From the Chair & Vice-Chair

Carrie Forbes, Chair and
Nicole Pagowsky, Vice-Chair

Many of our communities have moved into fall semester with plans for a full return of in-person activities, events, and teaching. Although some of us are eager to return to life as it was before the pandemic, it’s also important to acknowledge the confusion, anxiety, and frustrations many of us and our colleagues may still be experiencing. As a completely virtual Section, Nicole and I hope you find our community to be a place to connect, learn, and grow as well as a place to find support and encouragement. As we move into the new academic year, we welcome you to the Instruction Section and encourage you to explore our programming and resources.

The Instruction Section is a valuable organization thanks to the hard work of our many officers, chairs, vice chairs, and committee members. We’d like to welcome our new and returning IS Executive Committee Officers. Our newest members-at-large are Symphony Bruce (New York University), Alexandria Chisholm (Penn State Berks), and Brittany Paloma Fiedler (University of Nevada, Las Vegas). They join returning members-at-large Ryne Leuzinger (Cal State, Monterey Bay), Clarence Maybee (Purdue University), and Amanda Nichols Hess (Oakland University). Our new Secretary is Lalitha Nataraj (California State University, San Marcos). Ernesto Hernandez (Weber State University) is returning as IS Archivist, and Veronica Arellano Douglas (University of Houston) will continue to share her wisdom with us as Past-Chair of the section.

A group of ALA Emerging Leaders for 2022 completed an Inclusive Pedagogy Toolkit on behalf of the ACRL Instruction Section. The American Library Association (ALA) Emerging Leaders (EL) program is a leadership development program which enables newer library workers from across the country to participate in problem-solving work groups, network with peers, gain an inside look into ALA structure, and have an opportunity to serve the profession in a leadership capacity. Their toolkit adds to the valuable instructional resources provided by the Instruction Section and includes links, readings, videos, and more on inclusive pedagogy practices, anti-racism resources, tools for instruction, and self-care guides. The ALA Emerging Leaders group included as many open access materials as possible and intentionally centered the voices of scholars and librarians of color when choosing resources. We would like to thank Emerging Leaders Ramón García, Nadia M. Orozco-Sahi, Alexandra Howard, Danica E. White, and Marikit Fain for sharing their time, talent, and expertise in creating the toolkit and we look forward to integrating this new resource throughout the work of the Instruction Section.

As we have noted in previous newsletters, the ACRL Board has paused all ACRL section awards for the time being to figure out the best way to implement recommendations made by a previous task force. The ACRL Awards Process Implementation Task Force is in the process of being formed and will be responsible for making specific, implementable recommendations for streamlining the ACRL awards process. The three IS awards committees are currently on hiatus while this work is underway and the IS Executive Committee will remain in communication with ACRL to provide feedback and receive updates.

We are pleased to announce that Christine Fena has been selected as the ACRL representative to the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) for both the Instruction Section and the Literatures in English Section. Christine is the Undergraduate Success Librarian at Stony Brook University, and the library liaison to the Program in Writing & Rhetoric and the English Department. In addition to regularly teaching library instruction sessions, she has taught a variety of credit-bearing courses, including in the Program in Writing and Rhetoric. She holds degrees in musicology as well as...
LIS, and her current research interests include topics related to information literacy instruction and information behavior. As the ACRL liaison to CCCC, she will collaborate with members of CCCC and share ideas and reports with both IS and LES.

Nicole and I wish you all a fall filled with support, learning, and fun! 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, Carrie Forbes (Southern Oregon University), forbesc@sou.edu; and Nicole Pagowsky (University of Arizona), nfp@arizona.edu.

Are You Resisting Overcommitment?

