Teaching and Learning Knowledge Classification Skills in LIS Education

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Abstract: - *The purpose of this paper is to examine the teaching and learning method and understanding level of knowledge classification skills amongst LIS students. Knowledge classification includes book classification and further attributes complementing it. This helps users to find out the particular book, to fulfil the users need in future. Library science students must know the library classification. This study covers two universities in Mumbai that teach Dewey Decimal classification scheme. The study explore the study and teaching done in the practical of book classification. The results showed that teachers bring sufficient books for practice and they give sufficient time to complete book classification. Students get open access to classification schedules. They always practice classification after lecture also. Sometimes students find difficulties in adding subdivisions, using tables, relating book title with classification subject. The efforts taken by teachers are resulting sharpening technical skills of the LIS students.*

Keywords: Knowledge classification, Classification scheme, Study, Teaching, Learning, Library science, LIS education.

Introduction

The word classification come from the Latin word classis. Ordinarily classification is a process of grouping. It involves putting together like entities and separating unlike entities(Kumar, 1988).Classification is important subject in library science curriculum. It plays important role in the student's and library professional's career. As Dr S R Ranganathan proposed five laws of library science and to apply that five laws, students need to learn classification schemes to fulfil users need in future. Library classification is an important area of study and research. Tremendous development have taken in the theory and practice of library classification during last twenty-five years. Classification is the procedure of grouping various subjects in proper way.

According to Mann, "Classification is the arranging of things according to likeness and unlikeness. It is the sorting and grouping of things, but in addition, classification of books is a knowledge classification with adjustment made

necessary by physical form of books". Library classification aims to create a system out of disorder and provide a comprehensive view of the document on a subject (Kumar, 1988).

S R Ranganathan wrote in his paper about standards for classification, Library classification consist of knowledge classification and book classification. It also consist of the formulation of the assembling of documents belonging to different classes into special collections to meet special temporary and local needs. Book classification of documents falling within the same ultimate class of knowledge. It is relatively simple. It should bring together: a) All copies of a document, b) All the volumes of multi-volume document, c) All the supplements and the host document.

Library classification schemes

There are many more library classification schemes available like Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), Universal Decimal Classification (UDC), Colon Classification (CC), Library of Congress Classification (LC), etc. Generally public and elementary and secondary libraries are classified according to the Dewey Decimal system while college and university libraries are arranged according to Library of Congress (LC) (Drabinski, 2009)

Purpose of library classification(Kumar, 1988)

The following are the main purposes of library classification:

1. Helpful sequence - Library classification helps in arranging the documents in a method most convenient to the users and to the library staff. The documents should be arrange according subjects and classes and based on the mutual relations between them.

2. Correct replacement - Whenever documents are taken out from shelves by the users or by the library staff should after being used, be replaced in their proper places. Library classification helps to avoid misplacement of documents.

3. Mechanized arrangement –Mechanized arrangement means following a particular mechanism to arrange documents and ordinarily it should not be changed. The sequence should be determined once and for all so that one goes not have to predetermine, the sequence of documents once again when these are returned after being borrowed, or for the interpolation of new documents in their correct places.

4. Addition of new documents – Library is growing organism, it acquire new documents from time to time. Therefore, library classification should help in finding the most helpful place for each of these among the existing collection of the library. There are two possibilities in this regard. The new books may be on a subject already provided for in the scheme of library classification or it may be on a newly emerging subject, which may not have been provided for in the existing scheme.

5. Withdrawal of documents from stock – In case, the need arise to withdraw a document from the stock for some reason, then library classification should facilitate such a withdrawal.

6. Book display – The word "display" is adopted for a special exhibition of books and other materials on a given topic.

7. Other purposes –
    - Compilation of bibliographies, catalogue, union catalogues and so on
    - Classification of information
    - Classification of reference queries
    - Filing of non-book materials
    - Arrangement of entries in classified part of the catalogue

Classifier's function

According to Neelameghan & Bhattacharyya, (1966) library classification is a practical tool for the organization of documents has been in use much earlier than the development of the theory of classification. Therefore, there has been a tendency to teach practical classification and the theory classification. It would appear that the theory of classification has been deemed to be of more academic interest and of little value to the majority of librarians concerned in a helpful sequence- that is classifying. However, the dynamic development of universe of subject has made it necessary for the classifier to play the role of a classificationist-in-little, from time to time. Even if he does not design a new scheme for classification, he would find it necessary to exploit the capability of the preferred scheme in constructing coextensive class number for many newly emerging subjects, not included in the schedule, which he uses.

