

Who train young music information professionals in Japan?

Mari Itoh

The author has been studying on education of music information professionals. In the presentations delivered in IAML congresses in 2008 and 2011, the author has explained the situations of education for librarianship in Japan. There are no systematic programs in graduate school in Japan for music information specialists. Professional organizations such as IAML Japanese branch and Music Library Association of Japan (MLAJ) have been playing an important role to train active music librarians. In this presentation, the author would like to discuss the issues based on her two researches.

One is that the author studied the effectiveness on thesaurus during music literature search using RILM database from the aspect of colinked descriptors search method. Apart from the purpose of the study, the author found out some problems in the process of finding proper descriptors by users. One was the criteria to provide descriptors to each record in RILM database, and another was that it was necessary to consider the characteristics of descriptors in music field. The author believes that these issues are also related to training information professionals.

Another is the study on training programs offered by IAML-Japan and MLAJ. It clarified that they emphasized the areas of music cataloging and information on music bibliographies. However, they hardly provided sufficient and timely training opportunities for updated metadata and effective communication skills with users. Metadata and bibliographical information are top major themes indispensable for music librarians. These training situations need to be improved by providing periodically updated information on metadata and appropriate training programs reflecting librarians' needs.

Considering from historical aspects, librarians in Japan in general have engaged neither in collection development nor in bibliography compilation. These services were done mainly by faculty staff. Although library services are greatly related to library collection management, the fact that librarians hardly served to work for collection management caused them to have missed chances to assess resources.

At present there is another issue to be solved in libraries, which is a rapid decrease of job openings for librarians. Music librarians are no exception. Promising

young students who have great interests in a music library have been having difficulties to get a full-time job. Strong trend to hire temporary employees rather than FTEs has made a situation complicated to set regular staff trainings. On-the-job training does not function fully.

One of possible solutions at present is to provide programs on music information services as distance learning courses such as the ones by American Library Association (ALA) collaborating with Music Library Association in U.S. These programs enable people to study in any place at any time. They offer very interesting topics, for example, music cataloging, music encoding, music references, and so on. National Diet Library (NDL) in Japan is also enthusiastic for contributing librarian trainings. They now offer their distance learning programs on YouTube.

However, these are not the final solution. We continuously need to explore appropriate system of music librarianship education and hope music libraries and music information services will widely contribute to our cultural activities.