Model of Cooperation Between Library Education and University Libraries

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The report presents a model of cooperation between University Library at Sofia University «St. Kliment Ohridski» and the State Institute of Library Science and Information Technologies (SILSIT) in the process of library and information specialists’ education. Various interaction forms of the theory — practice — professional realization are discussed.

The dynamic development of library and information science, thanks to the using of new information technologies, approves as a really important factor for high qualification of librarians, the excellent acquaintance of leading library practices, combined with solid theoretical schooling. According to it the University Library and the State Institute of Library Science and Information Technologies are developing active cooperation, where are combined traditional and new methods for acquiring of knowledge and practical skills and for good professional orientation of students.

For many years, University Library has been base for carrying out practice and training of the State Institute of Library Science and Information Technologies. Future specialists are acquainted with modern information technologies in libraries through the working virtual information environment, new information media, e-catalogues, resources, services etc. Approved specialists from the University Library read lectures in the SILSIT and by exchange of guest-lecturers lead educative sessions and various education initiatives which enrich the preparation of students, as well as enhance the qualification of librarians. Some of the graduated students from the State Institute of Library Science and Information Technologies find their professional realization in the University Library.

Continuous professional dialogue between the two institutions expands ceaselessly by joint scientific projects and various activities like exhibitions, celebrations, meetings, round tables etc. The aim of the cooperation between the University Library at Sofia University «St. Kliment Ohridski» and the State Institute of Library Science and Informa-
The dynamic development in the field of library and information sciences, due to the invasion of new information technologies, necessitates as a really important factor for the high qualification of librarians, the good recognition of the leading library practices, combined with solid theoretical preparation. Along these lines the University Library and the State Institute of Library Science and Information Technologies develop active cooperation, which is combined with traditional and new methods for forming of knowledge and practical skills and for good professional orientation of students.

The State Institute of Library Science and Information Technologies (SILSIT) [http://www.svubit.org/] was founded in 1950 as State Librarian Institute. This is the first institute with approved traditions in Bulgaria, where are taught library and information specialists. The following specialties are proposed there: Librarianship and Bibliography, Book Distribution, Cultural and Historical Inheritance, Information Technologies, Information Brokering. The Higher Institute has high qualified lecturers and a modern base for teaching and learning: 4 auditoriums, 20 specialized seminar laboratories, rooms equipped with new information and communication technologies (multimedia, CD ROM, Internet), a library with a reading-room and library stock over 60 000 materials.

The University Library at Sofia University «St. Kliment Ohridski» [http://www.libsu.uni-sofia.bg] is a leader in the application of information and communication technologies and in the automation of the library information processes in Bulgaria. The University Library is the first Bulgarian library, which electronic catalogue is accessible via Internet, with special hall for automated information services. Nowadays the University Library at Sofia University «St. Kliment Ohridski» offers various traditional and electronic library and information services: electronic catalogues; reading rooms and lending services; written and oral bibliographical references; data bases via Internet and CD ROM; interlibrary loan and microfiching documents; services for people with disabilities; publishing etc. The University Library is a methodical center for the libraries at Higher Schools in Bulgaria and also an educational base for the students from specialization Library Information Sciences, also the basic point is a customer care and training.

The long cooperation between the University Library at Sofia University «St. Kliment Ohridski» and the State Institute of Library Science and Information Technologies enriches in activities and contents in order to achieve high professional preparing of library and information specialists according to the European and World Standards.

The choice of a partner is really important for correct introduction of profession essence of the library and information specialist to the students. It is necessary for the Library-Base to have wide spectrum of criteria: offering modern library and information services on the base of new information and communication technologies, automation of library processes, modern material base, qualified library staff, hall with educational functions, and experience in user education, creative managerial team, and librarians open for dialogue with students etc.

The University Library at Sofia University «St. Kliment Ohridski» conforms not only to these requirements but to consequent modern development, attracts students to the library profession and stimulates in them ambition for high attainments and creative decisions in their future realization. It is appropriate center for organization of students’ training in library and information sciences and it is the only one Bulgarian university library, which absolutely coincides with the International standard ISO/DIS 2789 Annex A: Measuring the use of electronic library services, applied in 2001 year.
The students are taught in acquiring concrete practical skills in the room for Automated information services in the Library like: working with e-catalogues, information retrieval in online and offline data bases (developing ability for understanding the represented information in the data bases, making a choice of the searching field, searching by keywords etc.), as well as effective saving and dispensation of information.

