Paraprofessional Library Education in Canada: An Environmental Scan

Norene Erickson & Lisa Shamchuk
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Outcomes

Describe how paraprofessional library education has developed and evolved in Canada.

Consider the similarities and differences between the current 14 English-speaking, paraprofessional library education programs in Canada.

Examine evidence of a shift in curriculum of these traditionally skills-based programs.
Research Parameters

Limitations:

• Only scanned English speaking programs

• ALISE Classification Scheme change to ALISE Research Taxonomy post data collection

• Course descriptions lack depth and breadth

• Lack of longitudinal coverage held back analysis of patterns/trends

Future Research:

• Scan using new ALISE Research Taxonomy

• Consult course syllabi and outlines

• Cover French speaking programs

• Replicate for longitudinal results

• Incorporate qualitative methodologies
Definitions

Library Clerk
Library Assistant
Library Technical Assistant
Librarian
Paraprofessional
Other Cool Job Titles

- Learning Commons Facilitator
- Bibliographic Services Technician
- Campus Library Supervisor
- Information Assistant
- Reference Services Assistant
- Student Engagement and User Experience Technician
What year do you think the first library technician program started in Canada?
1887 Dewey's School of Library Economy (Librarians, US)

1904 McGill summer course (Librarians, Canada)

1940s/50s Technical Programs (LibTechs, US)

1962 Manitoba Institute of Technology (LibTechs, Canada)

1967 CLA publishes Guidelines for Education of Library Technicians (LibTechs, Canada)

1974 CLA updates Guidelines (LibTechs, Canada)

1982 CLA updates Guidelines (LibTechs, Canada)

1991 CLA updates Guidelines (LibTechs, Canada)

2011 CLA updates Guidelines (LibTechs, Canada)

2016 14 (English) programs (LibTechs, Canada)
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<th>Province</th>
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<td>Dartmouth</td>
<td>Nova Scotia Community College</td>
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Program Name

- Library and Information Technology (6)
- Library Information Technology (1)
- Information and Library Technologies (1)
- Library and Information Technician (6)
Department Affiliation

- School of Business
- Continuing Education
- School of Information and Communication Technology
- Community Services
- Faculty of Professional Studies
- School of Health and Community Studies
- Science and Technology
- No department affiliation
Transferability

- Bachelor of Arts/Professional Arts (7)
- Bachelor of Applied Management (3)

Bachelor of (1):
  - Business Administration
  - Applied Science
  - Technology
  - General Studies
  - Education
Course Comparison

Most Mentioned:

• Database and Retrieval Systems
• Information Retrieval Theory and Practice
• Classification and Subject Analysis
• Descriptive Cataloguing/AACR
• Electronic Reference Services

Least Mentioned:

• Scholarly and Scientific Communication
• Instructional Design
• Information Visualization
• Information Integrity and Security
• Knowledge/IR Management
Collection Development
Development/Principles of LIS
Information Systems and Retrieval
Management/Administration
Organization of Information
Types of Libraries and Information Providers
Services to User Populations
Non LIS Courses
Conclusions

• Skills-based focus still prevalent
• Focus on specific roles and functions
• Increase in non-LIS specific courses in the curriculum
Questions? Contact us!

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