‘Ask, ask, ask!’: A case study of Umeå University library provision for its international students

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Abstract

The aim of this Master’s thesis is to investigate Umeå University Library’s provision for its visiting international students. Questions addressed include: whether this library considers its international students to have specific needs which are different from those of domestic students; what kind of provision is offered to international students; and whether and what kind of affective barriers international students experience in this academic library.

For this case study two semi-structured interview questionnaires were designed, one for librarians and the other for international students. Three contact librarians and five international students were interviewed. The students differ as to nationality, gender, and level of education. They are non-native English speakers and have stayed in Sweden longer than six months.

The theoretical framework for this study is partially based on Budd’s library instruction model and partially on Bostick’s five dimensions of library anxiety: barriers with staff, affective barriers, comfort with the library, knowledge of the library, and mechanical barriers.

The empirical findings are that apart from a library introduction and a library tour the library does not provide any special services for international students. The library appears to work on a one-size-fits-all assumption, sprinkled with a feel-free-to-ask-me attitude, rather than offering course-integrated library instruction sessions. At best, international students might get one timely library instruction opportunity. At worst, they use the library only for studying in it rather than for information searching. The study confirms the findings from the literature that the international students experience library anxiety. In order to overcome this anxiety, this thesis proposes that library instruction sessions are introduced into all international programmes and courses; that a liaison librarian should be appointed; and that a library website tailored to the needs of international students should be designed.

Key words: International students, Umeå University Library, information searching, information literacy, library instruction, library anxiety, emotional barriers
Introduction

In 2005, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education published an extensive report on the internationalisation of higher education in *En gränslös högskola: om internationalisering av grund- och forskarutbildning* (*Högskoleverket*, 2005). This report analyses the current practices and trends at Swedish universities in relation to international students.\(^1\) The 1997 Lisbon *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region* marked the beginning of an ambitious effort to harmonize the national differences in higher education qualifications in order to enhance the employability and mobility of citizens. *The Bologna Declaration* of 1999 represents a continuation in this direction. According to *Högskoleverket*’s latest annual report, more students from abroad, the majority taking part in student exchange programmes, are coming to Swedish universities (*Högskoleverket*, 2006). The same report shows that Umeå University is among the first ten universities in Sweden according to the number of visiting international students.\(^2\)

A recent University report points out that Umeå University’s internationalisation dates back to its establishment in 1965 when the University expressed its intention to develop national and international cooperation in research, and undergraduate and graduate teaching (*Programmet för Internationalisering vid Umeå universitet 2003-2008*). Even if, as suggested by *Högskoleverket*’s report, Umeå University is not the most prominent among Swedish universities in this respect, its Committee for Internationalisation, which started working in January 2004, clearly stresses that internationalisation is among the priorities of the University. In line with the University’s guidelines stated in *Programmet för internationalisering vid Umeå universitet 2003-2008*, and by introducing new courses and programmes in English, the University has increased its number of foreign students. From 318 students in 1998 the number rose to 557 students in 2006.\(^3\) The majority is participating in a variety of exchange programmes,\(^4\) while a number (48) of these international students are

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1 Parts of the rapport are a comparative analysis of the neighbouring countries: Finland, Norway and Sweden.
2 See Table 1, p. 8.
3 See Table 2, p. 10.
4 See 2.2 Exchange programmes.
‘other than programme students’. Umeå’s international students come mainly from Germany, Italy, Spain and France, but also from other European countries, North America and Asia (Rapport från internationalisering kommiteen, 2006).

The aim of this thesis is to study Umeå University Library’s provision for its international students; an aim inspired by a number of factors. Firstly, library provision was not included in the National Agency for Higher Education’s report of 2005. Moreover, Umeå University Library’s provision for international students has not previously been written about, possibly because the library has not recognized the needs of international students as being any different from those of home students. Finally, my personal interest lies in both LIS and education.

1.1 Purpose and research questions

In this study I wish to answer the following questions. How is Umeå University Library provision for the visiting international students organised? Does the Library consider visiting students to have specific needs which are different from those of domestic students? In other words, I wish to find out to what extent, and how, Umeå University’s Library provision constitutes an integral part of the University’s internationalisation process.

Secondly, I wish to find out how international students experience the library provision in the context of their academic work. By asking these students about their emotional adaptation to their new circumstances: new academic tradition, another language and new library, I hope to answer the questions whether and how the library provides what these users need in order to meet the requirements of the University found on Umeå University’s website: ‘The students are expected to be independent and take responsibility for the quality of their learning, while examination is predominantly of an essay form and requires students to have their own opinions’.

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5 The so called ‘free movers’
6 Library and Information Science
1. Scope

This research focuses on Umeå University’s international students and its academic library. The vast majority of international students come to the library sooner or later to search for information. ‘Library’ is here seen in both a physical and a virtual sense as the source of information vital for their studies. The physical site studied in this work is the Main University Library, located in the centre of the campus.

The International Office, which is a part of the Student Centre providing for the more day-to-day needs of these students, is also important in this context but is not included within the framework of this study. Teachers are another link in the chain of international education. Their role is not explicitly analysed, though their importance in the context of library instruction will be mentioned.

2. International students in Sweden

2.1 International student

A 1992 study on visiting students in Stockholm defines a visiting student as:

[---] a person, non-Swedish citizen and non-permanent resident of Sweden, who gains admission to an academic programme/course at a university or college in Sweden with the intention of returning to his/her home country at the end of the programme (Jones, 1992, p.9).

The Committee for Internationalisation at Umeå University uses the term ‘visiting international student’ to cover both: the exchange students and ‘others’. The ‘others’, who are not on an exchange programme, are often named ‘free movers’. Both groups can use the services of the councillors, coordinators and visiting international student advisors. The requirements for ‘free movers’ differ from those for students who come in the context of exchange programmes. This latter group of exchange students does not have to meet the

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7 Physical library means the actual library building.
English language proficiency requirements while the ‘free movers’ do. It would appear that home universities are responsible for the language requirements expected of exchange students.

The ‘free movers’ are equivalent to Swedish students in terms of conditions of enrolment to the university, but are otherwise a group difficult to define. The definition found in the literature is: ’Inresande studenter från ett land utanför Sverige som utan hjälp av ett avtalsuniversitet eller utbytesprogram på egen hand sökt sig till och studerar vid svenska universitet och högskolor’ (Ramstedt, 2003, p. 5).

In this study the term ‘international student’ is used for both groups as the difference between the two groups is of no significance for this study. English language skills however, are significant particularly for the quality of communication with library staff and because English is the language of library instruction and of information searching. Thus the language matter will be discussed later.

The International Office provides information for and gives support to the international students on matters of housing, basic Swedish, health care, the mentor system, the orientation course and the Internet. The role of the International Office is to coordinate and administrate international activities. This is achieved through close work with international departmental coordinators at faculty departmental level.8

Table 1 below shows that Umeå University belongs to the first ten universities and university colleges in Sweden according to the number of visiting international students number of students.

8 More information can be found on Umeå University’s website: http://www.umu.se/international_office/
Table 1: The number of exchange students who studied at ten Swedish universities and university colleges (2005)\(^9\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universities and University Colleges</th>
<th>The number of visiting international students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12 648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lund University</td>
<td>1 565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uppsala University</td>
<td>1 221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm</td>
<td>993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linköping University</td>
<td>910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm University</td>
<td>721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jönköping University College</td>
<td>711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Göteborg University</td>
<td>692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Växjö University</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umeå University</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalmers University of Technology</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Exchange programmes

Umeå University attracts more international students every year. From 1998 to 2006 the number of international students grew almost tenfold increasing by 94 percent.\(^{10}\) The vast majority comes to Umeå University through these exchange programmes and bilateral agreements:

*Bilateral agreements* are student and teacher exchange agreements with universities and colleges around the world which individual departments can enter into directly;

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\(^9\) Information taken and adapted from Högskoleverket (2006). Note that the number of students for Umeå University (UmU) slightly differs from the figure given in Table 2.

\(^{10}\) The statistical data on UmU exchange students and the tables below have been obtained through personal contact with Per Nilsson from International Office. Tables 2 and 3 (below) have been adapted from the Internationalisation Committee’s latest annual report.
**Linneus-Palme** is an exchange programme for teachers and students at the undergraduate level of university studies and aims to strengthen Swedish University collaboration with countries outside Europe and North America;

**Nordplus** is the Nordic Council of Ministers’ exchange programme for students and teachers at Nordic universities and colleges (Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark, Iceland, the Faroes and Greenland);

**North2North** is an exchange programme with an ambition to strengthen cooperation among seven northern countries: Canada, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and USA;

**Socrates** is the European Union’s general exchange programme. **Erasmus** is a part of Socrates targeted at higher education institutions and their staff in all 27 European Union member states, three European Economic Area countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), and Turkey.

| Table 2: The number of exchange students who arrived at Umeå University per year (1998-2006) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Erasmus | 174 | 178 | 231 | 216 | 227 | 251 | 291 | 386 | 402 |
| Nordplus | 45 | 54 | 71 | 54 | 51 | 30 | 51 | 59 | 64 |
| Univ. agreements | 33 | 49 | 27 | 20 | 24 | 30 | 38 | 34 | 43 |
| Others | 35 | 37 | 84 | 59 | 105 | 140 | 101 | 77 | 48 |
| **TOTAL** | **287** | **318** | **413** | **349** | **407** | **451** | **481** | **556** | **557** |

In order to enhance internationalisation at the university, one of the measures was to introduce courses in English as a ‘lingua franca’ of modern higher education. These courses have a double function. Firstly, they are intended to attract international students and secondly, they offer opportunities and international experience to those domestic students who cannot or do not wish to study abroad (Program to promote Internationalisation at Umeå University 2003-
The table below shows a significant increase of courses and programmes offered in English during a period of five years.

Table 3: The number of courses in English offered at Umeå University per year (2002-2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmes</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 English Language

According to the book *Schooling in Modern European Society*, Latin was the dominant foreign language in the middle ages and well into the 17th century. The elite: students and scholars, priests, diplomats and merchants, used the language for education, religion, commerce and diplomacy. Students coming from wealthy families could move from one country to another. At different universities they were able to follow the lectures and read the textbooks in Latin, while sometimes classical Greek was used. In 1630, Amos Comenius11 published his *Janua Lingarum Reserata* which was used throughout Europe and may be considered the first communicative approach in language teaching. Since the early 1970s the ‘communicative approach’12 has been widely accepted and actively promoted by the Council of Europe.

11 According to Encyclopaedia Britannica Online he is a Czech educational reformer and religious leader who favoured the learning of Latin to facilitate the study of European culture but emphasized learning about things rather than about grammar per se. His textbook Janua Lingarum Reserata (1631) was translated into 16 languages.

12 According to Husén, Tuijnman & Halls the two British linguists Richards and Rodgers define the communicative approach as an approach to teaching where: ‘Language is seen as a system for expressing meaning; the primary function of language is for interaction and communication; the structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses and; the primary units of a language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse’ (p. 177).
During the 16th and 17th centuries, French, Italian, English and German became more important as both written and spoken languages. While French was more often used in diplomacy and Italian was used in culturally refined circles, especially by opera lovers, English was becoming dominant in commerce. German became a dominant language among scholars. Latin was thus reduced to an occasional subject in the school curriculum.

The situation changed after the Second World War due to new political circumstances. With the general development and wider democratisation of education, and with wounds still fresh from the War, the choice of foreign language in school syllabi became an issue. Due to the fear of German political revival, German language gradually lost its attraction and was replaced by English. Information technology development has finally led to a global dominance of the language.

Stressing the importance of interaction and communication seems to be the basis for the international exchange programmes. However, language is not only a matter of communication in the academic environment, but also a means of academic achievement. How well international students manage to formulate themselves is important both for themselves, and for those involved in their education including librarians.

3. Academic Libraries, Higher Education and Internationalisation

3.1 The Academic Library

In his book *The Academic Library* Budd notes that the library as an institution is a couple of millennia older than the university. While the library can exist separately from the activities of teaching and learning, education, especially higher education, is inseparable from the library. The academic library serves higher education which explains its complex nature. The
institutions of higher education differ in their missions, governance structures, academic emphases and makeup of their student bodies. As a part of the university’s institutional life with a task to support the needs of ‘academia’, university libraries are not independent but ‘[---] take their cues from the institutions’ (Budd, 1998, xiii). Their response to these cues must be reflected in the choice of the collections, access, and service provided. The changes in technical, intellectual and social domains ‘[---] will have an impact on how the library informs the community, how librarians see their roles in higher education, and how instruction will be delivered’ (Budd, 1998, xiii).

Students are the largest population to be served by the academic library. These libraries should thus facilitate the process of teaching and learning by housing the necessary collections and delivering services to enable information retrieval. Today this means not only supplying books and other tangible materials, but also helping students with information retrieval in the ever-changing electronic world. Librarians try to carry out library instruction as they consider best under whatever circumstances they find themselves at various academic libraries. Budd claims that understanding the world of higher education is a crucial factor enabling the librarians to succeed in their work.