Students can use all media, owned by the library (CD ROM, dictionaries, encyclopedias, e-books, e-journals) in the reading room Mediateca. This is the room for e-education, equipped with 10 computers connected to Internet; there can be realized online education, programs for distance learning, various forms for interactive interaction between lecturer and students. Students from SILSIT can participate in the following services in this reading room: Electronic Document Delivery Service, Interlibrary Loan and International Library Loan. The University Library develops a complex of services for people with disabilities, especially for blind users. Librarians present to students the specifics of serving them.

Librarians collaborate and make consultation in the preparation of class and diploma works. Discussed problems from the practices of the University Library engender ideas for causes, which are useful in the realization of the method case study in the process of education in SILSIT. In auditorium circumstances the students can search and offer decisions for solving concrete problems. The reached conclusions will help them for more effective solving of problems in their future professional realization.

That is why under the influence of developing of new technologies and according to changes in the academic environment, conditioned from the implementing of new forms of open and distance learning, realizing the conception for continue education, mobility of students and of the academic staff are priority themes besides information — educational, cultural and communicative functions of the University Library.

The question for «teaching libraries» becomes a live question more and more in the last years, as well as in the aspect of online education. The study of leading library practices is very important for developing of knowledge and skills of the students for teaching of users.

As a conclusion of the discussion in Denver, Colorado during the national meeting in 2001 all participants unite to the attitude: «It is clear information literacy will be the focal point for academic librarianship, offering new models of engagement for the library with the rest of the campus while reemphasizing traditional roles».

John Ferguson from Richland College Library made investigation of 2 188 sites of libraries and colleges in 2001 to explore what kind of study in information literacy they offer. Ferguson’s survey results found that not quite half of academic libraries in the United States are currently «teaching libraries» and far fewer are «teaching proactively, rather than just reactively». The research-worker asked the question: Why do so few academic libraries currently have proactive information literacy programs? Ferguson explained that «a proactive program requires both

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a library that is — and librarians who are — tool literate, resource literate, research literate, publishing literate, emerging-technology literate, and critically literate. « And concluded that very low percent of academic libraries covers these criteria.

The University Library at Sofia University «St. Kliment Ohridski» is leader for Bulgaria in realization of programs for user teaching (traditional and online forms). The library renews its website in content, visual, communicative and functional aspect in 2003. In the concept are set a lot of new resources and rubrics with educational goal, purposed for better orientation of students for using the resources and services of the library, as well as forming of skills for using digital information. These are the e-libraries for Bulgarian Slavonic studies Biblioteca Slavica and the Section «Reading», e-bulletins «Newsletter of University Library» and «Books Newsletter», digitized exhibitions, presentations etc.

On the base of examination of leading foreign experiences arise ideas and projects for new resources. Within the framework of international project in program TEMPUS (1999 — 2001), specialists from the University Library had been acquainted with the work of Subject Librarians from Portsmouth University Library, which they actualize and apply guides to the main literature in various formats for the taught courses at the University at the beginning of each academic year.

Naomi Rhodes and Judith Davis also examine The Subject Content Model4, which is orientated to the creating of instructions in concrete subject fields and its consignment to lecturers, who informs students about them in the process of teaching.

Proceeding of these initiatives, the specialists from the University Library developed Web Directory of recommended free accessible resources in the Internet, divided into 21 subject fields. This e-collection enriches the ways for access to more information resources and complement the process of teaching and research. Students and lecturers are invited to become co-authors of this new, developing resource in the site of the Library by the form «Offer a site».

The presentation to the students from SILSIT of these various projects and ideas and their inclusion in the teams for their realization during their training and practice work — develop the fancy of the future librarians, provoke thinking toward contemporary innovative decisions in the library profession.

Other form of cooperation is reading of lectures from leading specialists from the University Library in the State Institute and by exchange of guest-lecturers are conducted teaching sessions and various educative initiatives as well as for complementing the preparation of students and for enhancing the qualification of librarians. Some of the graduated students from the SILSIT find their professional realization at the University Library.

Continuous professional dialogue between the two institutions ceaselessly increases by joint scientific projects and various activities like exhibitions, celebrations, meetings, conferences, round tables etc. The purpose of the cooperation between the University Library at Sofia University «St. Kliment Ohridski» and the State Institute of Library Science and Information Technologies is to be achieved a high standard of professional preparation of library and information professionals according to the European and World Standards.

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