

38th National LOEX Conference

Bridging and Beyond: Developing Librarian Infrastructure

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Overview

The conference was held at the Hyatt Regency Dearborn, Dearborn, Michigan, April 29 – May 1, 2010. A reception was held Thursday evening and meals were provided on Friday and Saturday, allowing conferees an opportunity to learn more about each other and practices in other academic libraries. An overview of the conference and abstracts of the presentations are available at the LOEX 2010 website, <http://www.loexconference.org>. Choose “Program” from the menu on the left. Links to presentations and handouts are available if provided by the presenters.

Plenary Sessions

The plenary speaker on Friday morning, Dr. Brian P. Coppola¹, in his talk, “The Value of Teaching in Learning”, described the University of Michigan Chemistry program and how it grew over a ten to twelve year period. He described how groups of students collaborated in an “Honors” class producing a plan by which to teach other students chemistry concepts. All of this is based on the philosophy that a person pays attention differently if that person will have to explain or teach a concept, subject or provide information about a point of view expressed.

The title of the presentation of the plenary speaker, Dr. Hermina G.B. Angheliescu², on Saturday morning was “The I-Society: Challenges and Opportunities for Librarians in the E-World”. After laying the ground work for what “I” means (three things: Information; “I,” the first person pronoun; and an individual) Dr. Angheliescu discussed issues in librarianship inside and outside the United States. The points mentioned about librarianship in other countries were fascinating. She mentioned that in some places, there is distrust of the library, as in the past it presented propaganda; there was censorship: the “R” (as in Russia) volume of an encyclopedia would be removed as it presented an unflattering view of the country; patrons do not ask librarians for help; in academic libraries only those preparing research papers use Reference Services. Librarians represent themselves as “bibliographers” rather than librarians due to stigma attached to the profession in some countries. She ended with calling on librarians in the United States to help their colleagues in other countries, particularly those in Eastern Europe.

¹ Friday, April 30, 2010. Presenter: Dr. Brian P. Coppola, the Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, and Professor of Chemistry at the University of Michigan. See LOEX 2010 website for more details.

² Saturday, May 1, 2010. Presenter: Dr. Hermina G.B. Angheliescu serves as a consultant to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for projects involving providing free Internet access in public libraries in Romania and other Eastern European countries. See the LOEX 2010 website for more details.

Concurrent Sessions Attended

LOLcats and Celebrities and (Red Panda) Bears – Oh, My!³: The presenter, a library instructor, uses tabloids (to evaluate information), zoo animals such as red pandas to find information and the LOLcats website, to recap at the end of the session. She found these ploys help to grab the attention of students by using the unexpected and make instruction relevant to their world. This approach is used in a second class. Her premise is that it is more fun to teach as well as for students to learn if students are energized and engaged. I have to give this concept more thought and would have to practice on some of our library student assistants before trying this approach in a class!

Lecturing Isn't Learning: Liven Up Library Instruction with Active Learning⁴: I attended this session in search of more suggestions for activities to enhance instruction by engaging students. The presenter reviewed the phases of instructional planning and learning styles then provided strategies such as “Success Stories”, “Quiz Me”, and “Concentration” and steps to implement the strategies presented.

A Picture is Worth 150 Words: Using Wordle in Library Instruction⁵: This presentation offered a fun way to enhance and assess student learning in an instruction session by asking students to produce word clouds about points presented during an instruction session. The word clouds are produced through a free online resource, Wordle. A comparison can be made with the words the students use to the subjects covered in class. The participation of the librarians attending the session and their enthusiasm for using Wordle suggest that this is an avenue to pursue for inclusion in instruction sessions.