3.2 Internationalisation and higher education

Understand higher education today is not an easy task. Firstly, higher education has become mass education - it is no longer for the elite. No country in Western Europe had more than 9 percent of the age cohort in higher education in the 1960s. Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, no country in Western Europe has less than 35 percent of the age cohort in higher education (Heyneman, 2002). Secondly, the university is in a state of constant transformation.

The University is no longer a place to teach and do scholarly work at a measured pace and contemplate the universe as in centuries past. It is a big, complex, demanding, competitive, business requiring large-scale ongoing investment (Skilbeck, 2001, p.7).

Though the speed and level of transformation might differ from one institution to another, every one of them is affected by the phenomenon of the globalisation of the knowledge
economy. Knowledge has become ‘a high value commodity to be packaged, marketed and retailed likes any other’ (Bridges & McLaughlin, 2007, p.3). This concept of knowledge is fundamental to globalisation and thus globalisation should have a profound impact on the transfer of knowledge.

The globalisation of knowledge is closely related to internationalisation in higher education. Leaving behind the traditional university with its strong national identity and ‘mission with respect to national culture’ (Bridges & McLaughlin, 2007, p.6) is not accomplished without problems.

The German university system in the nineteenth century was a model for universities worldwide. ‘The professor’, possibilities for serious ‘scientific’ research, clear hierarchies within the academic profession, concepts of good bibliography, the modern version of ‘the doctorate’, and the autonomy of the university, are some of the traits of the German University, also known as the ‘Humboldtian’ University model. This model not only influenced the geographically close European countries, and Anglo-Saxon universities around the world, but it influenced Japanese and Chinese educational institutions as well (Cowen, 2007, p.20).

However, according to Bridges and McLaughlin (2007, pp.4-5), the university has undergone a process of change to its traditional features:

- It is no longer necessary to be physically in the same place to have the academic contacts necessary for acquisition of knowledge or participation in academic discourse;
- The old schedules have been changed to incorporate manageable ‘bite-sized chunks of learning’ into courses;
- The scholarly community has spread to multiple sites and may consist of part-time and short-term contract stuff. This has resulted in an erosion of the link between research and teaching.

13 Encyclopedia Britannica Online explains that Humboldtian is the University of Berlin which became world renowned for ‘its modern curriculum, its impartial and nondogmatic spirit of intellectual inquiry, and its specialized scientific research institutes, in which many basic techniques of laboratory experimentation were pioneered’.
The student community has changed and now includes people from all walks of life through the process of ‘massification’ and internationalisation;

And subject identity is becoming more difficult to determine by the construction of curriculum around the professional fields of practice rather than subjects’ and by the increasing prevalence of interdisciplinary research.

Which university model will replace the traditional German one? R. Cowen writes about the two models: the ‘apex’ universities (such as Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard or Yale) and the ‘citational’ model (those which emerged in the twentieth century and often cited by politicians and the media as ‘being at the cutting edge of innovation in natural, social or applied sciences’). These two university types, osmotically shaped over time, have been imitated by many universities around the world. Cowen is critical of this university model imitation. He points out that a national university is difficult to imitate and especially warns against the third model called the ‘entrepreneurial university’, considering it more unsuccessful than the ‘citational’ model. He claims that this latter model is a ‘managed institution’, where a number of new administrators are recruited to monitor, organize and manage in order to achieve the ‘educational excellence’ set by national rules. He concludes that:

Instead of having a world-class higher education system which is multifaceted and which is - as if it were a market - organized around the principle of ‘any person, any study’, we have a managed university trying to excel on measures of research and teaching excellence defined by agencies strongly influenced by the British state (Cowen, 2007, p 23).

3.2.1 Internationalisation from the perspective of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (SNAHE) quotes Knight’s definition of internationalisation:

14 This term is used by the authors to explain a spreading effect of further professional education and training (of teachers, professions connected to medical and social work) in higher education. It means that national economic requirements for ‘higher level skills’ can only be met by further university education.
15 or Uppsala or Lund, the universities difficult to gain admission to and widely recognized as being the best in their countries.
16 Umeå University would probably belong to this category.
17 Cowen uses the term ‘osmotic’ to suggest such influence of history, politics, religion, economics, and many other social forces, that it is impossible to say what is important and what is not for the formation of an educational institution.
Internationalisation at the national, sector and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, function or delivery of postsecondary education (Högskoleverket, 2005 p.16).

En gränslös högskola: om internationalisering av grund- och forskarutbildning is SNAHE’s report aimed at comparison and evaluation of the results on internationalisation accomplished by the Swedish universities and colleges so far.

There are both national and international frameworks for internationalisation. UNESCO, the OECD, the European Council and the Nordic Council are responsible for the international policy of internationalisation, while Swedish Higher Education Act (1992:1434) states that: ‘Högskolorna bör vidare i sin verksamhet främja förståelsen för andra länder och för internationella förhållanden’ (Chapter 1/ Sect. 5, paragraph 2).

In 2001 the Swedish Government stated that universities and other institutions of higher education should offer an internationally attractive education. A later trend was to stimulate student mobility by offering internationally attractive programmes, and to promote internationalisation of higher education for domestic students (Högskoleverket, 2005).

SNAHE points out the specific features of Swedish higher education. It is not legal to charge for tuition fees. This principle makes the phenomenon of internationalisation in Sweden a different issue to that in Great Britain, Australia or the USA, where internationalisation is of fiscal national interest, bringing billions of dollars per year into the country. In Germany, on the other hand, education is free of charge as in Sweden (SOU 2000). The cost of internationalisation in Sweden according to SNAHE is 250-450 million SEK per year.

Apart from this difference, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Germany and the Netherlands have centralised bodies which take care of all internationalisation matters, while this task is decentralised in Sweden. Even if there is a considerable argument for centralisation, as it involves savings of both time and money, I would like to point out that, thanks to decentralisation, it is possible to compare various universities’ experiences of internationalisation at the national level. Developing own experience, as opposed to copying...

18 According to Skinner and Shenoy this amount for the US was $ 12.3 billion dollars in 1999-2000.
international models (Cowen, 2007),\(^{19}\) allows for finding new solutions in relation to the unique circumstances faced by each and every university centre in the country.

Having analysed goals and strategies, organisation and support, activities and the results achieved so far, within each of the universities, SNAHE concluded that the best universities are: Uppsala University, with its clear goal and strategies; while Karolinska Institute and Malmö University College share second place in respect to undertaken activities. SNAHE points out that seven other centres demonstrated relatively good results in other activities, such as student union activities, range of international courses, mutual exchange, and cooperation (Högskoleverket, 2005, p.140).

### 3.2.2 Umeå University and internationalisation

On the University’s web site we can read that Umeå University was founded in 1965 and is Sweden's fifth oldest university. The University informs us that there are students, teachers and researchers from all over the world among a student body of approximately 29,000, and a staff of 3,900.

Umeå University is no exception to the general trend in university transformation. SNAHE did not consider Umeå University outstanding in any area of the above inquiry. The Committee for Internationalisation in Umeå has to work fast if it is to change its present rating. SNAHE is starting a new evaluation enquiry this year (2007). As a part of its internationalisation activities, Umeå University has earmarked a budget of ca. 20 million SEK, and depends on offering competitive international programmes. The present situation indicates that improving the service for international students and developing clear further internationalisation strategies need to take place if the goals set in the *Program to Promote Internationalisation at Umeå University 2003-2008* are to be achieved:

> All students should benefit from internationalisation regardless of their program of study. Those educated at Umeå University are to receive, in addition to a high-quality academic education, good professional, language and cultural awareness so that they can successfully operate in international environments.

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\(^{19}\) See Cowen pp.13-29.
Umeå University receives approximately 5,000 applications a year from international students. The University maintains that they apply because of its good quality programmes, good English spoken at the University, and because there are no tuition fees (Lustig, 2006).

3.2.3 Umeå University Library

Umeå University library, as an integral part of the University, cannot be forgotten in the process of internationalisation. This largest library in Norrland is situated at the centre of the campus and it consists of the Main Library, the Medical Library and the Research Archives. It aspires to fulfil the information needs of the University with its modern library technology. The library staff of about 115 people \(^{20}\) work to provide the necessary literature, databases, e-journals and other materials which are integral to the University’s teaching and research activities. Contact librarians who specialize in different subjects purchase foreign publications, organise library tours and instruction.

The library’s website announces that library tours are free of charge and are organised for all students who want to ‘familiarize [themselves] with the library, its collections, borrowing rules and services’. The library offers a number of standard courses, as well as courses tailored to individual or group needs. These courses are not free of charge.

3.3 Literature on the Swedish Experience

A number of authors have written about international students in Sweden. The first group of studies focused on understanding why students choose to study in Sweden, how they experience the new surroundings, culture, language, and climate, and how they adapt to the new educational system. Free, modern education of high quality, courses in English, the Swedish social system and a rich student life were named as positive experiences by the international students (Grau, 1977; Kyllmar, 1982; Albertsson, 1982; Jones, 1992; Edvardsson, 1999). Isolation and the difficulties of making contact with domestic students.

\(^{20}\) Of this number 16 employees work in the Medical Library.
were most often named as the negative experiences. The cost of living in Sweden, problems of obtaining permits to stay, and unfamiliar approaches to studying were other difficulties mentioned.

The second group of studies tends to focus on the Swedish mentality, drinking habits and their influence on behaviour, the importance of a social network, and the characteristics of particular cultures (Söderström, 2001). Accessibility of 37 academic libraries in Sweden in 1998 was a focus of Siebolds-Norden’s study. In her paper she takes up the international students issue and points out that Uppsala University library and Handelshögskola’s library offer special courses to exchange students and Erasmus programme students. Umeå University library offers a library introduction at the beginning of the semester and on request. Library instruction is offered to visiting students (Siebolds-Nordin, 2001, pp.9-21).

The diversity of the category ‘international students’ can be demonstrated by the term ‘free movers’. This group cannot be easily slotted into any of the administrative arrangements designed for those who come through exchange programmes and bilateral agreements. They are the ‘others’.

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In an extensive Masters thesis Sjöholm and Svensson (2006) engage with a topic relevant for this study. They investigated how a group of international students in Lund searched for information and used information sources. Some of their findings are:

Studenterna använder en eller flera termer i kombination och några av studenterna vet hur man preciserar och utökar sökningar. Studenterna är inte alltid medvetna om var termerna kommer ifrån, ofta kommer de från något som lästs. Studenterna söker även på olika språk.

In short, the students in their study didn’t know much about information searching. They were guided by their old habits from their home universities and always used the same sources even when they did not get good results. ‘Dock har studenterna ett stort eget ansvar när det gäller att utvecklas och förbättra sin förmåga i informationssökning. Upplever de problem så är det deras eget ansvar att finna hjälp för det’ (Sjöholm & Svensson, 2006, p.57).
Sjöholm and Svensson conclude that the major barriers the students have in the process of information searching are the information systems themselves. The library can offer help with booklets and guided tours, but the task of using the information systems is one the students have to master themselves. The study found that when the students met difficulties, they most often asked their teachers and friends for help. This work does not however investigate the library’s responsibility for international students. One might, for example, assume that some minor changes, such as putting up signs in English, would be an appropriate measure on the part of the library. The literature from the countries with longer traditions of internationalisation indicates that international students have different library instruction needs from domestic students (Kumar & Suresh, 2000; Chattoo, 2000).

4. Methodology

4.1 Data collection

This is a case study. The research methods used are qualitative, with the semi-structured interview as a data collecting instrument.

Umeå University library’s provision for the University’s foreign students is considered a case study for a number of reasons. This study is detailed and intensive; the phenomenon is studied in the context of changes in higher education and internationalisation and, in order to obtain the necessary data, I have used multiple data collecting methods such as interviews, email, telephone contacts, and some document analysis (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003 p.52). This case study is not statistically representative, but I hope rather to extract deeper meaning from the rich data.
In selecting the study population I used non-probability samples where ‘units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of the groups within the sampled population’ (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003 p.78). Thus the sample was selected on the basis of criteria-based (purposive) sampling of the population, which allows the sample to include the most important characteristics of the group, while at the same time representing an element of diversity. The research population was to be made up of both librarians and international students. The International Office directed me to the Coordinators within the Departmental International Contacts, and I asked for help to reach the student population through the administrative records.

4.1.1 The library population sample

The library staff includes sixty-two contact librarians who participate in library instruction through subject specialisation. It was logical to choose a sample from this group of librarians. A snowball method was used, as a randomly approached librarian suggested a person responsible for the educational activity at the library. The first librarian approached happened to be one of the contact librarians and agreed to be interviewed. The other two librarians were contacted via email. The number of the sample was to be between three to five respondents for a case study, as suggested by Creswell and pointed out by Onwuegbuzie, Jiao & Bostick (2004, p.129). I found this Creswell’s explanation for the sample size:

It is typical in qualitative research to study a few individuals or a few cases. This is because the overall ability of a researcher to provide an in-depth picture diminishes with the addition of each new individual or site. One objective of qualitative research is to present the complexity of a site or of the information provided by individuals (Creswell, 2005).

