From the Chair/Vice-Chair

For many of us, fall is both a beginning and an ending, and a time to start reflecting while sipping our Pumpkin Spice Lattes, or other autumnal beverage of choice. It’s both the start of fall instruction and the closing of the calendar year. For most instruction librarians, fall is the beginning of the busiest time of year, as requests for instruction steadily arrive in our inboxes. As we ramp up the start of our new instructional year, Nikhat and I have been reflecting and wanted to share with you some recent changes within the Instruction Section.

We are delighted to tell you about one of our new committees this year - the Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox Committee. Created and launched in 2016, the ACRL Sandbox was developed by a team of ACRL Framework for Information Literacy Advisory Board members including Sharon Mader (winner of the 2018 Miriam Dudley Instruction Librarian Award), Donna Witek, and Susan Miller, with help from other members of the Framework Advisory Board, and members of the ACRL Student Learning and Information Literacy Committee. As of July 1, 2019, the Sandbox Committee officially resides within the Instruction Section.

Donna Witek is the inaugural chair of the committee, and their charge is: “To maintain, assess, develop, and promote the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox website as ACRL’s primary platform and repository for sharing and discovering information literacy teaching and learning resources in all formats, providing access to materials created by librarians in the field. This committee is responsible for the vision and growth of the Sandbox as an integral resource for those who teach information literacy.” We are grateful to have Donna join us as Chair and think that bringing the Sandbox to the Instruction Section is a natural fit. Our membership has a wealth of knowledge and experience with the Framework already, and we can provide continuity to ensure its growth in the future. While we had a separate call out this Spring for volunteers for this committee (and we were overwhelmed, in a positive way, by more than 100 volunteers), in the coming year volunteers will be appointed through the usual committee appointment process.

We have three other new committees this year, though the work they are doing continues the work of a previous committee. We made the decision to split our Awards Committee into three separate committees: the Miriam Dudley Instruction Librarian Award Committee, the Innovation Award Committee, and the Ilene F. Rockman Publication of the Year Award Committee. Separating these out creates a more manageable workload for our volunteers and also creates additional volunteer opportunities for our members. If you’re interested in joining the Sandbox Committee, one of our Awards Committees, or any of our other committees, please look for our call for volunteers in late fall. We could not do all that we do as a Section without our members.

Speaking of the work our members do, this year our committees hosted six online webinars on a variety of topics including leadership, assessment, and social justice, which you can view on our Archived Webinars page. All our webinars are free, whether you join them live or watch them after the fact.

Finally, this past year, we sponsored a group of Emerging Leaders to give us ideas for how to engage with and recruit library school students and recent graduates in a meaningful way in our new all virtual environment. It was a pleasure working with our Emerging Leaders (Sabrina Dyck, Karna Younger, Ted Quiballo, and Phillip Shackleford), and we will be implementing some of their ideas, including a New Members page that will make it easier for new members to get involved and engaged with the Section.

We look forward to seeing what this year brings and to working with you. 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, Susanna Eng-Ziskin, susanna.eng@csun.edu and Vice-Chair, Nikhat Ghouse, ghouse@american.edu.
Engaging Transfer Students

Submitted by Annie Dempsey, Learner Experience Librarian, The College of Wooster

On many campuses, first-year students participate in library instruction and orientations as librarians work to make sure that students acclimating to college know how to use library resources and think critically about information. A concern on many librarians’ minds might be the transfer student who missed these critical opportunities.

Transfer students, as they work to adjust to a new academic environment, might be overwhelmed with the amount of new information, places, people, and services they experience at the beginning of the year. At The College of Wooster, a small liberal arts college, the transfer population is small but diverse in experience. The Libraries had not recently done specific outreach to our new transfer students. So how could the Libraries best engage with them?

Our response was to design a workshop that did two things: took a strengths-based approach and involved peer mentors. Heinbach et al. (2019) point out that much of the literature on transfer students has taken a deficit model: that these students are lagging behind and are missing something. But transfer students, although they might not have been present for much of our first-year instruction and outreach, have a wealth of experience with public and K-12 libraries, with the librarians and libraries of their previous institutions, and with research in their own personal lives. Drawing on these experiences and working in partnership with staff in our academic and career support center, we designed a workshop that asked students to draw on their experiences and knowledge with research and libraries in the past and apply it to the unique resources and people at The College of Wooster. By comparing and contrasting how the library might be similar or new to them, students realized that they already had many of the tools necessary to take advantage of everything the library has to offer.

