

36th National LOEX Conference

Librarian as Architect: Planning, Building & Renewing

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Overview

The conference was held at the Doubletree Chicago – Oakbrook hotel in Oakbrook, Illinois, May 1 – 3, 2008. A reception was held Thursday evening and meals were provided on Friday and Saturday, allowing conferees an opportunity to learn more about each other and practices in other academic libraries. An overview of the conference and some of the presentations are available online at <http://www.loexconference.org/2008/sessions.htm>.

Plenary Sessions

The plenary speaker on Friday morning, Laurel Ofstein¹, provided an interactive session titled: “Creative Collaboration: Setting the Course for the Future of Library Instruction”. Laurel presented information on creating a climate for creativity to flourish and using examples and then activities to involve the audience in using the concepts. The presentation ended at 10 a.m. leaving time for a question and answer session.

The plenary session on Saturday morning was a panel discussion of with three deans/heads² of three very different academic libraries in size and patron base discussing “The Future of Libraries in Higher Education”. They discussed physical space, how to influence faculty and staff to plan for the future, and the role of print and digital resources and creating a welcoming environment in the library. It was a very lively session with many pertinent questions from the audience.

Concurrent Sessions Attended

From Paint Chips to Laptops: Creating a Learning & Teaching Environment³: Erin had a great story to tell about redesigning a space given to the library which was remodeled to accommodate several classrooms with wireless laptops and electronic whiteboards. She described the time frame, planning group, the technology planning, cost of various elements and furniture and equipment choice, cost and arrangement. She highlighted things that went well and things that could be improved such as placement of electrical outlets, as well as future plans. The presentation was very refreshing and practical, providing insight into the process, pitfalls and suggestions. A copy of the presentation and fact sheet about the Learning and Teaching Center were provided.

¹ Friday, May 2, 2008. Presenter: Laurel Ofstein, DePaul University.

² Saturday, May 3, 2008. Panel participants: *Annette Haggray*, Dean, Academic Alternatives & Instructional Support, College of DuPage, *Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe*, Head, Undergraduate Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, *Christopher Stewart*, Dean of Libraries, Illinois Institute of Technology. The moderator was *Leslie Warren*, Moraine Valley Community College.

³ Friday, May 2, 2008. Presenter: *Erin Daniels*, Instruction Librarian, Sonoma State University.

Learning Infused Libraries: Honest talk about what is REALLY Takes to Create a Learning Commons⁴: Taking Scott Bennett's *Libraries Designed for Learning* to heart, this library conducted a user survey on the architecture, and interior design of the library. Based on the needs for technology, group work, and a relaxed atmosphere, a new environment was created with casual seating, including tables designed for student groups to gather around a computer, a coffee bar, space for lectures, and reconfiguration of the Reference Desk. It should be noted that this space is the only space on campus with computers. Results after the first year were very encouraging. Laura indicated that food and drink containers and noise were not problems. The contrasts between the "before and after" photos included in the presentation were quite instructive. Laura's presentation is available through the LOEX 2008 website mentioned in the opening paragraph of this report. I highly recommend accessing it.

Library Instruction and Student Engagement in the Age of Google⁵ The opening gambit was the best of the sessions I attended: nothing like a little bit of humor to set the tone of a session and engage the audience! The presenters were introduced with information found by "googling" their names in that search engine. Obviously, the information did not match the backgrounds of the presenters and was quite outlandish. Grappling with whether or not to use Google and/or how to use it in an Information Literacy session gets easier with the information provided in this session. The presenters premise was to start where students start, build on their prior knowledge and then design projects that can't be answered by Google and need library databases to help them acquire skills, not just knowledge on manipulating a database. As each strategy was presented, the pedagogy behind the strategy was also discussed. A copy of the presentation is available from the LOEX 2008 website indicated in the opening paragraph of this report.

Lesson Study: Building Better Lesson Plans through Teamwork and Revision⁶ : The presenters outlined an iterative process to create and test lesson plans for library instruction and proceeded to discuss their experience in using the process as well as the benefits and challenges in using it. They then gave the audience an opportunity to use the process and report out to the group. The activity helped to solidify the value of the process. Sounds like a very promising process to try. A copy of the presentation and a handout of the implementation steps and a bibliography are available from the LOEX 2008 website indicated in the opening paragraph of this report.

⁴ Friday, May 2, 2008. Presenter: *Laura Baker*, Library Learning Commons Coordinator, Abilene Christian University Library

⁵ Friday, May 2, 2008. Presenters: *William H. Weare, Jr.*, Access Services Librarian, Valparaiso University and *Michelle Kowalsky*, Adjunct Professor and Reference Librarian, William Paterson University

⁶ Friday, May 2, 2008. Presenters: *Marija Freeland*, Education/Kinesiology Librarian, University of Michigan, *Shevon Desai*, Communication Studies Librarian, University of Michigan, and *Eric Frierson*, Education & Political Science Librarian, University of Texas at Arlington

Learning (2.0) to be a Social Library⁷: This presentation was a “how to” on bringing a library staff into the 2.0 world. It was adapted from the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County model of “23 Things”. The library chose twelve applications for their staff to complete in a ten week period. The program was required of all staff. Continuing education credits were awarded as well as prizes. The modules were self paced. Samples of blogs and social networking pages designed by the staff were presented. Comments made by the staff were shared. The presenter also shared things learned in conducting the program. It was time consuming to create and took staff away from their jobs to complete, but worth it. A copy of a handout containing a summary of the program is available from the LOEX 2008 website indicated in the opening paragraph of this report. If you are looking for a way to bring your staff into the 2.0 world, I highly recommend the handout and sources listed on the handout.

Re-architecting an Information/Technology Literacy Course: Breaking New Ground and Laying Foundational Pedagogies⁸: This presentation was broken into two parts: Re-Architecting an Information/Technology Literacy Course and Information Literacy Pedagogies: Active or Passive Voice. The presenter spent a short amount of time describing the reasons for redesign of Info Lit courses at California State University at Monterey Bay and then spent the bulk of the time discussing Info Lit pedagogies and active teaching. Copies of the presentations were distributed during the session. The references and the handout “Filling the Void” which provided more detailed instructions and suggestions for activities to support this approach to active learning.

Bye-bye Bibliography⁹: This presentation described the use of wikis, rather than an annotated bibliography, by several of the library instructors, in their Info Lit classes. The presenter described how the concept came about, how it worked and what the students thought of it. The presenter then described some other concepts they were considering for future classes and demonstrated the use of Google Docs. It was a very lively session with a great deal of interaction with the audience. Google Docs looks like a great way to do collaborative work and I am interested in trying it. A copy of the presentation will be available at a later date.

Thank you, LIBRAS, for your continuing support!

⁷ Saturday, May 3, 2008. Presenter: *Beverly Simmons*, Reference and Instruction Librarian, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

⁸ Saturday, May 3, 2008. Presenter: *Mardi Chalmers*, Reference & Instruction Librarian, California State University, Monterey Bay

⁹ Saturday, May 3, 2008. Presenter: *Rosalind Tedford*, Information Literacy Librarian, ZSR Library Wake Forest University