The exact number was decided during the course of the study, based on data saturation. In practice, ‘new categories, themes or explanations’ (Marshall, 1996, p.53) stopped emerging after interviewing three librarians.

20 Most exchange programmes have an international contact person or a guidance councillor to help international students get adjusted to the university.
4.1.2 The student population sample

The student sample was more difficult to define and reach. International students are a heterogeneous group with little in common. Cultural background, technological and academic practices were assumed to make a difference to this research, and were used as criteria on which to base a choice of student respondents. Students from different countries were chosen, as this offered a desired heterogeneity of library experience. The chosen students attended different courses and programmes, which would allow analysis of whether the quality of library instruction varied according to course and programme. Non-native English speakers was the third condition important for the sample group, as my interest lay in the affective experience of those who were not using their mother tongue in information searching. Native speakers of English are at an advantage in this respect. The last criterion I included in the design of the study was level of education. Accepting Budd’s warning that we cannot assume that post-graduate students are information proficient I decided to include both undergraduate and post-graduate students in this study (Budd, 1998, p. 293).

The size of the sample for the study was determined in a similar way as for the librarians. This time I chose five respondents. To do a maximum cultural background variation sampling was tempting but it required ‘a wide range of individuals, groups and settings’ (Onwuegbuzie, Jiao & Bostick, 2004, p.124). Given the scope of this research and the obvious limitations in time, maximum cultural background variation sampling would have been impossible as the number of countries involved in exchange programmes and agreements is large. Erasmus alone covers 30 countries.

The snowballing method was used once again after getting in contact with the international coordinators and obtaining some e-mail addresses of students willing to participate. Three of the coordinators were especially helpful in providing detailed information about the international students. I e-mailed the first three students who happened to be from different countries and in different programmes. It also turned out that they were of different gender and age. Two of these students provided the names of the other two interviewees.
4.1.3 Formulation of interview questions

An interview is the process wherein researchers ask one or more individuals selected to respond to a series of generally open-ended questions and then record their answers (Onwuegbuzie, Jiao & Bostick, 2004 p.130).

In the semi structured interviews with librarians, respondents were asked key questions in the same way, and some probing for further information was done as described in literature (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003 pp.110-137). After I had introduced the research, the key questions were asked. These questions were divided into four categories, where the first category of questions was introductory, while the other categories covered the assumed points of interest in the relation between librarians and international students. The last category focused on internal communication in the library in relation to international students as users, and the interview closed with suggestions for future actions. In formulating these questions, I was guided by information found on the library’s web site and by personal experience from time spent in the library both as a student and as an employee.22

Questions to the international students were based on Bostick’s (1992) five dimensions of library anxiety: barriers with staff, affective barriers, comfort with the library, knowledge of the library, and mechanical barriers. This barrier concept covers both library provision and the affective sphere of the students. Apart from the first group of questions, which were introductory in order to gain a picture of the personal context of library-student experience in each case, and the last group of questions which rounded off the interview, the other questions tried to discover the barriers these students might have in the library.23

The interviews were conducted in two different places. The librarians were interviewed in their offices, while the students were interviewed in the library’s group study rooms. In both cases the interviews lasted from 45 minutes to little more than an hour. The introduction of the research involved three parts. I explained what the study was about, reaffirmed confidentiality, and asked for permission to record the interview. I spoke Swedish to the

21 Appendix A
22 Appendix B
23
librarians as it felt more natural and relaxed. I did not want any possible language barriers to impede the richness of expression. With the students I used English.

The recorded interviews were transcribed and analysed. The results were validated by triangulation and member checking. Triangulation as a process of ‘corroborating evidence from different individuals’ was applied both within the two populations and between the two populations. Creswell explains that: ‘This ensures that the study will be accurate because the information draws on multiple sources of information, individuals, or processes’ (Creswell, 2005, p.252). Member checking as a process ‘in which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account’ (Creswell, 2005, p.252), was done after data analysis. My summaries of their views were sent to the participants for accuracy checking. A minor alteration in formulation was made upon the suggestion of one of the participant.

5. Library instruction and user oriented theories

In order to get some ideas about how to approach the construction of the questions for the interviews I turned to library instruction and user oriented theories and models. Becoming information competent in academia implies overcoming a number of obstacles or barriers generally named as ‘library anxiety’ in the literature. Help on the way is needed and offered formally by teachers and librarians. It is however librarians who should know how and when to include library instruction in the curriculum.

According to Budd, an academic library can be effective and assume an active role in offering library instruction, or wait passively for someone else, presumably the faculty, to ask for instruction. An academic library can be active in creating the strategies for tackling this difficult area (instruction), or develop a more traditional orientation, focusing mostly on the sources of the library where collecting, classifying, storing and retrieving information is based on certainty and order.
Kuhlthau (1993) calls the traditional orientation the ‘bibliographic paradigm’. She adopts a user’s perspective to understand the process of information gathering, and points out that in contrast to the bibliographic paradigm’s certainty and order we now have uncertainty. She identifies the following stages of the information searching process:

1. Task Initiation - recognizing information need,
2. Topic Selection - identifying general topic,
3. Prefocus Exploration - investigating information on general topic,
4. Focus Formulation - formulating a focus from the information collected,
5. Information Collection - gathering information pertaining to the focus; and
6. Search Closure - presentation, completing information search

Every stage of the information search process is followed by a specific set of feelings: initiation is linked to uncertainty; topic selection to optimism; prefocus exploration is associated with confusion, frustration, and doubt; focus formulation is linked to clarity; information collection to sense of direction and confidence; search closure is linked to relief; and finally, starting writing is associated to satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Thoughts undergo a process from ambiguity to specificity, to increased interest and actions, and finally, from seeking relevant information to seeking pertinent information (Kuhlthau, 1993, p.43).

In the process of information searching students tend to turn to two types of mediators; formal, e.g. teachers and librarians; and informal, e.g. family and friends. At times however it is not so simple: ‘Seeking assistance from the librarian was seen as taking “the easy way out” and not as a legitimate approach to researching a topic or as an integral part of the research process’ (Kuhlthau, 1993, p.130). Besides Kuhlthau, it was Mellon who in her qualitative, two-year study involving 6,000 students found out that between 75% and 85% of undergraduate students experienced what she called ‘anxiety’ in the library which later became known as ‘library anxiety’ (Mellon, 1986).

Library anxiety is an affective sphere of students’ experience. Students' fears in this realm are due to a feeling that other students are competent at library use while they alone are incompetent; this lack of competence is somehow shameful and must be kept hidden; and asking questions reveals their inadequacies (Mellon, 1986). It can be defined as ‘an
uncomfortable feeling or emotional disposition, experienced in a library setting, which has cognitive, affective, physiological, and behavioural ramifications’ (Jiao et al., 1996, p.152). This phenomenon is important in understanding the obstacles which a librarian working in an academic library faces when helping students acquire information literacy, or what Budd calls ‘information proficiency’.

In *Seven Faces of Information* Bruce (1997) states that to gain information literacy one has to become experienced in: using information technology for information retrieval and communication; finding information located in information sources; executing a process; controlling information; building up a personal knowledge base in a new area of interest; working with knowledge and personal perspectives adopted in such a way that novel insight is gained; and using information wisely for the benefit of others. The American Library Association (ALA) defines an information literate individual as one able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed; access the needed information effectively and efficiently; evaluate information and its sources critically; incorporate information into one’s knowledge base; use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose; understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information; and access and use information ethically and legally (ALA, 2000).

How do we practically help students to become information literate? Library instruction is a wide field of investigation, from defining general sets of aims to developing precise classroom schemes.²⁴

In formulating his model of library instruction Budd starts by analysing Constance Mellon’s (1982) information problem-solving approach in instructional programmes. Basically the main complaint regarding this approach lies in its assumption that a student has a considerable amount of knowledge on the topic and is able to state the problem, state a desired outcome, define and select strategies, and evaluate the outcome (Budd, 1998, p.285). Further, Budd concludes that the problem-solving approach can lead to the frustration of the students. They might experience their inability to tackle this task as their own inadequacy. This linear and simplistic approach cannot suffice for a complex process of information searching.

²³ A whole range of teaching schemes can be found in The Reference Librarian (1995), numbers 51/52, New York: The Haworth Press
Budd is also critical towards VanderMeer and Rike’s (1996) task-based instruction programme, considering it, and other similar attempts, good in enabling students to navigate through tools, but merely a beginning of the library introduction. He accepts Allen’s ideas on ‘active learning’ where the students actively participate in brainstorming in open discussion, exploration in small groups, peer teaching and reflective writing. Active learning should ‘provide the opportunity to offer students the freedom and the responsibility to be themselves, to utilize their interests and learning styles in the content and design of their educational experience’ (Allen, 1995, p.99). Budd proposes a model of instruction with the goal of ‘enabl[ing] students to assimilate information from diverse, complex sources and to integrate that information into the context of a specific need’ (Budd, 1998, p. 291).

Budd has no intention of giving ultimate solutions of how library instruction should be organised in practice. He is conscious that a single experience, either integrated in an academic course or a library-based one, is insufficient for achieving the goal. What he suggests is an ideal concept of integrating library instruction into the entire educative programme. His model applies Allan’s active learning to Kuhlthau’s information searching process stages. His conceptual steps of library instruction: awareness of a question; understanding what the question entails; comprehending information related to the question; awareness of information retrieval; integration of information addressing the question; and understanding the means of answering a question, are very much like Kuhlthau’s stages of the information searching process, as described above (Budd, 1998, p.292). What is new is a series of tiered experiences he proposes for a library instruction programme.

Budd insists on a series of tiered experiences that could cover both undergraduate and graduate level. The first tier is to foster a critical approach to information need and information structure and is best organised as a formal course for first-year students. The second tier incorporates information proficiency education by introducing specific information sources into the relevant academic courses or programmes. The third tier entails a closer cooperation with the academic departments in order to follow the study level of the graduate students and offer them more intensive education about information source. Budd underlines the importance of not assuming that post-graduate students are information proficient. The main difference between undergraduate and graduate students is in their level of knowledge. Individual information need is especially pronounced for post-graduate
students: ‘In those universities with active graduate programmes the library should pay attention to those needs of this particular segment of the community’ (Budd, 1998, p.294).

6. Results

6.1 Presentation of the librarian interviewees

Three contact librarians were interviewed. All of them are experienced librarians. They have worked in academic libraries between eight and twenty years. All of them have other degrees as well as library science education. In respect to their anonymity I have decided to call them Anna, Beata and Cecilia.

Anna is a literature graduate. She is a contact librarian in humanities. She often works at the reference desk. Her first contact with the international students took place in a library built up in Skellefteå for the needs of Umeå and Luleå University students who have courses in that town.

Beata has a science degree. She studied LIS and has worked as an academic. Now she is a contact librarian in science and gives lessons in library instruction for science.

Cecilia studied social science before she became a librarian. She is a contact librarian for social science. She says that international undergraduate students started coming to Umeå approximately ten years ago.

6.1.1 Results from librarians’ interviews

After reading through the interview transcripts which were more or less divided into segments according to the structure of the interviews, I coded these segments. It turned out that there
was a lot of overlap as the participants made digressions into different themes and later remembered the things they thought important. The codes I got from the raw material were not hard to thematize. This process of data coding was visually described by Creswell (2002). The result of coding led to a scheme for my analysis:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Themes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Subthemes</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Library introduction</td>
<td>Introduction class</td>
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<td>Library instruction and information searching education</td>
<td>Library tours</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Courses for different faculties</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Librarians and teachers</td>
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<td>The teachers’ role</td>
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<td>Relationship between the international students and the librarians</td>
<td>Who are they and what do they want?</td>
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<td>Personal contacts</td>
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<td>The missing links</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Goals and suggestions</td>
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<td><strong>Subthemes which belong to more than one theme:</strong></td>
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6.1.1.1 Library Introduction

Library Introduction for international students is organised at the beginning of every semester and it is a part of an introductory week organised by Umeå University. It was introduced in 1998. Before this introduction takes place a librarian responsible for this event sends e-mails to all librarians in order to recruit those willing to participate. Quite a number of volunteers for the library tours have been gathered in this way since 1998. After the general introduction in a large lecture hall the students are divided into smaller groups and guided on the library tours. These tours can be held in different languages: Finnish, French, German, and Czech besides English.
All three librarians think that the introduction class is very useful and well organised. International students are invited to a big lecture hall where they are shown where the library’s own database Album can be found, how the tour of the library is organised and where the different parts of the library are. This general introduction takes less than an hour.