Transfer students at The College of Wooster were also assigned a peer mentor. These peer mentors were invited and encouraged to attend and participate in the workshops for transfer students. As a result, often the peer mentors learned new information about the library for their own purposes and to share with their future mentees. The peer mentors were also able to engage in some peer teaching, describing certain library services from their own experiences and sharing why they had been helpful. The result was a collaborative workshop that met transfer students where they were and helped make the information shared immediately relevant.

References


Nominations Sought for Ilene F. Rockman Publication of the Year Award

Full eligibility and submission guidelines

Submission deadline: December 6, 2019

Award: Plaque and $1,000 prize sponsored by Carrick Enterprises

This award honors the late Dr. Ilene F. Rockman, a nationally recognized leader in the field of IL. The Rockman Award acknowledges an outstanding article or book on instruction or information literacy in an academic library environment published within the last two years.

Publications are judged on the basis of their relevance to the field of instruction in academic or research libraries, originality, timeliness, and quality of writing.

Nominations for the award must include a complete citation, letter of support explaining how the publication meets the award criteria, and (when possible) a copy of the publication.

Read an interview with Stefanie R. Bluemle, the 2019 Rockman recipient.

Please send your questions and submissions to Clarence Maybee at cmaybe@purdue.edu.
Students as Information Creators: Visual Literacy and Primary Data

Submitted by Stella Herzig, Reference and Instruction Librarian, St. Ambrose University

First-year students often have the hardest time with assignments that require them to utilize data to support or challenge an argument. Students often rely on statistics found in secondary web pages and lift them wholesale while their professors would prefer that they go to the original source of the data.

I developed an in-class activity to teach more nuance in the use of primary data and to address some of the dispositions from the Information Creation as a Process frame, especially, “help students understand that different methods of information dissemination with different purposes are available for their use” (ACRL 2015). The activity introduces both an excellent source of primary data, American Fact Finder, and a free web application, Infogram.com. Students enter their own hometown zip code into American Fact Finder and get the Educational Attainment dataset. They download it into an Excel or Google Sheet and then, within a blank template in Infogram, enter the data and label it. In the process, they learn how to create a colorful infographic that details not only the educational attainment levels of their home zip code, but also the associated median wages. I often hear wows and groans from the women in the class when they see the display of gender disparity in salaries among those with the same level of education. We discuss how the rural and urban differences of their zip code-based creations could lead to another research question to deepen their arguments.

These resources aid students in the production of an easily readable visual infographic that illustrates connections between data and a claim they might make in projects, papers, and presentations. The students become interpreters of interesting and informative datasets. As creators of statistical information, they learn how important design is in disseminating pertinent data. They no longer have to rely on whatever is available in the first two pages of search results from a web search. Students have come back to me relating how they used these skills in other classes to great success.

Time: 60 minutes. Required: Computers with internet access and Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets.

References


Five Things You Should Read About… Universal Design for Learning

The Research & Scholarship Committee announces a new edition of our Five Things You Should Read About… series focusing on Universal Design for Learning. This series suggests five resources to get started on an important instruction topic ranging from books to quicker resources like web tutorials and articles.

Suggest Speakers/Topics for 2020 Virtual Event

The IS Teaching Methods Committee requests your input on their Virtual Event!

Please use this survey to suggest speakers or topics. The event typically occurs mid-Spring (April/May). Past topics include critical race pedagogy, gendered labor and instruction, and assessment.
New to the Instruction Section! The Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox Committee

A new IS committee has been created to maintain, assess, develop, and promote the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox website. The Sandbox is ACRL’s primary platform and repository for sharing and discovering information literacy teaching and learning resources in all formats, providing access to materials created by librarians in the field. This new committee is responsible for the vision and growth of the Sandbox as an integral resource for those who teach information literacy.