The Learning Cycle: Why Library Instruction Fails to Stick and What We Can Do About It⁶: This session started out with a twenty minute group activity in which some of the audience were “anthropologists” and other participants were a group being “studied”. There were three rules to follow: if you were wearing glasses, you could only respond to an anthropologist wearing glasses. If you were not wearing glasses, you could only respond to an “anthropologist” not wearing glasses. If the “anthropologist” smiled, you could say “yes” to a question, if the “anthropologist” did not smile when asking a question, the answer would be “no”. There was a great deal of frustration, annoyance,

³ Friday, April 30, 2010. Presenter: Mary T. Moser, Oxford College of Emory University

⁴ Friday, April 30, 2010. Presenter: La Ventra E. Danquah, Wayne State University

⁵ Friday, April 30, 2010. Presenters: Rhonda Hulsman and Kathleen Hanna, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)

⁶ Friday, April 30, 2010. Presenter: Eric Frierson, The University of Texas at Arlington

and confusion exhibited about the rules on the part of all the participants during the exercise. When the exercise was over, the presenter compared what participants felt with what students feel in a library instruction session. He reviewed the steps in the learning cycle and offered suggestions on getting to the core concept to be taught and suggested applying terminology later. Reviewing the PowerPoint will help in applying the concepts offered.

Strengthen Your Teaching Framework: Using Self-Assessment of Instruction as a Structural Support⁷: This session was absolutely excellent. In addition to looking for ways to enhance student learning, assessing one's performance in the classroom is important. The ACRL brochure *Standard for Proficiencies for Instruction Librarians and Coordinators: a Practical Guide* and a sample rubric for self-assessment covering presentation skills and promotion skills were distributed to participants. (A printable copy of the latter is also available on the ALA website.) The presenters talked quite candidly and enthusiastically about their experience using the rubric to assess and strengthen their skills after their instruction sessions. This appears to be a great tool. It will be used!

Linking Through LibGuides: Collaborating with Faculty through an Adaptable Teaching and Marketing Tool⁸: The presenters described their experience in using LibGuides. While they had been creating LibGuides since 2008, they were disappointed that the guides were not used more frequently. It was a challenge to reach the students. They found that collaborating with faculty to produce the guides was the key as the faculty had different objectives for providing information on a subject. With syllabi provided, they were able to key in on resources the faculty were using. They started with one faculty "friend" of the library to test this approach. It was successful. They expanded to providing tailored subject guides, and also created guides as an instructional tool for specific classes and prepared guides as workshop tools. They used them to cover three to five objectives in a research assignment with a "hands on" activity in instruction sessions. They noticed that classes flowed better and the faculty noticed a positive difference in the quality of resources used in papers.

It's All In What You Ask: Techniques for Enhancing Reflection and Learning in an Online Course⁹: In an online course, these presenters were tasked with how to teach the difficult subject of detecting bias. The presenters reflected on a better way to teach the subject. After conducting a literature review, they created a ten minute video in which they expanded on a mnemonic they developed to help students remember how to spot bias. They built an assignment with reflective prompts and evaluated the results, comparing answers from Fall 2008 to Fall 2009, and then tweaked the exercise based on those results.

⁷ Saturday, May 1, 2010. Presenters: Susan Avery, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Lora Smallman, Heartland Community College, and Courey Gruszauskas, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

⁸ Saturday, May 1, 2010. Presenters: Kimbel May and Anna Leyba Delgado, St. Philip's College

⁹ Saturday, May 1, 2010. Presenters: Karen Diaz and Nancy O'Hanlon, Ohio State University

Learning by Doing: Bridging Information Literacy Theory with Practice¹⁰: This presenter found a better way to provide library instruction for both the large number of students in First Year Orientation and for the librarians teaching many sessions of the same class. She collaborated with the First Year Orientation program coordinators to make the changes. She created four online modules (Getting Started, Finding Books, Finding Articles and Finding Quality Web Sites) as well as an introductory video. All were available in Blackboard. For each module, there was a PowerPoint presentation, a research guide and hand out, links to video tutorials and a four to five question assignment, which was graded. The questions were relevant to the production of an annotated bibliography required for First Year Orientation. She concluded with a survey which contained open ended questions. While the response rate was low, the comments were helpful. She talked about the grading process, which was tedious, and ways to deal with student questions about the modules and assignments. She will be working on streamlining all aspects of the program this summer. Presentation materials, etc. are available at http://web.me.com/mnmallon/Melissa_Mallon/Presentations.html. Given the time constraints we all have, this looks like a very promising approach.

Thank you, LIBRAS, for your continuing support!

¹⁰ Saturday, May 1, 2010: Presenter: Melissa Mallon, University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown