the context of pandemic).

Reading different chapters one can draw conclusions on the similarities and differences of teaching research methods on different levels of higher education: undergraduate and graduate (part 1). It is also possible to explore the details of the application of this knowledge and competence in doing research and teaching (part 3); get acquainted with the ways of supporting the development of young academic librarians and researchers mainly in the US, but also in Malaysia and Romania; learn about the challenges of applying different research methods by practicing librarians in different cultural settings.

It is not surprising that we see two main groups addressed in the volume: library and information science students and academic librarians. These two groups are mostly exposed to the academic environment that values research and as a consequence they become the recipients of many efforts in formal higher education programmes and less formal professional training initiatives. On the other hand, librarians in public or school libraries experience other conditions, so, it would be interesting if they need an entirely different approach or would benefit from this volume to a similar extent as those in academic environments.

Many chapters on teaching research methods in different countries presented a general view of the library and information studies in one or another country. This was quite useful in understanding the place occupied by the development of research competence in library education and the tradition of teaching research methods. Looking for differences, I have also found many similarities between different programmes and initiatives on the addressed levels and among many national and cultural traditions. This is obviously expected when talking about research that is in general yielding to general requirements and using universal instruments regardless of the particular environment. One could identify the bias towards quantitative or qualitative method, tendency to test diverse approaches or stick to one dominant. But the basic understanding of methods in research seemed to have similar features. However, there was one rather notable exception – the chapter on the Russian perspective. As I have experienced it in the

70s myself, I was astounded when realising that teaching of research methods in library schools has remained on the same level as then, to be more exact – it does not exist to any great extent despite a huge number of courses with titles including the words “theory” and “methodology”.

As usual in the books composed of collected chapters, it is sometimes difficult to understand the assignment of chapters to certain parts, especially in the part III. However, the editors have done a very good job in achieving comparable quality of all the texts.

As for the main issue presented at the beginning of the book related to bridging the gap between research and practice, I do not believe that teaching research methods will help to solve it. This gap is in general structural and exists not only in library and information science. It is the result of the differences between two very different social structures (or institutions) that are guided by different social aims, demands, requirements, reward systems, roles in society and other significant features. I do not want to say that the situation is hopeless and can tell many success stories in many countries. Library researchers and practitioners regularly communicate with each other as individuals and through their institutions, share problems and pool their efforts to solve problems, write and publish texts in collaboration. However, the gap remains and I guess that it should be there, as not all research is practice oriented and not all professional problems can be explored and solved by research.

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