The committee will focus on four main areas of the Sandbox:

- Site Administration and Maintenance - to administer and maintain the Sandbox site
- Assessment and Reporting - to meaningfully assess the Sandbox as a resource to professionals in the field
- Site Development and Improvement - to further develop and improve the site in response to user needs
- Promotion, Outreach, and User Education - to promote the Sandbox through outreach and user education to increase engagement with the site

We encourage you to explore the Sandbox, a place to discover ways to use the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education in instructional settings. Become a contributor and share your own activities and teaching resources related to the Framework. Feedback or suggestions about the Sandbox can be emailed to acrlsandbox@gmail.com.

- IS Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox Committee

Tips and Trends

Do you want to learn more about makerspaces in higher education?

Our Spring 2019 Tips and Trends article, Makerspaces in Academic Libraries by Carl Lehnen, explores the rise of these collaborative environments on campus, highlights the amenities offered at a handful of university library makerspaces, and discusses the potential hurdles in establishing and maintaining such a space.

Tips and Trends introduces and discusses new, emerging, or even familiar technologies that can be used in library instruction. To see previous Tips and Trends, visit the Instructional Technologies Committee webpage.

Nominations Sought for IS Innovation Award

Full eligibility and submission guidelines
Submission deadline: December 6, 2019
Award: $3,000 prize sponsored by EBSCO Information Services

The Innovation Award recognizes a project from the past two years that demonstrates creative, innovative, or unique approaches to information literacy instruction or programming. Past awards have recognized well-known programs and initiatives such as the WASSAIL Information Literacy Assessment Project, the Guide on the Side software, the New Literacies Alliance project, the 23 Framework Things, and the Undergrad Research and Writing Studio at Oregon State University.

Nominations must describe how the project meets the award criteria and should include a letter of support and documentation presenting the project’s purpose, content, impact, and innovative aspects.

Read an interview with the Undergrad Research and Writing Studio team, the 2019 Award winner.

Please send your questions and submissions to Sara Lowe at mlowe@iupui.edu.

Teaching Methods Committee

Selected Resources

The IS Teaching Methods Committee has updated its Selected Resources lists for 2019. Visit the committee’s page to learn more and find links to the teaching and assessment lists in Zotero.
Challenging Deficit Thinking in Academic Libraries: Ideas and Applications
Highlights from the IS Annual Virtual Discussion Forum on June 11, 2019. Submitted by Malina Thiede on behalf of the IS Discussion Group Steering Committee

Deficit thinking is present in any educational theory or pedagogical approach when the focus is on students’ supposed deficiencies as opposed to their contributions. Groups such as first generation, international, and transfer students are particularly vulnerable to being pathologized when viewed through a deficit mindset by instructors. Not fitting the mold of a “traditional” student can leave students feeling that they don’t belong. Instruction librarians are not immune to engaging in deficit thinking and need to consciously resist it to value the contributions and strengths of all types of students. On June 11, 2019, the IS Discussion Group Steering Committee hosted a panel exploring deficit thinking moderated by Eamon Tewell of Columbia University with panelists Yi Ding of California State University, Northridge; Chelsea Heinbach and Rosan Mitola of University of Nevada, Las Vegas; and Amy Pajewski of West Chester University of Pennsylvania.

The discussion began with panelists describing how deficit thinking manifests itself in library instruction. Biases, prejudices, and a lack of understanding of the contexts of historically marginalized students are some factors that feed into deficit thinking among librarians. The fact that 87 percent of librarians are white and hold different cultural assumptions from many students can also exacerbate these factors. Many LIS programs lack adequate pedagogical training, leaving librarians with few tools to deconstruct their cultural assumptions. The limitations of one-shot instruction also provide few opportunities to learn about students’ backgrounds.

Some different strategies and frameworks panelists have used to overcome these challenges include culturally responsive teaching, universal design for learning, asset-based pedagogy, funds of knowledge, critical pedagogy, open pedagogy, and mentoring programs. Specific changes panelists have made to counter deficit thinking include having students free write about their experiences as the foundation of a research project, collaborating with students on research, training student library workers to engage in peer coaching and co-teaching, and creating online modules that allow for different ways to engage with content. One panelist had hesitated to share her experiences as an English-language learner and international student but later realized that doing so allowed students to relate to her more easily.