Cecilia mentions that it is necessary for the students to realise the differences between this new university library and their home university library. Cecilia says: ‘Vi har sett till att de kommer även till biblioteket för de klarar sig inte utan biblioteket.’ However, Beata is conscious that this class does not give the students many opportunities to express their curiosity and get better informed about their personal needs: ‘Det är lite svårt när man är 70 eller 150 i hörsalen att våga ställa frågor.’

Library tours have more practical goals. Smaller groups of about ten students are formed and taken to the library to get a library card, look closer at Album, and become more familiar with the premises. Anna knows that this tour is not enough for the students to learn how to use the library for their needs: ‘[---] vi ändå insett att det inte handlar om att de ska lära sig söka, det gör de inte då, [---] och så hela tiden säg fråga, fråga, fråga [---] alltså att de ska känna sig trygga att fråga!’ Cecilia points out that there is too much information for the students to digest in a short period of time: ‘Vi vet att de här dagarna som de har introduktion de är späckade dagar. De får ny information hela tiden och allting är nytt för dem och i slutet på den ena dagen kommer biblioteket sist!’ The solution lies in reducing much of the necessary information and offering small manageable chunks. She too stresses the importance of asking: ‘Ta kontakt med oss och fråga oss!’

To summarise the librarians’ views on the library introduction that takes place during the general introduction to the international students:

- The librarians believe the introduction class to be very useful and well organised.
- The introduction class does not offer an opportunity to the students to ask more specific questions.
- Library tours offered in different languages offer an opportunity to the students to ask specific questions and get their library cards.
The most important lesson learnt during the tours is: Do not hesitate to contact a librarian and ask any questions you might have!

6.1.1.2 Library instruction and information searching education

Since the beginning of the 1990s the library has had library instruction courses in English. There are no specially designed courses for international students, and faculties differ greatly in the extent to which they use these services. The librarians named a few good examples of how courses in information searching can be well integrated into the curriculum. The integration process is not easy and requires good cooperation between the librarians and academic teachers.

Anna points out that the degree to which library instruction is integrated into syllabi varies among the faculties, and that some students get more instruction than others. Not all the faculties seem to be able to cover the cost of these services:

För att vissa utbildningar, de har sätt den [library instruction course] i system och man har betalt […]. Medan på humaniora, där är många som inte alls har råd med den här utbildningen och det är många som inte köper utbildningen [---]. Det är lärarutbildningen som har det [library instruction course] inne i systemet; det är hur de har tänkt ut utbildningen.

Beata adds Medicine to the good practice exemplified by Teacher Training above, and compares the differences pointing out that the Medical programme has a better way of incorporating the library instruction course into the curriculum than Teacher Training. She mentions the Business Studies programme and Law as good examples for incorporated library instruction. She is however, afraid of introducing too much library instruction into different programmes: 'Man kan inte hålla på att stoppa in undervisning i informationssökning i varenda kurs då kan studenterna uppleva att det bli väldigt mycket tårta på tårta [---]’. Cecilia points out that Umeå School of Business and Economics (USBE) has library instruction for all its students incorporated in the curricula at different levels:

På handelshögskolan så vill de att studenter redan första termin är ute på biblioteket för att gör egna små papers så att de färskriva och söka information självständigt. Då är det viktigt att de lär sig använda våra resurser [---]. Nu är de internationella studenterna en del av den här ordinarie
Cooperation between librarians and teachers at different faculties varies. Anna has had no direct contact with academic teachers as she, only came to the library a year and a half ago, and as she points out not much library instruction is bought by the humanities. Beata is critical of how some academic teachers approach the practical sides of planning the library instruction classes. She is aware of the importance of the right ‘timing’:  


This is something that can be settled with a little adjusting on both sides. If the right timing for library instruction is found, library instruction course, as a part of a syllabus, becomes a routine. Beata confirms this: ‘[…] och har vi då att allting fungerar då löper bara på så i flera år. Även om de byter lärare så nästa lärare får veta att det funkade bra i fjol då kör vi så i år också’. Beata points out that academic teachers and librarians need to have a dialogue all the time and it is much easier if information searching and source evaluation are included in the curricula. Cecilia also stresses the importance of good timing but she adds the importance of librarians’ active role in this cooperation:

Det är inte så att lärarna ringer till oss och önskar, fast det gör de. Det är också så att vi kan fråga om det skulle gå bra att dem fick undervisning. Vi försöker titta tillsammans med läraren då hur det kursavsnittet ser ut, om det finns något bra ställe där studenterna ska t ex göra något enskilt arbete, eller där de ska söka information själv och då kan vi få undervisningen där, och så tittar vi på att de ska anpassa undervisningen utifrån de uppgifter de har så att de bli motiverade.

However, she adds that the library has had instruction classes at all the faculties but not at all the university courses: ‘Vissa institutioner är lite tröga, det bero också på vilket sätt de har lagt undervisning’. Furthermore, one can assume that a number of academic teachers personally need library instruction in information searching. Could instruction in information searching be made obligatory for them? Beata answers: ‘Det är en dröm!’ She explains that the library organises seminars for academic teachers about twice a year when big changes
occur in the databases and it would be a bit sensitive to name these occasions ‘education’. There are lecturers who come readily and those who never have time or think they know all there is to know. Even those who come and who are good at searching can easily lose a race with updating of databases. This is how Beata describes academic teachers’ typical information searching routines:

Så frågar man dem, så säger de att de är ganska duktiga för att hitta det som berör deras eget - tror de! Och de känner till alla som betyder någonting i deras fält men börjar man göra testsökningar så kollar man vad de citerar mot vilka som jobbar i samma fält så upptäcker vi ju snart att de har ju inte så bra koll! Men en del får ju man acceptera, de jobbar ju i sina projekt. Den totalkollen kan man ju aldrig ha. Men det sorgliga är ju de som aldrig hinner ta sig tid att sitta och leka med databaserna någon gång och upptäcka vad som förändras utan de bara slentrianmässigt gör som de alltid har gjort. De skickar beställningar för de har fått tips från någon doktorand som sagt att den här artikeln är bra eller någon forskarkollega som har sagt att du måste läsa den studentens artikel. Då beställer de dem!

Cecilia thinks that it is ’en generationsfråga också’. Older researchers are not used to databases. They are slower or have difficulties in using them, while the younger generation of researchers take databases for granted.

The importance of academic teachers’ role in their students’ information literacy is stressed. Beata points out that those teachers who are good at information searching serve as positive role models for their students. Their students learn to value the importance of information searching. She even realises that it is also a good thing for the librarians:


Cecilia is critical of teaching where only textbooks and literature lists are used and students have a passive role in getting information for their studies instead of actively searching databases for information. She observes that korvstoppare, as this passive attitude in teaching is called, does not help students much with their academic work. On the other hand, she is
very positive about how USBE\textsuperscript{25} handles this matter, as their students get individual assignments during their first term and start information searching in the library.

To summarise the librarians’ views on library instruction and information searching education:

- There are no specially organised courses for the international students.
- There are big differences among the faculties in the degree to which they use the library’s educational provision.
- The Medical programme, Teacher Training programme, USBE and Law are mentioned as examples of academic programmes which successfully incorporate information searching education into the curricula.
- It is not possible to organise obligatory training courses for academic teachers.
- Frequent updating of databases leaves even those who are skilled at information searching ‘technically outdated’ after some time, unless they spend some time ‘playing’ with the databases.
- Teachers who are good at information searching serve as positive role models for their students.
- A korvstoppare approach to teaching does not help students become information literate and independent in academic work.

6.1.1.3 The relationship between the students and the librarians

Who are the international students and what do they want? The majority are Europeans but there are students from all over the world. Anna and Beata meet them every time they work at the reference desk. Cecilia has not met them often since she was promoted. Apart from wanting to learn how to search for information, international students ask for more basic things such as how to find certain books, search in Album and what they are permitted to do. Anna observes: ’Så det handlar ofta om att söka! Man plötsligt kommer till insikt att man inte kan det även om man var på undervisning – det hjälper inte [---]’.
The librarians’ experiences of contact with international students differ. Anna does not believe that there is a big difference between international and Swedish students. She notes however that certain difficulties can arise due to the different English pronunciations, which are at times difficult to understand: ‘Ofta pratar de väldigt bra engelska när det gäller ord men brytning måste man komma i att förstå vad de säger. Det är någonting att träna på!’ She has noticed an interesting detail:


Beata believes that international students have no problems with reading, but speaking could present a problem: ’Jag kom på att de inte förstår engelska så bra eftersom de står och tolkar åt varandra. Men de säger ju inte ifrån… det gör mig lite förstvivlad ibland.’ Her solution to this problem is to speak more slowly and let this interpretation among the students continue. Understanding of pronunciation differences is not the only linguistic difficulty. It is the semantic ambiguity which can be more confusing:

De kinesiska studenterna, de är… det vet jag, det har jag pratat med en del forskare här på institutioner också om. De läser engelska, de skriver hyfsat engelska men, talande engelska [...]. det är rätt obegripligt. Så säger de ’yes, yes’ det betyder: ’snälla du jag förstår ingenting’. Säger de bara ’yes’ då kanske de har förstått [...] De är ju oftast [...] det är så när det gäller studier, de är duktiga alltså det är inte det! Det är en språkbarriär!

It was Beata who named the two barriers. Besides the language barrier she mentions the culture barrier. Difficulties may arise when cultural differences in accepting rules become apparent. Copyright limitations can seem illogical as Beata points out:

De blir jättechokade när de får veta att de får låna så mycket som helst, att de får kopiera så mycket de har råd att kopiera. Och sedan då plötsligt när vi märker att de börjat kopiera för mycket, sparar för mycket artiklar från nätet [...] Där har vi lite kultur skillnad. [...] Tror jag, eller vi som är dåliga för att förklara på varför man inte får tanka ner hela tidskriften häften från nätet [...]. För när man räkade ut för en kinesisk student som väldigt gärna ville skicka ut artiklar till kolleger på institutioner i Kina, och jag var tvungen att förklara så gott jag kunde, att försöka nå fram, att vi var överens om vilka regler som gällde. Han kunde inte förstå varför han inte fick
Cultural differences can include gender issues and this is how Beata describes her experience:

[---] men vissa manliga studenter från vissa islamiska länder är jobbiga. De ska också ha saker tillsverade som svenska jurister [Dvs, jurist studerande] och humanister. Det är lite macho, det berodde ibland på att jag var en kvinna men med en del av de islamska killarna, det har jag faktiskt känt, att det är mer sexistiskt och egentligen skulle jag ha velat se hur de gör med mina manliga kolleger. Men jag hade mer av den obehagliga känslan när jag var lektor. Jag hade en student som verkligen försökte att få mig att godkänna ett uruselt felsvar! Han menar så - att du som är kvinna [---].

It is not always easy to understand quickly whether a student in front of a librarian is a domestic or foreign one, because appearances can be misleading. Beata mentions this moment of adjustment to the users:


What is missing or does not function as it should in the library’s provision for the international students? Anna remarks that the possibility to book a librarian (advertised on the library’s web page) is directed to the academic faculties and not to individual students. Secondly, the library’s web site is not completely translated into English. And finally, she has never discussed the international students with her colleagues: ‘Nej, det är faktiskt lite konstigt att man inte har… Det finns ju andra, både utländska studenter och distans studenter jag tycker man borde diskutera mera [---] om de behöver speciell hjälp’.

Beata is primarily dissatisfied with the poor advertising of the library services. She believes that more opportunities to work with those who do not understand Swedish could easily be arranged. Secondly, there is a difficulty with the Swedish library classification system for

25 All the librarians point out that a general redesign of the web site is taking place at the moment, but my point is valid at the time of writing.
cataloguing, which is unique in the world and different from the widespread Dewey’s Decimal Classification system. The Swedish classification system is not translated into English either. The worst is that some international students attend courses which do not offer teaching in information searching. She too mentions the non-existing English web pages and blames it on translation costs and the extra work needed to update the web site. She confirms that only academic teachers can book a librarian, not students:


When asked about any discussions with colleagues on matters relating to international students, both Beata och Cecilia give positive answers. Beata mentions some practical discussions about her organisation of the library introduction course at the beginning of term. Cecilia mentions discussing about how to reach the doctoral students.

Cecilia agrees with Beata that all the signs in the library and all the information on the library’s web site ought to be in English. She adds that the library has not enough money to buy textbooks for all the students. Her main observation is:

Jag vet inte hur tillrättalagda de engelska kurserna är så att de liksom får väldigt mycket. Om det är kanske bara ett halvt år det är kanske inte så enkelt att lära sig alltting [---]. De där databaserna är detsamma i alla länder så det skulle vara nyttigt att lära sig [---]. De använder samma sök system, samma databaser!

