

## LIBRAS REPORT

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ACRL 2009: Pushing the Edge: Explore, Engage, Extend  
March 12-15, 2009

The ACRL Annual Conference in Seattle offered a wide variety of learning and networking opportunities. The conference began with an excellent keynote presentation by Rushworth Kidder, who gave a very dynamic presentation on ethical decision making. His argument that most of our ethical decisions are a choice of “right versus right” rather than “right versus wrong” was quite compelling, and his discussion of the current “ethical recession” was fascinating.

In addition to attending a number of panel and contributed paper presentations, as outlined below, I found the many poster session offerings to be quite good, and I came away with several ideas for further consideration. I also found the “Cyber Zed Shed” style of introducing attendees to brief, narrowly focused presentations on technology issues to be very helpful. I sat in on several of these offerings and again found food for thought for future implementation in my work.

As with previous ACRL conferences, I was pleased with the quality of the programs offered at this conference and look forward to future opportunities to attend. I am grateful of LIBRAS’ support.

### *Reinventing Research Guides: LibGuides at Two Academic Libraries*

LibGuides seemed to be the “hot topic” of the conference. This session gave a good overview of their usefulness not only to create research subject guides but for various other library applications as well. The presenters balanced the presentation of LibGuide capabilities with comments about what they have learned about their users’ expectations of these guides.

### *Reaching Public Service Excellence: Developing a Mystery Shopping Program to Measure Service Quality, Performance, and the Patron Experience at Library Service Desks*

This paper reported on a “mystery shopping” program used to evaluate reference services at two university libraries. Students were trained to be “mystery shoppers” and asked to rate the service they received from the reference department. Although there are marketing programs on our campus that I could envision eagerly taking on a project such as this, I have some ongoing reservations about utilizing this type of evaluation method and the ethical issues related to it.

### *What Really are Student Learning Outcomes?*

This session helped me better understand the difference between evaluation and assessment. It also helped clarify the need to look at “impact” rather than “satisfaction” in terms of library service to the campus community.

### *Using the READ Scale (Reference Effort Assessment Data): Capturing Qualitative Statistics for Meaningful Reference Assessment*

This was a very interesting discussion of the development of a 1-6 rating scale for recording reference transactions. The move away from hash marks that give equal credit for helping someone find a known

item in the collection and spending an hour helping someone explore their research topic has the potential to greatly improve reference statistics gathering.

*Creating Instruction “to go”: Maximizing Resources, Maximizing Impact*

Attendees learned not only the definition of “learning objects” but were given the opportunity to try their hand at the first steps in creating such objects. The presenters also discussed how to combine such objects into larger modules or tutorials. The emphasis was on learning objects that are not specific to any one product or resource.

*New Challenges: Multimedia Use and the Academy*

This session was useful in terms of better understanding the many copyright issues that multimedia users must still consider in academic institutions.

*If Fish Markets Can Do It, So Can We: Designing Memorable Library Experiences for Students and Faculty*

This panel did an excellent job of explaining the concepts of “user experience.” They stressed the value of the overall EXPERIENCE of our users and explained that even great resources could be heavily outweighed by a negative experience in accessing or using them. They gave excellent suggestions for ways to learn from our users about ways we can improve their experience of our libraries.