

**LOEX 2007 Conference, held May 3-5, 2007**  
*Uncharted Waters: Tapping the Depths of our Community to Enhance Learning*

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LOEX 2007 was held in San Diego, California at the Bahia Resort. This LOEX was sponsored by the Southern California Instruction Librarians, an interest group of the California Academic and Research Libraries consortium. I attended as a member of the planning committee for the 2008 conference, which will be held in Oakbrook. This was also my first LOEX conference, and so my impressions are based in part from that perspective.

The setting for the conference was beautiful. The Bahia Resort is right on Mission Bay and it was a treat to be able to attend many of the conference functions outside in the California weather. I also heard from Brad Seitz, LOEX director, that this conference broke previous attendance records, and included many librarians from the West Coast who have not attended the conference at past, more eastern, locations. Brad also said that this LOEX had more first-time attendees than usual, also likely a side effect of its location.

LOEX is a conference that focuses on Information Literacy instruction. It is a small conference, with around 300 attendees, or roughly 1/10<sup>th</sup> the attendance of the recent ACRL conference in Baltimore. The breakout sessions tend to be small and focused on a specific aspect of instruction. The sessions often involve a “show and tell” aspect, as librarians share programs or tools or initiatives that they have implemented and found successful.

It was very interesting to attend so many wonderful presentations about information literacy instruction. I attended 7 sessions over two days, on a variety of information literacy instruction topics. I will give brief descriptions of five, and more detailed descriptions of two that I found especially relevant.

Susan Ariew, of the University of South Florida, presented some Youtube videos that they are using as supplemental instruction tools. They have developed a character, “Richard Sly the Library Guy” (who was written up in *ALA Direct*), who shows students how to use library databases and teaches some plagiarism concepts. This presentation also addressed the ways that librarians can tap into the talents of students in coming up with innovative instruction tools. The two Richard Sly videos: “Databases” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nik3pyJwaYI>) and “The Chronicles of Libraria” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX5SK8t-N0s>) can be found on Youtube.

Molly Flaspohler and Elizabeth Bingham, from Concordia College and the University of North Dakota, respectively, presented a research project that gave some

insight into how freshman composition teachers view information literacy instruction. Using Singh's ACEJMC survey format, they gathered data on what information literacy instruction methodologies these instructors use, as well as what their perceptions of their students IL skills are. They concluded that teachers who employ a wide range of IL instruction methodologies (including librarian-led instruction) were more satisfied with their students skill set than instructors who used fewer methodologies.

Pamela Corley, a librarian from the University of Southern California, and Julie Tilson, professor of physical therapy, described their collaboration in creating research instruction that met both the research requirements of the evidence-based practice model in health care education, as well as meeting the needs of the professor in teaching her students the methodology of EBP.

Jennifer Zimmers and Sally Ziph gave a session on using podcasts as a transmission methodology for instruction. These two librarians from the University of Michigan's Kresge Library came up with an innovative way to address the wide range of instruction needs of their graduate and undergraduate students. Their Kresge Dash series (<http://www.bus.umich.edu/KresgeLibrary/help/podcast.htm>) of podcasts deliver instruction in how to use business databases, as well as doing research in specific business areas, such as marketing and SWOT analyses.

I also attended a discussion session on incorporating Library 2.0 technologies in instruction, moderated by Susan Shepherd and Teri Vogel, both from UC San Diego. They discussed their use of wikis, blogs, and other Web 2.0 technologies in instruction, and then we shared some stories, tips and techniques in round table discussions.

But the two most interesting and relevant sessions I attended were "How to Embed a Librarian", presented by Leslie Foutch from Vanderbilt University's Peabody College Library, and Dr. Brian Griffith, professor of Human and Organization Development; and "From Guest Lecturer to Assignment Consultant: Exploring New Roles for the Teaching Librarian and Alternative Models of Information Literacy Integration", presented by Kathleen Gallagher from the University of California, Berkeley.

The first of these sessions, on "embedding" a librarian, described how Foutch used her presence as an auditor in the HOD 1000 course to tailor instruction to the work in the class. Being present in the classroom allowed her to understand exactly what the students' assignments were and to specifically target their research needs. She was also available in the classroom to answer questions as they arose, and to "co-teach" research details with the professor. Both Foutch and Griffith found this to be a valuable experience for themselves as well as the students. They presented some data they had collected from students' bibliographies which indicated the students' choices of research sources had indeed been influenced in the desired direction (away from Googled webpages and towards peer-reviewed journal articles).

I find this approach fascinating, as it gets the librarian right in the thick of what's going on in the classroom. Foutch discussed not only how having her finger on the pulse of the course assignments helped her deliver relevant instruction, but also how being in the classroom lent itself to personal connections with students and a sea change in their perceptions of librarians. Her personal presence among them changed many of their attitudes about librarians and created an atmosphere where they felt comfortable approaching her (and other librarians) for personal help. This created a bit of a "downside" for Foutch, as she spent many hours in one-on-one consultations with students in the course. But she and Professor Griffiths felt the trade off was worth it in the end.

The second session of interest that I attended was Gallagher's presentation on a consultant model of information literacy integration. Gallagher participated in a faculty development Mellon grant program designed to assist faculty in reworking course materials, especially in large-enrollment classes. As the librarian representative, she was able to assist faculty in integrating information literacy skills and objectives into course assignments. It was fresh perspective on the "traditional" role of the librarian, from a guest-lecturer research consultant model to more of an instruction consultant role. Librarians bring unique skills and perspective to course assignments. This presentation went beyond the "how do we find out what the students' assignments *are*" that seems to be a pressing question at many reference desks. Gallagher provided a paradigm for strategies that not only answer that question, but restructure the context of the question in the first place.

One of Gallagher's discussion points was that the 50-minute one-shot model for information literacy instruction isn't necessarily the only role for instruction librarians. She proposes a model in which the librarian functions as pedagogical support for faculty, rather than just being a resource for research and collection needs. She challenged herself, in the context of the Mellon Summer Institutes, to rethink how information literacy could be integrated into the fabric of a course, so that students learn IL skills along with course content. This particular session has many interesting implications for me, and perhaps for others.

In addition to the many wonderful breakout sessions I attended, there was a mind-blowing plenary speaker. Pat Wolfe is a renowned educator and speaker on the correlation between the development of the brain and education. She had some very interesting things to say about the way we teach and learn. While her own research and writing is focused on the K-12 educational environment, many of her thoughts have interesting implications for higher ed as well.

I was also attending this conference as a member of the LOEX 2008 planning committee, and it was very useful to see a conference like this "in action". I had the opportunity to observe the organization of the conference and made many notes about running the 2008 conference, as did the other members of the planning committee who attended the conference.

I was grateful to have the opportunity to use this LIBRAS grant to attend LOEX 2007 in San Diego. I feel it was very useful to me in developing my skills as a librarian. I have many ideas to apply to my current instruction toolkit.