Here are some goals and suggestions the librarians have. Anna suggests that the librarians working with the international students should learn a few English library terms and thinks that starting web sites in different languages could be a possibility, where students could ask for help online in their mother tongue. She does not develop her ideas much but she is certain that there are many things which could be done if one just thought more focusedly about international students. Beata would have more library tours and short instructions which the

26 A system for organizing the contents of a library based on the division of all knowledge into 10 groups, with each group assigned 100 numbers.
students could book personally. She would like to convey to all the academic teachers how important teaching information searching is today. Finally, she would like to be able to reach all the user groups. In the meantime she expresses a wish:

Vi skulle ha ett veckoschema som gäller alla veckor med en fast tid för visa saker, kanske bara en gång i veckan men, kanske en gång i månaden på engelska, övriga ganger på svenska, hur man ska söka i vår katalog, en gång i veckan Web of Science, en gång i veckan EBSCO Elite, några sådana fasta, likadant varenda vecka med studenter som kan boka och då kan vi lägga ut ett schema för en hel termin i taget, då vi vet, vi som undervisar, vi är bokade, vi tar hand om dem, då gäller att understerna bara bokar in sig, och är de för få då mejlar man och säger ’tyvärr ni är för få, kan du komma nästa vecka?’

Cecilia wishes to reach the doctoral students: ‘Jag önskar att vi hade någon som har rutin för gästforskarna och att de fick en bra introduktion och ett namn de kunde kontakta vid behov’.

To summarise of the librarians’ views on the relationship between Umeå University librarians and international students:

- The international students are frequent visitors to the library.
- They want help with information searching as well as with finding books, getting to know different parts of the library, copy machines, rules and regulations etc.
- The librarians sometimes experience language barriers.
- They also experience cultural barriers.
- International students are discussed only sporadically.
- Advertising of library services for international students is poor.
- The Swedish library classification system is not translated into English.
- Links on the English web pages do not always take you to another English language page.
- Not all the instructions and sign posts are in English.
- There is a possibility that the international students miss out on teaching on information searching.
- The librarians would like to have all information regarding the library translated into English, more opportunities for library instruction and set routines in their work with the international (and other) students.
Even though the librarians acknowledge that different levels of academic achievement require different levels of library instruction, they believe that library instruction should be offered at all levels and to all students.

6.1.1.4 Time and money

During the interviews some of the themes seemed to reappear in different contexts. Time seems to be very important in several respects. Anna believes that the librarians have time to instruct their users in how to search the databases: 'Det är bara så att, har man gott om tid, och det kan man ha ibland, så händer ofta att man sitter en halvtimme med någon vid en dator, sitter en halvtimme och hjälper dem'.

Learning takes time and Anna describes the process of library instruction offered in the library as gradual and continuous, adapted to the needs of the students who ask for help. She stresses the importance of delivering digestible bits of information which lead to further searching and finally to formulating new questions. Beata confirms the important factor of time for library instruction, by stating what she believes students must think: ‘OK jag tar lite tid, jag får ta lite tid. Det kanske blir bättre resultat’. Academic teachers need to set aside time to be personally updated or to help their students become information literate. Beata continues: ‘De som har tid kommer gärna på sådana seminarier där man presenterar nyheter i Web of Science [---] [De] hinner ta sig tid att sitta och leka med databaserna [---] tar sig tid för att följa med när man bokar en timmes undervisning’.

The international students do not have a lot of time. They can not afford to miss the scheduled library instruction as their Swedish counterparts can. Cecilia comments on the shortage of time for the enormous quantity of information the international students must acquire: ‘Vi vet att de här dagarna som de har introduktion - de är späckade dagar! De får ny information hela tiden och allting är nytt för dem och i slutet på den ena dagen kommer biblioteket sist’. Furthermore, Beata is conscious of the fact that studying information on the library’s web site takes a lot of time: ‘Man kan inte begära att de ska sitta och bläddra genom vår webbsida. Vem hinner det?’
It is very important to choose the right moment to introduce library instruction into the classroom or into individual work. Beata comments that it can be a waste of time if library instruction is introduced too soon: '[..] när studenterna kommer med projektet då har de nästan glömt bort vad vi berättade om informationssökning'. Cecilia discerns two phases when the doctoral students need library instruction: 'Det är viktigt att komma in i rätt fas just när de är i behov av att söka väldigt mycket litteratur och sedan när de sätter sig ner och börjar jobba’.

Money appears to be important in the sense that certain faculties do not seem to be able to buy library instruction. Beata points out that translation of information, instructions and signs costs money. Finally, Cecilia states that there is not enough means to buy textbooks for all students. On the other hand the librarians believe that the international students are quite satisfied with the library resources:

De är jättenöjda [---] kanske ännu mer nöjda än de svenska studenterna. För en normal svensk student är ju så bortskämd med resurser och kommer man från, har man studerat på ett universitet med restriktioner är är man chockartad att man kan låna det som man orkar bära antagligen (Beata).

To summarise the librarians’ views on time and money:

- Librarians often have enough time to help their clients with information searching.
- Library instruction is time consuming like any other learning process.
- Academic teachers need to put quite a lot of time into both personal education and that of their students.
- International students have less time and fewer opportunities to get library instruction.
- Right timing for introducing library instruction into a curriculum or a project is very important.
- Not all faculties can afford to buy library instructions for all their courses.
- It costs to have all the library information translated into English.
- There is not enough money to buy textbooks for all students.
6.2 Presentation of the student interviewees

The five students I interviewed are in their second term of studies at Umeå. Two of them are ‘free movers’, two came through the Erasmus exchange programme and one through the North2North programme. One of the Erasmus exchange programme students and one of the ‘free movers’ are attending Master programmes while the others are on undergraduate courses. Their original names are not used in this study.

Jan comes from the Netherlands. He is a 22-year-old graduate student, studying biomedical technology at his home university. He is studying courses in computing science at Umeå University. Masters programmes at his home university offer a possibility of half-a-year studying abroad and choosing any subject related to the student’s main subject. He has chosen Sweden and Umeå thanks to some acquaintances. He has been staying longer than initially planned due to the difficulty of scheduling the courses he wishes to attend into a six-month period. He came through Erasmus exchange programme.

Rose is 40. She comes from Cameroon and is a free mover. She is a graduate student and is on a Masters programme in accounting and finance at USBE. She applied to a number of universities which she had found on the Internet and came to Umeå where she was accepted and because there are no tuition fees.

Vera is 21, and an undergraduate ecology student from Russia. After three years of studying there, she became very disappointed with the quality of studies in ecological tourism, her special field of interest, and searched the Internet for a better place to continue her studies. She applied to a number of universities which are members of the North2North exchange programme and was accepted at Umeå University.

Francois is a 21-year-old undergraduate French student of political science who came to Umeå through the Erasmus programme. All third year students at his home university participate in an exchange programme. Francis chose Sweden because it was in Europe and he was interested in the EU and because he was curious about the country.
Azam is a 24-year-old student from Iran. As a top graduate student in accounting, she applied directly to Umeå, Lund and Gothenburg upon the advice of one of her lecturers. It was important, when making her choice, that there are no tuition fees at Swedish Universities. She was accepted at Umeå University and came as a free mover.

6.2.1 Results from students’ interviews

The questions to the students were inspired by Bostick's (1992) five dimensions on library anxiety: barriers with staff, affective barriers, comfort with the library, knowledge of the library, and mechanical barriers. The order is changed to follow a natural discourse but this barrier concept is covered by the themes in the students’ questionnaire while the subthemes have arisen from analysis of the interviews:

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6.2.1.1 General academic library experience

All the interviewed students go to the library regularly but the frequency varies. Jan says that it depends on the subjects he is reading but points out that he does not go to the library very often; approximately once every three weeks. Vera is not a frequent library visitor either; she goes to get her text books once in every two weeks. Azam is there once or twice a week. Francois is there three or four times a week, while Rose can be found in the library every day. She realised that it was more practical and time saving to study there.

The five students think that Umeå university library is much larger than their home libraries and all apart from Jan think that it is much better supplied with materials. All except Jan find it fascinating that one can borrow as many books as needed, and all seem to be well informed about the library’s basic rules and regulations.

Jan from the Netherlands thinks that Umeå University library is better than his home library both in terms of the size of its collection, and its very central position. Both libraries have a network of databases and in both one has to do a computer search in order to find books. However, he prefers his home library to Umeå University library because logging in or using a proxy is not needed there which is why he still occasionally goes to its web site and browses from Umeå. He prefers the subject classification at home.

Rose did not use her home library much. They have borrowing cards there and the computers in the so called ‘American corner’ but, they: ‘[---] do not have books in them [library’s database] like here’. Library membership is free but overdue has to be paid. Vera is very critical of her home library:

There is nothing of comparison. In a way it is the same but- it is a lot more complicated! We also have information databases in my home library but there is not everything there. There are very few new books I must say, and this is very bad with a lot of old books of no use. It is very important that you know who the author is, the title of the book, who is the publisher and what the year of publication is. You have to write your name, date, etc, etc. It’s annoying! You can not have more than five books at once, you go to the library and stay in a long queue and wait for ages and when, finally, you get your five books and discover that there is nothing for you in them – that’s

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27 Jan has a modern academic library at his home university.
28 Her explanation was that the computers were donated to the library by ‘the Americans’.
really a waste of time! We only have tables and chairs and sometimes too many students come to the library and you can’t find the place. This is quite common. Our libraries close usually at seven, latest eight!

Umeå University library offers so many studying possibilities. Vera however does not study often in the library because: ‘I don’t come here to study because it is absolutely the same in my building, in the canteen, so you can study everywhere within the university. Just find a cosy sofa!’ Francois finds that both libraries have certain advantages:

At home, the reviews [Journals] are separated from the books and here, you can choose both varieties and have access to the Magasin, you can go there yourself. In my home university library you have to fill in a paper and give it to the librarian. Most of the books you take yourself but the journals, articles or some valuable books are brought by the librarians. I never used these options because I didn’t want to wait.

The library card system at home is much easier: ‘We get a library card when we pay the administrative cost for the university and we can do different things with it. We can pay for the cafeteria and we can have books from the library’. The computers at the library are used by the staff but he prefers the numeric system at home. Azam does not use too many words to describe her home university library:

There are enormous differences. If I want to compare the two, I can say that my previous university’s library just has about 5% of this library’s facilities. Sources of information were scarce. We didn’t have any good possibilities to get to the web site of the university’s library, and such things. But here, with an abundance of everything, there is a scarcity of course literature books that our teachers want us to study!

Jan, François and Azam had the library introduction before the official beginning of term and found it very useful and well organised. Jan mentions that it came at the end of a very long day and half of the information was lost almost immediately: ‘I think they said everything we needed to know but I didn’t catch everything’. François describes the introduction:

We had information at the beginning of the year for the exchange students. It was quite enough, I think. They told us how to get a library card and how to get a copy card and what the different areas of the library were for, and how to find books on the Internet [Album].

29 Umeå University Library’s store room
Vera missed the introduction as she wasn’t feeling well: ‘I discovered the library on my own, and sometimes asked a librarian for help’. She does not remember any library instruction: ‘I don’t think we had any instruction about the databases in the classes [...]. Sometimes a teacher would mention a special database considering my field of study [...] and I can go to the lab where we can enter on-line journals with thousands of articles’. Rose missed the first month of the term and the official tour of the library due to a prolonged visa procedure. Her countrymen showed her around the library and afterwards she turned to the librarians for help.

Azam mentioned different sources of library instruction:

At the end of Library Introduction class all the students were divided into separate groups and each group had a leader who was an older student from our or from other departments. We followed him and he explained about every part of the university and also about the library. But, unfortunately, our leader wasn’t well informed himself. He just showed us around and said a few things briefly.

One of the librarians was very helpful and showed her (Azam) how to use Album. She learned how to use the EBSCO database from her mentor and had library instruction in Thomson, but she fears she will need to be reminded about the databases when she starts writing her thesis.

The students’ activities in the library differ. Jan does not sit in the library. He goes to the library to get the books he needs for the subject he is reading or to get some background reading on the subject. Rose gets her course books and reads. She likes to take a few books because she searches for the explanations in the books which suit her best and then goes to the Red Room and reads there. Vera searches for books and she surfs on the Internet. She never reads news. Francois searches for the books at home and goes to the library to fetch the books he finds. He feels comfortable studying in the Red Room and spends some time there. He uses copy machines in the library and participates in group work that his class sometimes has in one of the group work rooms. Finally, Azam mostly searches for books from her literature lists, charges her copy card and asks the librarians to help her with information searching.

To summarise the students’ views on their general academic library experience:

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30 Umeå University’s textbook room from which the books can neither be borrowed nor taken out.
The library visitation frequency varies: from once in three weeks to every day.

The library is much larger than their home libraries and everyone, apart from Jan, is fascinated by the library provision in terms of materials and technical equipment.

Jan and Francois find the classification system easier at home. The others do not mention it, either because they were mainly served by the librarians at their home libraries (Vera and Azam), or because they did not use their home university library often (Rose). Azam is critical of the scarcity of the course literature books.