Discussing barriers to implementing anti-deficit pedagogy and ways to overcome them, panelists again noted the limitations of the one-shot but stressed the importance of engaging in the student experience by getting involved in student activities on campus. Panelists also observed that there can be internal and external barriers which manifest from sources such as personal bias and institutional culture, respectively. Interrogating personal assumptions and involvement in campus-wide committees can help to break down these barriers. Other suggestions were to develop relationships with student library workers and actively interrupt negative talk among faculty about students.

To overcome deficit thinking, the key strategies are to confront personal biases and seek out opportunities to learn about students and center their experiences. For more information on this panel discussion see the discussion digest, the full recording of the panel, and #InfoLitNotDeficit on Twitter.

Nominations Sought for Miriam Dudley Instruction Librarian of the Year Award

Full award criteria and submission guidelines
Submission deadline: December 6, 2019
Award: Plaque and $1,000 prize sponsored by the Instruction Section
This award honors a librarian who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of instruction in a college or research library environment. Read the acceptance speech given by Megan Oakleaf, the 2019 Award winner.
Please send questions and submissions to Meghan Sitar at msitar@umich.edu.
Syracuse University Libraries Welcomes First Cohort of Information Literacy Scholars

Submitted by Kelly Delevan, Information Literacy Librarian, Syracuse University Libraries

In spring, 2018, I joined Syracuse University Libraries in the newly created role of Information Literacy Librarian. One of my charges was to "create an Information Literacy program as a part of the University’s pledge ‘to identify and develop a set of core competencies that give all students the critical skills that inform academic, personal, and professional success’" (Syracuse University Libraries 2018). Developing such a program requires a significant staffing commitment; one potential solution presented itself via a collaboration with the School of Information Studies. I pitched an idea for a program that would train iSchool students to assist in delivering information literacy instruction to a wider audience. The benefits of this program are two-fold: the Libraries can increase instruction staff necessary to meet their strategic goals for information literacy, and the iSchool is able to offer an experiential teacher training program that runs in tandem with their iSchool curriculum. Future academic librarians are able to gain “real world” work experience to complement their academic work, thus producing viable candidates for the workforce.

This semester, we welcomed the first cohort of Information Literacy Scholars to campus. IL Scholars are recipients of the Information Literacy in Academic Libraries Scholarship, which is awarded annually to students who are passionate about information literacy and interested in a career as an academic librarian. Information Literacy Scholars receive a 50 percent tuition award, 20 hours a week of paid employment during the academic year with Syracuse University Libraries, and mentoring by Syracuse University librarians with expertise in reference, information literacy instruction, and student learning assessment.

They also receive professional development support that will position them for entry-level career opportunities upon graduation. In their weekly work with me, scholars will learn about different pedagogical approaches to information literacy instruction through observations, co-teaching, and reflective praxis. They will also choose a topic surrounding information literacy in academia to research, with a possible poster presentation, article, or similar publication as an end result. Welcome, IL Scholars!

References


Get Your Voting Fingers Ready!

Here are our candidates for IS officers in the next ALA election:

Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, three-year term
● Maura Seale, University of Michigan
● Veronica Arellano Douglas, University of Houston

Secretary/Archivist, two-year term
● Maoria Kirker, George Mason University
● Karen Doster-Greenleaf, Georgia State University

Member-at-Large, two-year term (three openings)
● Donna Witek, University of Scranton
● Jorge Ricardo Lopez McKnight, Austin Community College, Riverside Campus
● Sara Sheib, University of Iowa
● Bill Marino, Eastern Michigan University
● Sara Holliday Holder, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Look for your ballot in March 2020.

~ IS Nominating Committee: Jennifer Knievel (Chair), Jessica Critten, and Brian Sullivan
Strategizing Framework Integration: A Reflection from the Engaging with ACRL Framework Workshop

Submitted by Grace Liu, Business Librarian, West Chester University

On March 18, 2019, Engaging with the ACRL Framework: A Catalyst for Exploring and Expanding Our Teaching Practices was held in Portland, Maine. I was fortunate to participate in this event. During the workshop, we collaboratively explored the challenges and opportunities in information literacy (IL) instruction. We repeatedly heard about the following challenges:

1. Getting faculty buy-in and balancing different expectations and demands among stakeholders.
2. Working in a one-shot environment, in which librarians have limited time with students, making it challenging to scaffold student’s learning.
3. Librarians having full schedules and needing resources and support to implement new approaches into their current practices.

The truth is none of these challenges can be solved by an individual librarian. Even though some librarians step up to meet these challenges, from an institutional perspective the practices cannot be sustainable until a systematic approach is developed. What could be a sustainable model for IL instruction that potentially addresses these challenges while at the same time helps students prepare for an ever-changing information society and participate ethically in communities of learning? The IL education as a reform movement will realize its potential only through offering a more dynamic and real-world information experience. Here are some of my initial thoughts and program ideas for IL Framework integration.

- Develop an experiential learning library session or integrate the Framework into departmental experiential learning classes. Experiential learning can immerse students in a rich and dynamic information environment, where more flexible concepts and agile strategies are needed to understand the situation and solve problems. One idea is to work with local news agencies or publishers to learn how information is gathered and disseminated and what are potential biases in the information creation process.
- Develop a problem-based learning session or course. One idea is to develop research sessions to tackle challenges that our community faces and encourage students’ learning through in-depth research to find solutions. Libraries can partner with community service providers and connect faculty, students, and research resources on campus to support stakeholders in making critical community decisions.
- Design a case study session and cultivate learning through inquiry. One idea would be to follow the news and design research or discussion sessions that encourage deeper critical thinking of a trending issue.
- Conduct curriculum mapping and fill IL gaps with library instruction. Librarians can offer IL sessions to complement what is offered in class and encourage faculty to offer extra credit for participation. If necessary, librarians can also design standalone research modules.
- Design research certificate programs. The market/business research certificate program has been developed by business librarians. Such programs can be embedded in a class as a mandatory or voluntary section. It can also be offered as required training for internships.

Strategic planning of the IL Framework integration is essential to adopt new program ideas. It can start with an environmental scan to understand current resources and constraints and the impact of new programs on related stakeholders, followed by a feasibility analysis, which evaluates what program ideas are practical based on current structure and resources. After the feasibility analysis, we can lay out long-term and short-term goals and objectives, align library resources with these goals, and define the roles of related stakeholders in advocating for IL Framework integration. If a Dean-level conversation is necessary to make the program more recognized, try to approach the Dean for support. If granular-level working groups for lesson plan/activity brainstorm meetings or faculty engagement workshops are needed, we can incorporate them into the strategic plan as well. Hopefully, a strategic and coordinated effort can level up the framework integration in library instruction.
Demystifying Online Instruction in Libraries: People, Process and Tools

If you’ve attended the workshops, read the theories, and are now ready to put instructional design practices to work but have some lingering questions about how to do so, check out the newly published book Demystifying Online Instruction in Libraries, People, Process and Tools by Dominique Turnbow and Amanda Roth. They tackle some of the unspoken aspects of bringing instructional design into the library, like the difference between instructional designers and instructional technologists and their respective skill sets. You’ll be introduced to a streamlined way of organizing your work, including ideas for documenting the unseen thought work that is part of the design process and be introduced to various development tools of the trade. More importantly, they provide “I.D. in Action” mini-case studies to provide you an inside look at how instructional design is done in an academic library.

Do you have something you’d like to promote on official IS social media channels? Send suggestions to: Mackenzie Salisbury, ssalis3@artic.edu

Call for ACRL Award Nominations

Submission deadline: December 6, 2019

Excellence in Academic Libraries Award
$3,000 and a plaque

Academic/Research Librarian of the Year
$5,000 and a plaque

Generously sponsored by GOBI Library Solutions from EBSCO

Announcing ACRL Liaison to the Conference on College Composition and Communication

The Instruction Section and Literatures in English Section is happy to announce the appointment of Dr. Kathy Anders to the position of ACRL Liaison to the Conference on College Composition and Communication. In this three-year appointment, Kathy will be responsible for outreach, education, and communication between the CCCC and ACRL in order to form strong relationships and advance the interests of ACRL, IS, and LES.

Kathy is an assistant professor and graduate studies librarian at Texas A&M University. Her research interests include the intersections of information literacy, writing studies, and scholarly communications. She enjoys interdisciplinary collaborations that bring together libraries and writing programs.

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

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