Knowledge resource centres

Knowledge resource centre (KRC) is the updated name of a "library" since library is treasure of knowledge. Knowledge resource centres are growing organism. As knowledge and information grows, knowledge resource centres also grow with the knowledge and information in terms of books. In knowledge resource centres, collectionsare arrange according to classification numbers. Some libraries arrange their collection according to their own classification scheme. However, the main purpose of this is the user should get their book without any problem and without more efforts. Classification helps libraries to fulfil the needs of users. Without book classification, knowledge resource centres progress would be impossible. Through classification users can easily find their books.

Literature review

Neelameghan & Bhattacharyya, (1966)found that the teaching of classification should be so designed that the learning of the theory of classification enriches the learning of practical classification and vice-versa. In other words, although in the syllabus, classification (theory) and classification (practice) may be indicated as two headings, but for classifying having to be

done by the students in the hours so co-ordinated and properly integrated as to bring home to the student that they form two inseparable facets of the same personality. In fact, it is more helpful to derive the principles for classification through discussion on the basis of the practical work done by the students.

Chatterjee (2015) discussed in his article about structure of main class, indicator digit, notation, generalia class, common isolates, posteriorising common isolates, time isolates, devices for sharpening of foci, phase relation, agglomerate basic subjects of UDC and CC scheme. He found that the practical use of CC in libraries is going down because of various reasons, but the sound theory formulated by Ranganathan on which it is based, not only helps in designing new faceted classification schemes but also revising the existing ones.

Idrees (2013) found standard classification systems were not fulfilling the classification needs of the materials on religious (Islamic) topics adequately. He found that improper enumeration of religious(Islamic) disciplines in standard classification system with result that the hierarchy of the subject has been affected, standard classification systems were unaware of the depth and hierarchy of religious knowledge, no standard principle were followed by such system or expansion.

Gulati, (2013) examinedthat the most popular classification scheme is Dewey decimal classification, which is used by almost all categories of libraries. DDC, CC and UDC have a helpful order, which is the most desirable feature of classification schemes. The library classification schemes are being used as a tool for searching the document, indexing, compiling bibliography, documentation list, organizing content page. The author found that, in the ICT environment DDC and UDC are most suitable schemes of classification that are being used in comparison to the CC scheme since no emerging libraries are ready to adapt to the CC scheme. But the classification schemes hold a bright future in ICT environment and therefore cannot be replaced although with the current online classification tools available, these can be supported in a much more convenient and better manner.

O'Neill, Dillon, & Vizine-Goetz, (1987) examined two measures that characterize the dispersion of classification system when mapped to a second classification. One was a distance measure, captures the physical spread of a class when represented in the second system: the second, from rank-frequency analysis, characterizes the scatter of tokens over a set of types. The measures were tested by applying them to the library science portions of the Library of Congress Classification and the Dewey decimal classification using a database drawn from MARC records.

Purpose and significant of the study

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching and learning method of book classification used by students and professors in LIS filed.

Methodology

Survey is conducted using questionnaire as research tool. According a structured, questionnaire was prepared keeping in mind the objectives of the study. Then the questionnaireand an E-mail sent to 50 library science students. Out 50 students, 27students responded. Further brief discussion is done with LIS students and LIS teachers

Data analysis and findings

The data collected from SNDT women's University (SNDTWU) and Mumbai University (MU) library science students through questionnaire. Out 50 students, 27 students responded.

This section reports on the result of the study:

- **Conducting book classification practical-**

In both the universities, DDC practical is conducted right from 1st semester as knowledge classification is a technical skill/process without which library work cannot be done smoothly.

22 (81%) and 26 (96%) students said the classification subject is taught in 1st and 2nd semester respectively. 21 students (78%) said DDC 23rd edition is taught in classification practical and 6 students (22%) said DDC 21st edition is taught in classification practical. It is observed that SNDT WU teach DDC 23rd edition and MU teach DDC 21st edition.Most of the students said 3 sessions taken on classification practical in a week.

23 students (85%) said they get 11-20 books for classification in practical at a time, 4 (15%) students said they get 21 to 30 books for classification in practical at a time.

23 students (85%) said book classification practical sessions are taken with entire classroom, 2 students (7%) said book classification practical sessions are taken with group of 2-4 students and 2 students (7%) said book classification practical sessions are taken with group of 10-15 students.

Most of the students (89%) responded that they create a separate book for practical.

It is observed that the 12 students (44%) never classify non-book material.

- **Conducting book classification practical test-**

10 students (37%) said 4 to 6 practical tests are conducted in a semester. 8(30%) and 5 (19%) students said 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 practical tests conducted in a semester. Moreover, 4 students (15%)said 8 to 10 practical tests conducted in a semester.

- **Understanding book classification-**

12 (44%) and 9 (33%) students felt that the classificationpractical issometimes and often easy to understand. 4 (15%) students felt that the classificationpractical is always easy to

understand and 2 (7%) students felt that the classificationpractical is rarely easy to understand.

25 students (93%) students felt that the professor always discusses the correct class numbers of books titles that were given to students for practice.

15 students (56%) always discuss queries of classification theory and practical with their classmates, 14 students (52%) always and 6 students (22%) sometimes discuss queries of classification theory and practical with professors.

It is observed that 11 students (41%)always do practice of classifying book titles after the lecture time and 2 students (7%) rarely do practice.

- **Difficulties in book classification-**

The study revealed that the classification schemes are sometimes difficult to understand. About 11(41%), 11(41%) and13(48%)students said that DDC, CC and UDC are sometimes difficult to understandrespectively

10 students (37%)never find difficulties while adding geographical area, 13 students (48%) sometimes get confused while adding subdivisions to main class number,

14 students (52%) sometimes find difficulties in relating the title of book with classification subject.

12 students (44%) sometimes find difficulties to assign classification number using tables and 8 students (30%) rarely find difficulties while classifying language books.

- **Access to schedules and books to classify-**

It is observed that 23 students (85%)said they can always access classification schedules after lecture also. 24 students (89%) said all library science students always get open access to the classification schedules.

20 students (74%) said they always get individual classification schedules to practice book classification.

11 students (41%)felt that they never get a list of books titles through which students have to find class number for each book title.

15 students (56%) always and 8 students (30%)sometimes get physical copy of the books through which they have to find class number for each book title.

15 students (56%) always get sufficient number of books to practice book classification and 5 students (19%) sometimes get sufficient number of books to practice book classification.

- **Practical test**

15 students (56%) said internal practical test of classification are always taken 4-5 times before external exam.

- **Time-**

It is observed that 23 students (85%)always get sufficient time to practice book classification

15 students (56%) said theory lectures on book classification are taken for 1 to 2 hours.

18 students (67%) said classification practical are taken for 1 to 2 hours.

11 students (41%) said they do practice book classification after lecture for less than 1 hour

15 students (56%) said they do classification of 10 books within 1 to 2 hours.

- **Subject categories-**

LIS students mention that their professors teach language, literature, history, economics, law, library science, political science, medicine, geography, technology, art & creation, computer science, biography and serials subjects in classification practical.

Suggestions from the LIS students

- Classification subject should divided into all 4 semesters and the difficulty level may increase with each semester, that is the only way that to gain deeper understanding of it. Example. In the first two semester students may have only books titles provided and in the last two actual books for classification.
- In MU, student felt that there must be a dedicated lecturer to teach one basic classification scheme and provide just a peripheral understanding of other schemes as well.
- Classification need practicing to retain the skills, which students must keep on.
- Teachers should tell about the source of readymade class number for their future use. Example students can refer that source in their job.

Conclusion

In LIS field library classification plays a very beneficial role. Users can search their book by classification number for that the library classifiers need to have a proper knowledge about library classification. In this paper, the author found that the most of colleges teach DDC scheme, teachers bring sufficient books for practice and they give sufficient time to complete book classification. Sometimes students find difficulties in adding subdivisions, using tables, relating book title with classification subject. Students get open access to classification schedules. They always practice classification after lecture.

It is utmost important that future to be Directors of 'Knowledge Resource Centres' must have good classification skills that help them to organise every knowledge of their centre systematically. This systematisation, result is fulfilling five laws of library science in true sense.

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