Three students mention the introduction to the library as the main source of their library information. Rose had help from her countrymen while Vera had to cope on her own. Only Azam seems to have received help from more sources: library introduction, formal education, her mentor and the librarians.

Their activities in the library vary. Vera mainly browses for her course related books; she also surfs on the Internet. Francois and Jan borrow the books they have already searched for at home. Jan sometimes browses for other literature he likes to read. Francois sometimes does group work in the library. Both he and Rose like to study in the Red Room. Francois and Azam mention using the copy machines. Only Azam mentions asking a librarian to help her with information searching.

6.2.1.2 Experiences of the physical library

How the students experience the library as a physical place differs in some respects. They all notice that the size of the library is much larger than that of their home libraries. All of them believe that the location is perfect. It happens that they all have lectures in the vicinity and thus can go to the library before or after classes. The organisation of the materials in the library divides it into several parts which are differently visited by the students. The majority uses the Course Literature Room, the Red Room and the Magasin. The Study Hall is not used too often. The students’ experiences with these rooms are different. Jan says:

I usually go to the basement for some papers and I sometimes go to the study hall to browse the shelves. I hate this Swedish system of marking books [the Swedish classification system]. The first few times I really was confused, I couldn’t find anything. Their classification is terrible! In the physics department you could just look under magnetism and find it, but not here! It was so

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31 Jan’s home library consists of smaller branch libraries situated at different faculties.
32 Another part of the library where the books are arranged according to the Swedish classification system.
annoying! I mean in the Magasin there you can’t arrange that in a different way. It’s just too much, so I think that works very well. You just have to accept that without the computer you can’t find anything there but it’s otherwise quite easy if you understand the year and a number. The Red Room is very useful, just to make sure that you have a lot of copies and that they are always there for you. I think that is really a good thing- not that I use it much but I think it is good to have. I never go to the study rooms upstairs, I use other places.

Rose mainly uses the Red Room for studying where she knows her shelves and if she cannot find something she searches in Album: ‘If you don’t know what you are looking for you don’t know how to go about it’. Vera likes to use every part of the library but the Magasin is confusing:

There are some parts difficult to find. I was looking for some kids’ book to try reading in Swedish. The part was not put in the map then, maybe because it was new but I happened to need it then. I find the books in the Red Room easily after being explained by a librarian how to look for them.

Francois thinks that the size of the library makes his search for books difficult. His search is more successful in the smaller rooms of the library. He says:

It is not easy to find things but I think that it is due to the fact that it is huge. If I search for some letter I think it is close to the spot and then it turns out to be ten shelves away from where I thought it should be. It’s easy to find books in the Red Room. I use the Course Literature Room and I use the Study Hall and I also go to the Magasin. I got lost there several times. Maybe I am not really attentive to what I have to find and sometimes I forget the paper with the note on it. I am not the perfect man for writing all those numbers and abbreviations. Once I couldn’t move a shelf.

Azam found her way around by asking a librarian every time she had some doubts. The books in the Magasin are easier to find:

You select the years, the shelves move electronically and those shelves you want come out and you can take whatever you want. In the Course Literature Room there are clear rules on how the books are placed. The room is bigger and it’s easier to find one’s way around. The Red Room is confusing and I think if the study part was separated and all the books were in the other part it would be better.

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33 Textbooks can be borrowed from this room.
Here follow some positive experiences mentioned by the students. Jan mentioned the atmosphere: ‘Searching in the physical library has some charm; you see so many books, they are sorted in some way and it is comprehensible, sooner or later. There are so many additional things besides the science things’. Francois mentions comfortable chairs, good light, and the right temperature. The nearby cafeteria is appreciated. He also remarks favourably on the working schedule. The good thing is that one does not always need to go to the library: ‘When it is winter and it is cold outside even if my room is not far away from here, and I find like three books related to my subject and two are on line through the proxy, I don’t go to the library’. Jan agrees that the physical library is a necessity when: ‘I know information is there because I have found it on the web site and I have to fetch the books physically.’

There are some critical tones. Rose would like less exposed resting places. She explains that she does not live close to the university and finds it difficult to continue with her studying in the library after a long day in the classroom:

They could have a rest room or more comfortable chairs where you could doze a bit. Those seats that are there are exposed, they are in the way, just by the passages, and you can’t just sit and sleep in them. I am then just thinking about going home and to go back just to return again- it’s a long distance!

Both Francois and Azam happened to study in the library during the period of library building work and found it very disturbing: ‘[---] and a noise always irritated the students. They could have worked [---] during the night!’ Francois is disturbed by hearing people opening their cookie packages, pressing buttons of their mobile phones or even answering their mobile phones in the Red Room.

To summarise the students’ views on their physical experiences of the library:

- Good location, size and atmosphere.
- Good comfort, light, temperature, offer of refreshment, working times.
- The Red Room and the Magasin are the most used parts of the library.
- It takes time and can be quite frustrating to look for materials in the different parts of the library.
- Resting places should be better organised, it can be quite noisy at times, not only temporarily due to building work, but due to mobile phones and eating in the Red Room.
- It is easy for a newcomer to become lost in the Magasin.

6.2.1.3 Materials

This theme is rather large as it can mean anything from the library’s supply of books and journals, stationary, and photo copy machines to materials searched through the databases. Basically all the students are satisfied with the material resources in the library. The problems arise when they want to borrow their course literature.

Jan points out that if one does not borrow textbooks before the start of a course it is impossible to find the books later: ‘They have all the course books but not enough copies’. Rose is more practical: ‘I mostly read the course material recommended by the teachers and if I don’t find something, I look for books related to that subject’. Azam is rather annoyed about this: ‘Getting the main reference books for the course is the most difficult thing! I need the books now not three or four months later’. Francois has developed some tactics to obtain the course literature:

I think I always find the books for my courses. I have different tactics. Sometimes, when I am really interested in the subject, I first check how the book is written, if it is interesting for me I buy it. Sometimes I don’t want to spend time copying and then I prefer to come here and read it in the Red Room. Sometimes I check before the course begins and borrow it before other students.

At home Vera and Azam used to study from textbooks not from articles and handouts. Vera seems to believe that articles are less worth studying than textbooks: ‘I must confess that [here in Umeå] we quite often refer to articles and read them more often than books’. Azam seems to share her opinion:

And also most of the lecturers advise us that these handouts are the most important for the exams, but I think that they should focus more on books because the information is more complete and it stays longer in mind. Most of the students don’t focus on books. They don’t either buy or borrow from the library; they just focus on the handouts.
The main fault with the library’s web site is that not all information is in English. Jan and Francois think it is amusing as they are trying to learn Swedish, but Jan adds: ‘You can’t see that the information is there if you don’t know Swedish and you can give up searching. Basically I end up asking the Swedes for help’. Francois would change some of its design: ‘I don’t like that you have to change the pages if you have fifty answers [i.e. hits]’. Jan continues: ‘The structure is not intuitive for me. It isn’t easy to find things. Some parts of the web site are long and boring; my English is good enough to sort it out’. It was disappointing for him not to be able to find some practical information on the site about what to do in case one’s library card is stolen:

It was Saturday and it was already closed when my wallet was stolen, then I was searching the web site, how to do it and it said nothing so, in the end, I ended up going to the library on Sunday, twelve, being there when the library opened.

Everybody is satisfied with Album. The ‘simple search’ option is easy and they mostly use this option. Vera expresses the way most of them accept it: ‘I don’t always know what the letters in the placing post in Album mean but, I always find a book I am looking for!’

Some of the other minor themes that appear in talking about the materials are copying, time and money and competition. Rose declares: ‘I can use a photocopy machine. I did it before and it is easy. I had one in the office, I had a computer so, and it’s not as if I was using them for the first time’. Vera on the other hand, did not use a photocopy machine before she came here and she thinks:

Copying is complicated here. I was explained several times but I am still very unsuccessful. Some pages are missing, some text is too large and before you find a proper size you have to spend some crowns. I just waste lots of money and I am afraid to be annoying and ask again. I think it is too much time to explain everything to me. I am very bad with the copying machines.

Francois does not like spending much time copying. He thinks that books are rather expensive. Azam also thinks that books are expensive and adds that printing out lecture material costs a lot too:
I would like to get the information about how to find the book I need which is not available at the library; maybe from the other universities, or how to buy a second hand book, or how to order to buy a new book the cheapest way. This kind of information I would like to find on the library web site. It would be useful for every student to get access to these sources.

Vera complains about the time she spends searching for information: ‘The lack of time is often lack of information for me’. Rose also finds the time frame for her studies frustrating:

I can complain about that the program here is very short for individual study and you can’t really have more information, you struggle to read just the amount you have so that you can prepare for the exams. The time frame is tight, just one month. I would have used the library for more reading if it wasn’t so!

Azam complains about the time spent waiting in a queue for course literature books and connects it with the costs: ‘If you request these titles you get them three or four months later when they are not useful any longer so I rather buy books than borrow. And it’s expensive!’

Azam is also critical of the lack of competitive atmosphere among students in her group, which she believes contributes to a certain lack of ambition. High ambition leads to better usage of the existing materials:

I think the expectation level of the students is rather low because of the Swedish mark system. If they were marked and categorised by the level of presentation: 90/100, 80/100, it would be better. It would bring the competition into the studies which would encourage students to work better! This is why they say that American and Canadian universities are on a higher level than the Swedish. I am not sure whether it is true but it could be!

Jan comments on ambition, too: ‘I mean if you are at the course you usually get so much material that you should be more or less able to do the things yourself. It depends a bit on how ambitious a person is’.

To summarise the students’ views on the materials supplied in or by the library:

- The interviewed students find the library’s provision of materials very adequate.
However, the library’s provision of course literature is insufficient, and to buy it costs a lot. Students have to develop different tactics to read their literature in time. Not all are successful.

The library’s web site does not offer all the expected information in English. The design of the web site is experienced as strange and sometimes boring. Album is mainly used for simple title or author search.

All of the students have had some kind of writing tasks where information searching was involved. However, only one of them had formal library instruction linked to that activity. Moreover, even she thinks it was not introduced into the curriculum when it should have been.

Those who have traditional ‘textbook’ oriented studying habits have difficulties in understanding how the ‘handouts’ are to be treated in their studies.

Lack of ambition is mentioned as a possible explanation for why the library material is not used more.

6.2.1.4 Staff assistance

The five international students are very satisfied with the assistance they get in the library. They ask for assistance in finding a book, searching in Album, and Azam and Vera have asked for help with more complex searches. They all experience asking a librarian for help as a final solution. All of them have lost some time trying to get the idea of how the books were organised but finally had to approach a librarian.

Jan comments on asking a librarian for help: ‘Imagine that everyone should go straight to the librarian without trying themselves, then either you would need ten times more librarians or you would have to wait for quite a long time’. Rose comments:

I don’t ask a librarian to help me. No! I look for it myself! Look, look, look, anything I see related to corporate or international finance. When the time comes for me to write my project and if I don’t know where to look for the articles, normally the librarians are paid for that - to help.
Francois does not like asking a librarian for help either: ‘Usually I ask as little as possible because I don’t care if I spend a little extra time in the library. If I find something by myself it will be easier the next time I come’. Azam likes to be well informed about everything and is not shy to ask for help. Neither is Vera.

They all describe the librarians as very friendly, helpful and patient. If they finally have to ask for some help they choose the nearest, free librarian. They avoid those who seem busy or are otherwise occupied in conversation. Francois can not get rid of some habits from home:

Asking a librarian is not my way of doing things. I think when I search I can see more things than a librarian. They might have a precise idea of three or four books and there are others they don’t know or don’t like, or they might think it’s not my subject. I am not used to that kind of relations between the students and librarians. At my home university it is usually the librarian who is sitting and here they are often standing and moving. I talk easier to the librarians standing here. Some are standing and waiting for some questions, almost inviting for questions!

The library’s practice of helping students do things themselves is absolutely appreciated. Jan reasons on this:

But when you are twenty, figure it out yourself! And if you don’t get it, we are always here to help you but you have to try out yourself first! What kind of scientist are you if you run to the first person that can help you without thinking yourself?!!

Vera thinks this practice saves time. Rose thinks there would soon be no librarians left to serve every student who came to the library. Francois feels comfortable doing things by himself: ‘Here, you can do everything yourself while the people [the university’s librarians] are very open for you. No one can feel that he is left alone to do everything’. Azam adds:

When a student asks for help from a librarian and he has been instructed it would be very good if the librarian followed and controlled if the student was satisfied. He doesn’t need to follow him literally but check from the distance if the student is doing well or maybe go to him after a while and check. The expression on the face and body talk can reveal a lot and it is not difficult to notice if the student is managing or having problems. I am not shy to ask again but I have seen that some students are.
Language seems to be no problem for the majority of the students. They have no communication problems with the librarians and mostly ‘find the right words’ or ‘talk their way around it’ or ‘insist on repeating until the point is understood’. Rose is an exception and this is how she explains her communicational difficulties:

Hmm, most people working in the library speak English and few of them [---] I realised- they don’t really understand me very well! Even in class some of the teachers don’t understand when some of us are talking. I think it is cultural difference, pronunciation and accent. I accept it. I can’t do anything about it.

