From the Chair & Vice-Chair

Veronica Arellano Douglas, Chair and Carrie Forbes, Vice-Chair

Fall 2021 may be another semester of uncertainty for many of us; however, as you navigate the challenges of HyFlex, virtual, and in-person teaching during these stressful times, we hope that you will find support and encouragement among your Instruction Section colleagues. As a completely virtual section, we offer a variety of ways to engage, recharge, and reflect on your teaching practices. Carrie and I would like to welcome you to our collaborative, inclusive community and also share some updates and news on the year ahead.

In 2018 ACRL added a Core Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) to its Plan for Excellence, with the goal of weaving EDI principles into all of the association’s programs and services. As part of this initiative, in December 2020/January 2021, the ACRL Board solicited feedback on the possibility of pausing all ACRL awards and ACRL section awards for FY22 so that ACRL and ACRL sections could re-examine all awards through an EDI lens. The IS Executive Committee voted to support this pause, and the ACRL Board approved this action at their Jan. 29, 2021 meeting. There is now an ACRL Awards Taskforce that is making recommendations to the ACRL Board on future awards processes.

As part of our commitment to this work, our IS Awards committees will be reflecting on each award’s purpose, criteria, and recipients through an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens. What are we awarding and why? What do we value? How is that reflected in the award’s criteria? What are the nominating processes like? Where are we receiving funding? We will stay in touch with the ACRL Awards Taskforce as we begin these discussions, and we welcome your feedback and input into this work, too.

We’d also like to welcome our new and returning IS Executive Committee Officers. Our newest members-at-large are Ryne Leuzinger (Cal State Monterey Bay), Clarence Maybee (Purdue University), and Amanda Nichols Hess (Oakland University). They join returning members-at-large Sara Holder (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), Sara Scheib (University of Iowa), and Donna Witeck (University of Scranton). Our new Secretary is Ernesto Hernandez (Weber State University). Karen Doster-Greenleaf (Kennesaw State University) is returning as IS Archivist, and Nikhat Ghouse (American University) will continue to share her knowledge with us as Past-Chair of the Section.

Due to some technical issues with the ALA web server, the Instruction Section website was not usable for a good portion of last year. We are pleased to say that things are now back up and running, and we are actively working on updating content and information! The IS website contains tools and resources related to pedagogy, technology, higher education, and professional development as well as the latest news from IS committees and task forces. You can also find an archive of past webinars sponsored by the Section.

We wish you all a safe, healthy, and productive fall! If you have ideas for new initiatives, processes, or anything else related to the Instruction Section, please get in touch with one or both of us: Chair, Veronica Arellano Douglas (University of Houston), varellano@gmail.com and Vice-Chair, Carrie Forbes (University of Denver), carrie.forbes@du.edu.

ICYMI

The Virtual Engagement Committee created “Best Practices for Hosting Virtual Events,” a comprehensive guide detailing everything you (or your IS committee) need to know about hosting webinars, Twitter chats, and more! See: https://bit.ly/ACRLISVECbest
Tips for Teaching in an Active Learning Classroom (ALC)

Submitted by Rachel Edford, Instruction & Engagement Librarian, University of Central Florida Libraries

As part of the 21st Century Library Project at the University of Central Florida, a new active learning classroom (ALC) was added to the John C. Hitt Library in 2020. However, due to the pandemic, the room was not available for in-person classes until the summer of 2021. As an instruction librarian with no prior active learning classroom experience, I sought out training opportunities and turned to the professional literature for assistance.

In September of 2019, I attended an active learning training provided by our Faculty Center for Teaching, which included a session in an active learning classroom on campus and offered a list of resources. The University of Minnesota’s Center for Education Innovation site on “Teaching in an Active Learning Classroom” proved to be particularly useful. While sitting in the classroom during the training, one challenge I noticed was the lack of a focal point for both students, who might not know where to look, and for the instructor, who might be unsure of where to stand. I learned that instructors can address this issue by designating a focal point through using a podium or a central screen (Center for Educational Innovation, University of Minnesota 2021).