Highlights from the Instruction Section Virtual Discussion on June 15, 2022. Submitted by Malina Thiede on behalf of the Instruction Section Virtual Engagement Committee

Many aspects of library work can lead library workers--and instruction librarians in particular--to accept every request that comes to them, leading them to become overcommitted to projects and roles that may not suit them. Overcommitment can lead library workers to become stretched too thin, which can negatively affect both their work and personal lives. To help library workers understand and navigate the problem of overcommitment, Katrina Spencer, the librarian for African American and African Studies at the University of Virginia, gave a talk and facilitated a discussion about her article entitled The Comprehensive Guide to Resisting Overcommitment at the ACRL Instruction Section Virtual Engagement Committee Discussion Forum on June 15, 2022.

To illustrate the problem of overcommitment, Spencer shared her own experiences of becoming overcommitted. She then explained how she learned to manage her resources and her responses to service requests to better fit her goals. Spencer took a position at an institution that had a strong culture of engagement in and out of the classroom, and, as a result, she was often invited to participate in student events outside of working hours. Because she had no practice of taking breaks or setting boundaries for herself, she would reflexively accept every request. Eventually, she became stretched too thin and responded in a negative way to a request to give a speech with a short timeline from a student group that she really valued and with whom she wanted to engage.

This experience led Spencer to explore ways to avoid such overcommitment in the future and to examine the root causes of such overcommitment among library workers. Capitalism, feelings of guilt, gendered expectations of service, veneration of self-sacrifice, and desires to feel valued are among some intrinsic and extrinsic factors that lead many librarians to say yes to all requests. Instruction librarians in particular tend to work across many areas of the library and campus which can leave them vulnerable to overcommitment.

Spencer has developed an arsenal of alternative responses that fall between yes and no which can allow one to decline a request or to accept it with additional conditions. Some of these responses include “I can attend your event, but I can’t prepare a speech on this timeline.” “Please sign me up for next year.” and “Maybe I can attend one of your meetings this semester, so I have more time to prepare.” She advises taking a long pause before responding to a request and to not respond when one is feeling triggered. Doing these things has helped Spencer to learn the right reasons to say yes to requests instead of saying yes as a knee-jerk reaction. Doing these things has helped Spencer to learn the right reasons to say yes to requests instead of saying yes as a knee-jerk reaction. It has also allowed her to name how she would like to be involved in a project or with a group. The awareness of the problem and her repertoire of responses have allowed her to leave space for work that aligns with her own goals and desires.

A full recording of this presentation and discussion is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4SnVHwoOh8

Shifting from Reactive to Proactive: Accessibility Review and Revision Project

Submitted by Donovan Frazier, the Curriculum Development Student Assistant at the University of California, Riverside. Another version of this article was published in C&RL News Magazine by ALA.

Our library’s Teaching and Learning Services Department at the University of California, Riverside frequently uses digital learning objects to help reach a wider student base than we can reach in a traditional library classroom. I'm an undergraduate student worker and began working for the Teaching and Learning
department in August 2021 as a Curriculum Development Student Assistant. This means I share creative freedom with the teaching librarians in updating and developing interactive, online tutorials or digital learning objects (DLOs) made using Articulate 360 software. We embed these DLOs in course Blackboard and Canvas sites for undergraduate students, my peers. This past winter, I was charged with assessing whether or not our older existing DLOs met accessibility standards, something that had not previously been systematically tracked or addressed. We designed a system for reviewing accessibility across multiple modules that we will use going forward. The process described in this article may be useful for anyone interested in finding ways to check if their DLOs meet current accessibility standards.

I began by researching accessibility standards, referring to the resources cited by our software vendor, Articulate 360, namely W3C Accessibility Standards.¹ I compiled 16 relevant requirements on one axis of a spreadsheet and the target digital learning objects on the other axis (See Appendix for the full list). These 16 standards address vision, motor, audio, cognitive, and linguistic needs such as making sure there are always multiple modes of obtaining information through voice instruction, images, and text. Some standards were not applicable to our DLOs, such as those around timed quizzes and activities.

The spreadsheet I designed (see fig. 1) allows our team to have a visual framework to see exactly which standards are met or unmet by each DLO. If a particular standard wasn't met, it was colored yellow to mean a light edit was needed or red to mean a heavy edit was needed.

All the cells of the spreadsheet that had a missing standard were used to create a list of concrete tasks for revision to address any correctable issues. For example, videos in one of the modules were missing closed captions and marked as red. The task was then to generate captions for the video in that module and ensure their accuracy. I collaborated with librarians to make decisions about more significant changes, and the librarians provided quality control for edits and updates.

This systematic process ensured that all relevant standards were met across all of our DLOs. Focusing on each standard at a time gave dedicated attention to those functions. The Accessibility Review & Revision project took about two months to complete across all of our tutorials. We now have a list of standards that can be used during the design process of future DLOs which will greatly improve accessibility for all our students. For everyone who is looking to review their DLOs, I hope this method can be adapted to the needs of other libraries.

Appendix:

The 16 standards our team used:
1. Accessibility Options
2. Alt Text
3. Image Descriptions
4. Video Descriptions
5. Check Contrast
6. Epilepsy Check
7. Closed Captions
8. Transcripts
9. Icons
10. Keyboard Control
11. Autoplay Off
12. Estimated Completion Time
13. Clear Direction
14. Link Descriptions
15. Font Clarity
16. Color Blindness

References

Exploring and Engaging with the ACRL Framework Sandbox

Submitted by Jane Hammons, Renee Kiner, and Elizabeth Kamper on behalf of the Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox IS Committee.

Last April, the Promotion, Outreach, and User Education (PROMO) Subcommittee of the Instruction Section Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox Committee hosted two webinars to increase awareness and engagement with the ACRL Framework Sandbox. The Sandbox is an open repository that allows for searching and contributing resources centered around teaching information literacy, including lesson plans, activities, presentations, and other types of curricular and professional development resources. The Sandbox provides a place where librarians from all types of institutions can share their learning materials and find ideas and resources to support their teaching practices.

Participants in the first webinar, "Introduction to the ACRL Framework Sandbox," learned about the wide range of types of resources available in the Sandbox, reviewed several featured resources, and explored the Sandbox to locate resources of interest. Eighty-four participants attended the webinar.

In the second webinar, "Engaging with the ACRL Framework Sandbox," participants learned how they can use the Sandbox to identify potential collaborators and use the Sandbox to support their promotion and tenure efforts by demonstrating their contributions to the profession. Participants also learned best practices for uploading resources and had the opportunity to upload their own resource. Forty-two participants attended the webinar.

Instruction section members who are interested in viewing the webinar recordings can access them here: Introduction to the ACRL Framework Sandbox and Engaging with the ACRL Framework Sandbox.

Both new and returning members of the Instruction Section are encouraged to explore the Sandbox to locate interesting and relevant teaching resources. We also encourage members to contribute your instructional resources. In doing so, you can build a repository of your materials and contribute to the profession by advancing teaching practices related to the Framework and information literacy. You have expertise and resources that may benefit others. The Sandbox is a great option for you to share your great ideas with other librarians.

ICYMI

The Information Gathering & Exchange Committee’s charge has been recently updated, following approval by ACRL IS Exec, to allow for the committee to explore ways to implement more agile surveys for the ACRL IS Community. The updated charge can be found here: https://acrl.ala.org/IS/is-committees-2/committees-task-forces/information-gathering/

One of the significant changes in our charge is an adjustment in the distribution of the survey. Instead of doing one survey per year for all membership that includes broad questions, as well as questions tied to specific committees, we are shifting to a new model where we will do up to two agile surveys per year for interested committees, and one general, biennial survey of all membership.

We are currently designing the supporting documents to be able to complete a more agile survey focused on committee needs in the spring. Information about this will be forthcoming, so stay tuned! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact IS IGE Committee Chair, Sarah Simms, or Vice-Chair, Ruth Boeder, via ALA Connect.
Get Your Voting Finger Ready!

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

Vice-Chair/Chair (3-year term)
Kirsten Feist
Piper Martin

Member-at-Large (2-year term) we will be electing three
Kristin E. C. Green
Julie Hornick
Maoria Kirker
Evelyn Ugwu-George

Secretary/Archivist (2-year term)
Elise Ferer
Matthew Weirick Johnson

Elections will be held mid-March 2023 and results announced mid-April 2023. Many thanks to the members of this year’s Nominating Committee: Cynthia Keller, Caroline Sinkinson, Meredith Knoff, and Ben Oberdick. Thanks also to everyone who submitted nominations and especially to our candidates who agreed to run for office.

Susanna Eng-Ziskin, 2023 Nominating Committee, Chair

Escape Room Orientation

Submitted by Leslie Drost, First-Year Experience Librarian, Kennesaw State University

After multiple semesters of fully virtual interactions with new students at Kennesaw State University, I was charged with developing a new face-to-face orientation for the incoming freshmen for fall 2021. I designed an orientation escape room for students to interact with a librarian, library services, and library resources to increase their knowledge of the library.

In The Old Curiosity Shop Escape Room, students engage in active learning with physical and digital resources to solve puzzles related to the library. Students gain knowledge of important library services, such as research appointments and the study rooms, and discover new-to-them resources, like individual databases and anatomy models.

I designed clues and puzzles to steer students into interacting with the library website by searching for clues in the databases, the catalog, and the service portals. For example, the students search for an article inside a specific database to gain clues to open an alphanumeric lock. In addition to clues contained on the library website, I also designed hands-on puzzles, such as a jigsaw puzzle. After putting together the jigsaw puzzle that has a picture of a book cover with one word of the title covered, the students are directed to the catalog to discover the missing word to open a letter lock.

Red herrings in the form of information covering librarian support, the Writing Center, and the university’s tutoring center are strewn around the room for accidental knowledge transfer.

This semester, which was the third iteration of the escape rooms, saw continued learning and satisfaction with the game. Throughout all semesters, the students took part in a pre and post-test to gauge their knowledge of the library and how this knowledge expanded after participating. In the first pretest question, which asked how librarians support students, the students predominantly spoke of general-knowledge support actions, such as finding books and articles. During the post-test, the teams more often noted support actions that are less known, such as chat help, research appointments, finding keywords, and help with research questions. For the second post-test question about the library’s resources, students noted that the librarians were resources, and the mechanisms by which they could be accessed, in addition to the expected answers of books, databases, and other resources. Many students responded to the final question in the pre-test, which asked how the library supports their academic careers, with confusion. After they participated in the escape room, they were no longer confused and answered this final question with the services and resources that the library offers.
Each semester the students have indicated increasing satisfaction with the game. I have revised the puzzles and added others based on feedback from the satisfaction survey after each semester. Overall, the escape room activity succeeded in introducing first-year students to the library’s services and resources.

**Benchmark**

Benchmark is the newest tool for data-driven planning and advocacy in academic libraries. Launched by ACRL in late 2021, Benchmark provides enhanced access to ACRL annual survey data from 1998-2020. With Benchmark, you can illustrate ongoing activities and usage in a compelling fashion for different audiences, as well as generate key metrics for strategic planning, budget justifications, annual reports, fundraising, and more! Benchmark is also where you can contribute your library’s data to national surveys to further research and advocacy. Login to your free account today to complete the 2022 Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey, which includes trends questions on the topic of post-Covid library service and workplace trends!

**ACRL 2023, Forging the Future, March 15 – 18, 2023, Pittsburgh, PA**

Higher education has changed dramatically over the last few years. Academic libraries are addressing an increased emphasis on remote learning, rising calls for social justice, and an acknowledged need for flexibility that supports a sustainable work-life balance. At ACRL 2023, we will explore these issues and more around the theme of Forging the Future. If you are interested in finding strength in a community of academic library professionals, discussing our mutual issues while crafting innovative ways to solve them, enhancing relationships with faculty, and re-engaging with students, we welcome you to join us in Pittsburgh or virtually! Registration opens in October, and proposals for select session types are being accepted through October 14, 2022. See the ACRL 2023 Conference Website for details.

Disclaimer: 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.