To summarise the students’ views on staff assistance in the library:

- The students avoid asking for help; they ask when they have no other choice.
- The librarians are seen as friendly, patient, helpful, and easily approached.
- The policy of developing students’ independence in the library is appreciated.
- English is experienced as a communicational barrier with certain (African, in this case) speakers.

6.2.1.5 Emotional barriers

I am not anxious in the library, I am anxious at home when I am working, searching. (Francois)

The expression on the face and body talk can reveal a lot and it is not difficult to notice if the student is managing or having problems. (Azam)

When one gets lost in the library (Francois), cannot find magnetism under physics classification (Jan), has to wait in a long queue to be shown in which direction to go (Azam), or when one has to change one’s studying routines for two weeks because of a noise from the building work (Rose and Azam), one can be discouraged from going to the library. Nevertheless, library visits cannot completely be avoided. Jan admits: ‘I go if I can’t find information without the library’. Occasional irritations are accepted as the price of getting necessary course literature.
Information searching process can be frustrating. All five students had some assignments where information searching was needed. However, only Azam had library instruction incorporated in her curriculum. She is fully conscious of its importance for her work and thanks to her experience she knows how to proceed when she starts writing her thesis. Even so, her library instruction seems not to have been as effective as it should have been! She says:

But in the first course which we had in corporate finance, we had a 20 points essay to write and we were confused how we could get more and the best information about simulation and finance. We just knew we could go and search in the books and journals but we had no idea about the databases. Now, with five courses behind me I think how much better it would have been if I had known about these databases in my first course. Our group could have had a better mark!

Jan has had experience with information searching from his home library:

Personally I think searching is a lot of hard work and I don’t like doing it [...] sometimes it can take a few days before you find something really good. [...] Reading the articles can be nice but just searching for them is in a way boring. [...] The amount of information nowadays is too big to make the searching process easy. I have a feeling that there is a crucial thing I didn’t get and sometimes you find precisely what you need but not often. The sort of information you need just has to be out there only you can’t find it. Maybe it isn’t but I am not satisfied. I mostly find what I want but I don’t really know how the searchers [Data processing that results from a single instruction] work. But basically speaking, everything I know about searching I know from my home university. I didn’t have any instructions here. I don’t know if other faculties get it or not but it’s very useful. My girlfriend [she is also an international student], she doesn’t know how it works and she writes out a few words and hopes it will come out. She didn’t even know that you have a negative search. For example she was looking for diatoms, organisms in water. She was searching marine diatoms and she wanted to do a study of them in lakes not in the sea and then she had to get rid of sea and ocean and that’s very easy; you use a minus sea, minus ocean. But she didn’t know that and it was so simple. You really have to know these things!

He is already thinking about his future research. He describes the process of information searching at the beginning of studies as building the body of knowledge. He also talks about searching at different levels of academic education. As opposed to undergraduate searching where: ‘you are searching for something you don’t even know [what it is]’, at postgraduate level he understands searching as discovering areas of still undone research: ‘you are actually
searching for something you don’t want to find. If you can’t find it, it isn’t done and you can do it, in that sense’. He describes his anxiety:

I don’t have so many problems with it this year. I had it before when I had the feeling that I knew more about the subject, topic, but not really. I knew the subject, I followed the lectures but still I had no exact idea, especially in engineering that’s very common, you don’t know exactly what you are doing. There is a difference in doing something and in understanding what you are doing and I always get anxious if I don’t understand what I am doing.

Vera did not know anything about searching and is still insecure but optimistic: ‘I came to the library, wrote a word and found some books. I don’t think it is difficult at all. You always find something!’ She asks her boyfriend and the librarians for help.

Francois thinks that finding a subject to write about, is the most difficult thing with the ‘open’ assignments they sometimes have to do. ‘I don’t like the feeling while searching because it is like working but doing nothing.’ He brings up the amount of time spend: ‘If I choose ‘popular culture’ in Album, I find about 300 books and in the end, I maybe choose a subject that is interesting but not the most interesting for me’. He has had no library instruction course: ‘If I did use the tool it was not because I knew the rule but because it is the automatism [habit] from Internet search I had from before’. Time spent on search is mentioned over and over:

When I have the instructions for seminar questions I think it’s very open and I spend a lot of time to find a subject, then I feel like I can do more things as I have time but since I spent so much time searching I have not enough time to write the paper and sometimes I feel I want more time after I have done the presentation. Political science includes a lot of subjects. [--] The schedules were overlapping and sometimes I had to be at three places at the same time. Usually, these courses are only five - week courses but the five weeks are not the same at the social science building and at the gender studies so they overlap a week or two. And I had another course here which was once a week the whole semester and the teacher didn’t agree to move it so we usually had a choice between a seminar and a lecture and we usually went to the seminars and missed the lectures. I have a feeling that I am running through the courses not getting enough from them [--]. I think it’s my problem if I don’t have enough time to do what I want to. (Francois)

Rose responds to information searching:
What is that? The librarians showed me that when I click Album, I choose English or Swedish, if it is English, you can see the American flag, then I go and search by author’s name or key words. Then you have lists of so many books related to the topic. You choose, and then click for location and that tells you where the book is. You copy the number and go and find it. Most of the time I use books, but I will have to use the articles to write my thesis, I think. The only thing that I can complain about is that the program here is very short for individual study and you can’t really have more information, you struggle to read just the amount you have so that you can prepare for the exams. I believe that for the Master’s level you have to have a grip of the concept of the study, not just go and pass a course. You need to have the knowledge! Most of the time here we struggle to read just to pass, studying needs longer time.

To surmise the students’ views on emotional barriers:

- All the students directly or indirectly talk about ‘library anxiety’ which is experienced during the process of information searching. Sometimes this anxiety is not directly connected to the physical library but to the more virtual one e.g. when searching at home.
- All of the students had some kind of written assignment which involved information searching but only Azam received official library instruction. She is very conscious of its value but is critical of the timing for its introduction into the curriculum.
- There is a slight tension between building a body of knowledge and the role of information searching. The tension lies in inability to formulate the question for individual work which is partially complicated by not having an adequate body of knowledge on one hand and not mastering the searching tools on the other hand.
- Some stages in the information searching process are recognised: Task initiation, Topic selection and Information Collection.
- The levels of information literacy are very heterogeneous among the students, independent of what they are studying. Jan has thought about the process and seems to be most informed (yet, not thanks to Umeå University Library). Azam is applying the taught library instruction without too many thoughts about the process. Francois is going through the stage of realisation that he needs to get formal library instruction. Vera is just starting her information literacy acquisition while Rose is just coping with the materials provided by teachers; the so called ‘korvstoppare’ approach to teaching.
7. Concluding discussion

My intention with this study was to answer the questions how Umeå University Library provision for international students is organised, and whether Umeå international students are seen by the librarians as a user group with specific needs. I also wanted to describe international students’ actual library experience in order to compare the services offered by the library with the service needed by international students.

The role of the academic library in the internationalisation of higher education ought not to be ignored. Kumar and Suresh (2000, p.330) claim that: ‘[---] the library is a key to the academic success of these [international] students and [---] a librarian has a significant role to play in partnering with international students to help them achieve that success’. In light of this, it is surprising that Umeå University Library’s provision for international students has not received more attention by either Umeå University Library or Umeå University International Student Office. Acknowledgement of a tailored library introduction for international students reveals librarians’ awareness that a somewhat different approach to these students is necessary.

The interviews revealed that, apart from the library introduction and the library tours before the beginning of term, nothing extra is done for these students. They are treated as domestic students who need to be spoken to in English. Library instruction for international students is left too much to chance. They might get formal library education if they happen to attend one of the programmes or courses at a faculty which integrates library courses into the curriculum, or they might get informal library instruction if they ask for it and/or if a willing librarian has the time to devote to them. Otherwise, they have to find somebody else who is able and willing to share their knowledge with them. This study also reveals that international students are not inclined to ask librarians for help and do so only when they cannot avoid it. The attempts on the part of the smiling and helpful librarians to encourage students’ questions seem to be lost on many.
7.1 Should library instruction for international students be obligatory?

Work based on the American experience is unambiguous. Having undertaken a number of studies comparing the needs of international and domestic students, and owing to ‘differences in language skills, level of familiarity with the library system and with library resources’ Kumar and Suresh (2000, p.331) stress that separate instruction for international students is needed. Although there may be differences between international students in Sweden and those in America, they share the same problems, such as unfamiliarity with the library system (knowledge of the library), unfamiliarity with resources (mechanical barriers) and language barriers. On the language issue, Swedish research on the effects of working in a foreign language when assessing the relevance of retrieved documents, indicated that ‘foreign language texts took longer to assess and were assessed less well’ by a group of Swedish readers fluent in English (Hansen & Karlgren, 2005).

Another reason why international students should be offered tailored library instruction is because many of those coming from universities in the less developed world have little or no experience of information searching tools or techniques. They come as information illiterates who are expected to ask for help, even as those considered experts (e.g. university lecturers) often do not update their information searching skills. Meanwhile, students who come from universities in the developed world, and who have a certain knowledge in this field, have different experiences and need some explanations, as well as regular updating on the frequent changes occurring in databases. Finally, information searching is a necessary skill if these students are to successfully complete their assignments. They cannot make up for the loss of library instruction later on when they return home. Domestic students can always get another chance during their programme of study.

One of the librarians interviewed pointed out that international students would derive real benefit from being instructed in information searching: ‘De där databaserna är detsamma i alla länder så det skulle vara nyttigt att lär sig [---]. De använder samma söksystem, samma databaser!’ I have no doubts that this skill could be among the most valuable things learnt in Sweden, one of the practical tools for future careers of these ambitious scholars.
7.2 How do the librarians reach international students?

Reaching out to international students in Umeå presents a practical problem which is not unique to Umeå University. Kumar and Suresh advise that a liaison librarian may facilitate communication.

The liaison librarian apart from providing an initial orientation and tour of the library could enable those students who have more specialised information needs to be introduced to the subject specialists so that the students will be aware of ongoing instructional support sessions that are available (Kumar & Suresh, 2000, p.333).

A librarian responsible for organising library introduction and tours of Umeå University Library has already been appointed, indicating that the library is willing to take its responsibility for international students. However, the University’s International Office, which deals with international student issues, needs to be more active. The International Office could supply the library with a precise picture of the incoming students: their country of origin, language and computer skills. The appointed liaison librarian could then inform the educational group at the library about the incoming international students, and the library instruction could then be discussed and organised accordingly.

7.3 What kind of library instruction do international students need?

Librarians are highly conscious of the necessity of working to solve Masters and Doctoral students’ information needs. Onwuegbuzie, Jiao & Bostick (2004, p.35) mention, among other common prejudices held by students, the prejudice that only more advanced undergraduate students need library instruction. This kind of prejudice is shared by the interviewed international students; even the interviewed librarians seem to believe that their services are needed more by Masters and Doctoral students. I would argue the importance of ongoing instructional support sessions on all levels within different specialities. This is where Budd’s instruction model becomes meaningful, and the current practice of introducing one
instance of library instruction into an academic course, looks more like a compromise than an ideal solution to students’ information needs.

The librarians interviewed would like lecturers to be more actively engaged in seeing to it that both their students and they themselves acquire up-to-date information literacy. Fullerton and Leckie (2002) mention that the course related instruction or lectures requested by individual faculties are most commonly applied library instruction and this is the case with Umeå University, too. In general, curriculum- integrated sessions seem to be the most desired and the most difficult to realize, due to the high degree of cooperation between library and faculties needed (Kahmi-Stain & Stein, 1998; Macdonald & Sarkodie-Mensah, 1988). In order to reach the students, some libraries target their instruction sessions at the academic teaching staff. Once faculty members are made aware of the possibilities offered by the library through workshops and seminars, they tend to design their assignments in accordance with the library’s resources (Simmonds, 2003). I believe that closer cooperation between the library and academic department should be an accepted part of planning academic curricula, leading to better practical solutions regarding library instruction, where a librarian teaches information searching after a subject assignment has been given. Defining specific information searching objectives, as well as recognising the importance of analysis, synthesis and evaluation of information as part of active learning, are absolutely necessary for achieving information literacy tools (Allen, 1995).

English language academic courses and programmes are relatively newly designed and ought to be flexible enough to incorporate library instruction sessions. The success of these sessions depends on the ability of subject librarians to achieve their teaching goals, provide variety and avoid unnecessary replication. This is only possible if cooperation with lecturers is well organised, and the roles of the two types of educators (lecturers and librarians) well defined. I believe that more determined steps should be made by Umeå University Library to introduce library instruction into all English language academic programmes and courses.
7.4 What can a contact librarian do?

The role of the contact librarian in Umeå has not developed to its optimum. Apart from functioning as educators in library instruction in academic programmes and courses, there seems to be a number of other untapped opportunities for these librarians. They could fill in gaps in the specific information needs of Masters and Doctoral students, as well as work with smaller groups of undergraduates including international students who have missed out on library instruction. I am aware of the pressure this amount of work can put on the staff, but flexibility has to be a strategic orientation of a modern academic library determined to ‘take cues from institutions’ (Budd, 1998). In this case, a ‘cue’ comes from the University and is called ‘internationalisation’. In this way, the large-scale library instruction for international students can be broken into smaller manageable chunks, offering a variety of sessions for different needs (Kumar & Suresh, 2000). Routines will appear gradually with acquired experience and though discussion.

7.5 Why is time so important?

Both the librarians interviewed and the student respondents realised how important time is for international students. Time is important for all students in the sense that information needs for writing papers are immediate and pressing (Budd, 1998, p.294) but the timeframe for international students is compressed as there is much more to do in a shorter period (such as: adapting to the new living circumstances; constantly using English language; experiencing a new town; spending time with new people) while the ambition to perform well academically, is still high.

The importance of good timing for library instruction has already been mentioned as vital for its success. Lack of time is the most frequent excuse heard from lecturers for not being updated. Baron (2002, p.139) explains this phenomenon (related to new technology skills learning): ‘One faculty member I spoke with said she could not be bothered - wasting time - trying to learn new technologies, when she should be researching and writing’. Had the article been written much earlier, at the beginning of the information technology age, this attitude
would not have been difficult to accept. It is surprising that even today, when information technology is inseparable from academic work, some faculty lecturers still believe that trying to learn new technologies is a waste of time. What example do they provide for their students? Why is obligatory library instruction for lecturers (those who need it) only ‘a dream’ at Umeå University? This is an apt subject for further study, understanding and bringing closer the roles of the two mediators: lecturers and librarians.

7.6 Barriers and Anxiety

International students start feeling comfortable in their new library after a period of experiencing library anxiety due to its size (Mellon, 1986) and novelty. They get lost while trying to find a particular location in the library, and display symptoms of library anxiety when they ‘[---] overlook signs and maps, misinterpret directions and cues, refrain from asking for help, or give up their search relatively quickly’ (Onwuegbuzie, Jiao & Bostick, 2004, p.3). All of the above mentioned symptoms were experienced by the student respondents. Baron suggests ‘cures’ for library anxiety, some of which are already ministered (2002, p.141)\(^\text{35}\). Umeå University librarians are calm, clear, open to questions, non-judgemental and non-evaluative. They help students to help themselves, they say it, show it, have them do it, they familiarize students with the outlay of the library, they proactively provide assistance and make sure the library is comfortable, but there remains more to be done. In order that librarians are in a better position to provide successful library instruction for international students, Chattoo (2000, p.357) suggests staff training: ‘Given the differences in learning styles [among international students] due to language, culture, and educational customs, librarians need greater access to research on this topic as well as better training to enable them to meet the needs of international adult learners’. Staff training can be conducted in the form of a short, formal workshop where a discussion on this matter is initiated after a presentation on experiences found in the literature. Such training could also be carried out by introducing the matter into an existing staff communication system on the Internet or Intranet. Whichever way is chosen, the most important point is that an ongoing

\(^{35}\) In her literature citations collection, she gives a list of tips for librarians teaching people with technophobia, computer anxiety or library anxiety.
discussion on the needs of international students should be initiated in the academic library in Umeå.

Both the librarians and the students believe that they have a good relationship. The librarians readily approach these students patiently and respectfully. Language barriers in most cases are overcome by patient repeating or reformulating of phrases until communication is achieved to mutual satisfaction. However, there are sustained language barriers when pronunciation is difficult for the librarians to understand. This matter should also be discussed among the librarians in order to find a solution. Cultural barriers present a bigger problem, because they are not always obvious, and can lead to personal misunderstanding and prejudice. Charles Sturt University in Australia offers a booklet on cultural barriers for academic teachers who have international students. Cultural differences in relation to power distribution in a group, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and age related authority, are explained, as well as how to cope with these differences. Librarians in Sweden could learn from these suggestions.

Student participants in this study are accustomed to using computers for Internet search. This study does not directly address the information searching routines of the international students, but it became apparent from the interviews that they had similar searching habits to those described by Sjöholm and Svensson (2006). Information searching in new circumstances needs to be taught if library anxiety, due to a lack of experience with library technology, is to be overcome (Allen, 1993). In a study from 2004, students who had received 30-45 minute computer-assisted library tutorial sessions, reported statistically significant lower levels of library anxiety than those had not (Onwuegbuzie, Jiao & Bostick, 2004, p.46).

The web site of Umeå University Library does not satisfy the needs of international students, and it would be wrong to assume that an adequate translation of the Swedish site would suffice. A translation of the existing website from Swedish into English would only emphasize an attitude of ‘one-size-fits-all’. A new library website specially designed with the needs of international students in mind, should be considered. The poor quality of the existing website design became evident in the course of conducting student interviews. Peter Van Dijck claims that: ‘Humans naturally assume that other people are like themselves. […] If you

36 See 3.3
want to find out about their behaviour, observe people. If you want to find out about their attitudes and beliefs, interview them’ (Van Dijck, 2003, p.50). Thus the design of the library web pages for international students should be based on insights gained about this user group by observing and interviewing them. Even though international students may lack the sophistication of the ‘new [experienced] user’, described by Kyrillidou and Persson (2005) as a ‘self-sufficient, independent and autonomous information seeker’, they belong to a generation who all over the world have similar expectations of libraries; to help them become self-sufficient quickly. They expect a library to provide a website which enables them to locate information on their own.

Possibly reflecting their failure to satisfy the need for library instruction in a routine manner, the librarians are doing their best to provide individual help every time they are asked for it. One of the main goals of the library introduction session for international students is to clearly communicate that the librarians are there for all students and their questions. Indeed, a student interviewed noted that the librarians stand in the library as if ‘waiting to be asked’. But do the students ask? Can an ‘asking-for-help’ attitude go together with a wish to be self-sufficient? An article on library provision outside a traditional library environment, entitled *I wouldn’t have asked if I had to go to the library*, describes the typical student avoidance of asking a librarian for help in the library (Lee, Hayden & MacMillan, 2004). The students are embarrassed to show their inadequacy publicly (Mellon, 1988), and want to avoid taking the ‘easy way out’ (Kuhlthau, 1993), (this is of course not only typical of international students). Further, not all international students are used to this ask-me-attitude, and it is difficult for them to overcome this affective barrier easily. Baron (2002, p.139) claims that the demeanour and nonverbal communication of technologically ignorant library users tells ‘a sad story - they are desperate’. International students are technologically ignorant of a new library’s technology. This situation is not eased by the fact that the library is in a foreign country and that communication with the staff is in a foreign language for both international students and librarians. As one of my student respondents put it, ‘the expression on the face and body talk can reveal a lot and it is not difficult to notice if the student is managing or having problems. I am not shy to ask again but I have seen that some students are’ (Azam).
7.7 Some suggestions for future work

This case study is the second in a row of studies on international students at academic libraries in Sweden. Sjöholm and Svensson (2006) initiated this field of study with an investigation about the information searching habits of international students in Lund. This contribution focuses on library provision at Umeå University. As there is not much else written about international students at academic libraries in Sweden, any further contribution to this field of research is welcome. Besides studies on mediators’ roles for these students and on web design, it would be interesting to conduct a quantitative study comparing library anxiety in Swedish and international students. Bostick’s library anxiety scale could be applied, and the research could help resolve some of the library-related psychological problems encountered by international students (Onwuegbuzie, Jiao & Bostick, 2004, p.31). The results could then be compared to those found in literature. Other interesting matters in this field to be studied are: the role of academic staff in information literacy of international students; integration of library instruction into curriculum; and different needs of international students who come from less developed countries.

8. Implications of findings for library practice

In order to enhance the employability and mobility of citizens of Europe, internationalisation of higher education has been intensified during the last decade. Swedish universities are taking an active part in the process. As a part of ‘academia’, university libraries have their share of responsibilities for increasing the number of international students coming from all over the world. It is high time for Swedish academic libraries to take decisive measures in order to define and meet the needs of this group of users. Umeå University Library has already recognized that these students have different needs from domestic students, in its promotion of the library introduction session and library tour as part of university introduction.

37 See 3.3
week. Contact librarians hold library instruction sessions as integrated parts of academic courses, and offer help to individual students at the library. Why is this not enough?

This study has revealed that international students - due to an array of factors, including: very different experiences from home university libraries; English language barriers; short stay in Sweden; and very intensive programmes and courses at Umeå University - all experience some kind of library anxiety, expressed as barriers related to limited knowledge of the library, mechanical barriers, language barriers and emotional barriers. All these barriers can be overcome by providing adequate library instruction for this group.

In order to improve library provision for international students, the library should name a liaison librarian to work closely with the International Student Office and provide the library with necessary information about the incoming international students. Workshops, short courses and discussions on issues relating to library provision for international students should be available to the library staff and especially the teaching group of contact librarians. Furthermore, other libraries’ experiences in this domain ought to be studied and best practice adapted to the circumstances of Umeå University Library. Course-integrated, library instruction sessions should be introduced into all international programmes and courses. A website designed for international students should be considered. Finally, introducing these changes into existing library practice can provide a model for all library instruction in all Umeå University programmes and courses. Other university libraries in the country can profit from this experience, too.

It is my firm belief that Umeå University Library has much more to offer international students, who might never get another chance to acquire information searching skills and information literacy. Databases are the same all over the world, but the ability to search them and use information from them should not be a privilege of domestic students and of international students lucky enough to have attended academic courses with integrated library instruction. Should the rest return home from a modern Swedish university ignorant about the vast source of scientific information buried in the databases of modern academic libraries?
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Appendix A

Frågor till bibliotekarierna

Allmänna

1. Vilka tjänster erbjuder biblioteket till internationella studenter?
2. Hur ofta träffar du dem?

Boka en bibliotekarie

3. Är du nöjd med hur mycket internationella studenter använder tjänsten "boka en bibliotekarie"?
4. Vilka är de internationella studenterna?
5. Vad vill de ha hjälp med?
6. Vilka kommentarer har de? (Angående bibliotekets hemsida, hjälpen de får o.s.v.)
7. Har du märkt skillnad bland studenterna i när det gäller deras nationalitet?
8. Hur fungerar "hjälp till självhjälp” med dem?
9. Hur fungerar "boka en bibliotekarie” fungerar med dem?
10. Skulle du ändra någonting med den här tjänsten?

Språk

11. Vad tycker du om att använda ett främmande språk när du förklarar något för studenterna? (Är det stressande, obehagligt, annat?)
12. Hittar du de rätta orden för att bli helt förstådd?
13. Har du någon typ av skriftlig kommunikation med internationella studenter och hur fungerar det?

Intern kommunikation

14. Har ni diskuterat frågan om internationella studenter bland personalen här på biblioteket?
15. Har någon försökt få reda på vad de här användarna tycker om biblioteket?
16. Har du något förslag på hur man skulle kunna förbättra tjänster till de här användarna?
17. Utifrån din erfarenhet, tycker du att internationella studenter har andra typer av problem i biblioteket än svenska studenter?
Appendix B

Questions to the students:

General

1. How often do you go to the library?
2. What are the things you do in the library?
3. How did you get informed about them?
4. How does this library differ from your home university library?
5. How do you understand the rules and regulations of the library?

Physical

6. What do you think about the location of the library?
7. What do you think about the arrangements of different materials in the library? Do you have any problems in locating things?
8. Which parts of the library did you use the most?
9. What about finding a book: a certain title, a certain writer, do you know how the books are placed on the shelves?

Materials

10. What do you think about the ALBUM? How did you learn to use it? (Formal instruction, librarian demonstration, helps of another student, trying on your own)
11. What do you think about the library’s web site? (Easy to find information you are seeking or not, easy to understand)
14. What do you think about the classification system?
15. Are you satisfied with the resources in the library?
16. Did you always find the resources for your project?
17. What do you do if you can’t find something you need?

Staff assistance

18. Are you satisfied with the assistance you get in the library?
19. Can you think of anything that has discouraged you from asking a librarian for help?
20. How do you choose a librarian to ask for help?
21. Have you ever booked a librarian and what do you think of this service?
22. How could a librarian be more helpful to you in doing your project?
23. What do you think of “help them to help themselves”?

Emotional

24. Is there anything in the library that has made you anxious or frustrated in the past?
25. Have you ever had communication problems in the library?
26. Are you completely understood?
27. What do you experience as the most difficult in your academic work and to what extent has the library helped?
28. Do you ever avoid going to the library for some reason? (If yes, why)

Conclusion

29. Can you name some of the things you like best about the library?
30. If you could change anything about the library what and how would you change?