This advice proved useful in our library space, which includes five screens positioned on the walls around the room with seating in front of the screens. Four monitors have a wireless keyboard and mouse for student use, while the fifth is controlled by a desktop computer (photo 1, courtesy Rachel Edford).

When we first taught in the room during the summer, instructors would use the desktop computer when giving presentations. This location meant that their backs were facing the students and they were unable to move around the classroom. To solve this problem, we purchased a wireless device to advance slides as suggested by the University of Minnesota’s site. We also added a mobile lectern with a wireless keyboard and mouse, which provided a clear focal point and allowed the instructor to move around easily (photo 2).

At the beginning of instruction sessions, I have found it helpful to talk about the room design, since most students haven't had experience being in an ALC, and to explain how the space will be used during the session. In my experience, the ALC space has made it easier to facilitate group work. Students don't have to move their chairs or awkwardly turn to face their group members, as when sitting in traditional rows. It is also much easier, as an instructor, to interact with the students. However, as with any in-class activity, it is still important to give students clear instructions to help them stay on task (Center for Educational Innovation, University of Minnesota 2021).

While there isn't a wealth of information in the LIS literature about teaching in ALCs to assist librarians teaching in these spaces for the first time, many faculty centers offer helpful training and provide practical suggestions on their websites, which can certainly be applied to library instruction.

References

Reflections on Winning the 2020 Instruction Section Rockman Award

By Amanda Folk, Head, Teaching & Learning, The Ohio State University

Winning the Rockman Award was a total shock and is a highlight of my professional career. I did not know that my article was even being considered for the award. When I received the email from Dr. Clarence Maybee about the award, I assumed it was the public announcement of the 2020 winner.

My article "Reframing Information Literacy As Academic Cultural Capital" was five years in the making. In my last semester of courses as a PhD student at the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Education, I took a course called Foundations of Higher Education with my advisor, Dr. Linda DeAngelio. During that class I was wrestling with how I wanted to frame and scope my dissertation research (and the comprehensive exams that would precede the dissertation), and I had all of these theories floating around in my head. At the same time, I was working closely with undergraduate students at one of Pitt’s regional campuses, a campus that attracted a lot of first-generation students. I had seen potential connections between information literacy and cultural capital while doing this work, in that many faculty expected students to have developed their information literacy before college. However, students had a variety of preparatory experiences during high school, and I witnessed as many of them struggled with what seemed like a hidden curriculum.

I began to reflect on how this intersected with the recent shift away from a skills-based conceptualization of information literacy to a focus on threshold concepts, dispositions, and knowledge practices, and what this could or should mean for librarians with teaching responsibilities. I decided to start putting all of these strands of thinking together for the final paper in the Foundations course. That paper received the lowest grade I had gotten throughout my doctoral coursework – not because the connections I wanted to make did not have merit, but because they were all still jumbled in my head. I was fortunate to have an incredibly supportive advisor, one who was deeply invested in my dissertation research exploring first-generation students’ experiences with research assignments to gain some insight into how this student population navigates a potentially hidden curriculum. As I refined my conceptual model and conducted the research for my dissertation with her mentorship, I was able to articulate more clearly how I was putting together these previously disparate theories and concepts and apply them to the practice of librarianship.

Winning this award is such an honor for several reasons. In any given year, there are so many excellent publications about information literacy and/or libraries’ contributions to teaching and learning. I know that the committee must have an impossibly difficult task in making this decision. I know that an important piece of scholarship for me that was published in the same year and would have been deserving of the award was Michelle Reale’s book Inquiry and Research: A Relational Approach in the Classroom. Furthermore, as I scroll through the list of previous recipients, they are colleagues who have made (and continue to make) substantial contributions and significant impact on our profession both in terms of scholarship and practice. Indeed, I have cited many of the previous winners in my own research!

I would like to thank the committee and the Instruction Section for this incredible honor, as well as Carrick Enterprises for supporting the award. Every time I walk into my home office and see the plaque on my bookshelf, I still have to pinch myself to be sure that it is real!

Amanda Folk with plaque. Photo courtesy Amanda Folk.
From Learner to Contributor: A Webinar on Navigating the Framework Sandbox

Submitted by Kari D. Weaver, Alicia Vaandering, and Jane Hammons. Instruction Section Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox Committee

In April, the Promotion, Outreach, and User Education Subcommittee of the Instruction Section Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox Committee hosted a webinar to increase awareness of the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox resources and encourage more librarians to contribute teaching materials. This resource is currently the only open collection of teaching resources, professional development content, and curricular materials focused on and organized around the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. Participants in the webinar spent time exploring existing available resources and connecting with colleagues about teaching with the ACRL Framework. They were then introduced to a newly created infographic, which outlines the process of adding instructional content to the site, and encouraged to upload materials during the webinar. Over fifty participants attended the live webinar, and a recording is available for those with an interest who were unable to attend.

As a result of the webinar, a range of new resources have been added to the Sandbox, including an infographic on Cognitive Bias and Information Practices and an Antiracism LibGuide. IS members are encouraged to sign up for accounts, contribute resources to the Sandbox, and use the available materials to inspire and enhance their teaching practice. Those interested in contributing may also consider hosting an upload-a-thon at your institution or at a conference, during which small groups come together to upload new resources to the Sandbox at the same time. This could be a fun way to share the resources being developed at your institution and connect with other instructors.

By contributing to the Sandbox, either individually or as part of an upload-a-thon, you will be helping to build a repository of resources that will benefit all who are interested in teaching the Framework.

Get Your Voting Fingers Ready!

The 2022 Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the slate for the next round of IS elections:

Vice-Chair/Chair (3-year term)
- Amanda Click
- Nicole Pagowsky

Member-at-Large (2-year term)
- Symphony Bruce
- Alexandria Chisholm
- Brittany Paloma Fiedler
- Jane Hammons

Secretary/Archivist (2-year term)
- Megan Hodge
- Lalitha Nataraj

Elections will take place in March 2021. I want to thank Bill Marino, Kristy Nowak, and Lauren Wahman for all their thoughtful work throughout this process. Thank you to everyone who submitted nominations, and many thanks to our candidates for agreeing to run for office!

Meghan Sitar, 2022 Nominating Committee, Chair

ICYMI

The IS Teaching Methods Committee updated its Selected Resources lists for 2020. Visit the IS-TM webpage to learn more and check out the Instructional Design and Assessment lists in Zotero.
Research & Scholarship Resources

New to research or working to stay current in the areas of instruction and information literacy? The Research & Scholarship Committee of ACRL’s Instruction Section publishes these excellent resources. Take a look!

Research Agenda for Library Instruction and Information Literacy
Important research questions related to instruction in academic libraries. Great for brainstorming your next article.

5 Things: Learning About Trauma-responsive Pedagogy
Short reading lists designed to instruct and educate on topics relevant to library instruction today.

Research Agenda Conversations
Conversations with leading scholars in the field of information literacy research.

A Selective List of Journals on Teaching and Learning Venues for publishing your research outside of the library and information science field.

For questions or feedback on any of these resources, please contact Ann Agee (ann.agee@sjsu.edu), Chair Research and Scholarship Committee.

New From ACRL

ACRL publishes a range of books to assist academic librarians in developing their professional careers, managing their institutions, and increasing their awareness of developments in librarianship. ACRL books provide timely, thought-provoking, and practical content and research to academic and research librarians worldwide. Some recent titles include:

- Mind, Motivation, and Meaningful Learning: Strategies for Teaching Adult Learners
- Envisioning the Framework: A Graphic Guide to Information Literacy (ACRL Publications in Librarianship No. 77)
- Teaching About Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences
- Stories of Open: Opening Peer Review through Narrative Inquiry (ACRL Publications in Librarianship No. 76)
- The Teaching with Primary Sources Cookbook

Interested in writing for ACRL? Contact Erin Nevius, ACRL’s Content Strategist, at enevius@ala.org for more information, or visit Publish Your Book with ACRL to learn more about our book publishing program and submit a proposal.

Disclaimers: Opinions published in the newsletter are those of the submitters and should not be assumed to reflect the opinions of the editors or of the Instruction Section.