



Information Literacy and the Public Library: Danish Librarians' Views on Information Literacy.

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Agenda

- Objectives
- Motivation
- Methodological approach
- Results
- Summary statements



Objectives

- Our paper reports on a study of public librarians and public library managers' perception of information literacy and learning

The objectives are to:

- Identify how they perceive information literacy, *and*
- which types of courses and guidance they provide to the users



- Enhance our understanding and bring new insight on how information literacy is understood and practised in public libraries in Denmark



Motivation 1/2

- It is important to develop information literate citizens at all times and in all types of libraries
- Public libraries has a tradition for supporting lifelong learning through instruction and guidance
- However, this is rooted in a tradition which in a higher degree emphasizes the promotion of the library collection than the users' needs and learning processes (Kuhlthau, 2004)



Motivation 2/2

- In addition, research in public libraries and information literacy is limited (Hall, 2010; Harding, 2008)
- Consequently, we do not have enough evidence on public librarians' perception of information literacy
- As a result, public librarians may adjust services and pedagogies to the needs of individuals, as well as to specific target groups, when they design information literacy education



Methodological approach 1/2

A largely qualitative approach

- Using two empirical methods: interviews and survey

Interviews

- An expert group of public librarians and public library managers has been interviewed
- The interviewees were purposively selected
- Answers has been used to construct a limited number categories, which show how this group perceive information literacy
- The interviews has also been used to help in the design of our survey



Methodological approach 2/2

Survey

- Survey with a mixture of qualitative and quantitative questions
- The questionnaire was distributed to 96 of 98 public libraries
- A total of 740 questionnaires have been answered
- Almost all public libraries responded
- Answers have been analysed into broad categories



Results 1/2: Perceptions of Information Literacy

1. Finding information
 - Focus on information search
2. Process of making meaning
 - find, manage, evaluate, sort and use information at a competent level
3. Mediation and communication of information
 - intermediaries between the information systems and the users
 - emphasizes the information literate person's ability to use and communicate information
4. Meta-cognitive function
 - part of general education and being well-informed combined with search experience and knowledge of search tools



Results 2/2: Types of Courses

Heading level	Total number	Percent
General Introduction	68	70,1%
Introduction to Library Catalogue	63	65,6%
Information Search on the Internet	62	64,6%
Book a Librarian Service	53	55,2%
Use of Print Bibliographies and Indexes	50	52,1%
Information Literacy	49	51,0%
Information Search in Subject Specific Databases	48	50,0%
Information Search in Print Journals	43	44,8%
Course in Evaluation of Information	40	41,7%
IT-courses (Computer or Mobile Technology)	39	40,6%
IT-Courses (Specific Software)	37	38,5%
How to Write Good Assignments	33	34,4%
Social Technologies (e.g.. Facebook, Del.is.cious, Twitter)	30	31,3%
Information Search in E-journals	28	29,2%
Other Types of Courses	18	18,8%
How to Cite and Make References	7	7,3%

Summary statements...

This study provided an opportunity to learn about how information literacy and learning is perceived and supported in public libraries

- Our study identifies four categories of description (finding information, process of making meaning, mediation and communication of information, and metacognitive function) of the concept of information literacy
- We found that there is some diversity in the perception of information literacy
- We found a tendency towards more skill-oriented courses when we look at the typical courses offered in the public library



Thank you for your attention.

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