

LOEX 2007 Conference Report : San Diego, CA

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Librarians from up and down the west coast, including Alaska and Hawaii, and from across North America took advantage of the opportunity to attend the LOEX 2007 conference in San Diego, California—the first LOEX conference in that region. No matter from how near or far the librarians traveled, however, they enjoyed great weather and an inspiring program of plenary, breakout and discussion sessions.

Both days of the conference opened with plenary sessions that highlighted the role of instruction librarians as teachers. On Friday, May 4, Dr. Pat Wolfe got the crowd excited about discoveries in brain research, highlighting how teachers can use what scientists know in order to design instruction that works and to explain to others how it works. Dr. Wolfe is a former K-12 teacher and professor and her passion for education set the tone for the conference. She prepared the librarians for two days of sharing dilemmas, insights, and solutions with colleagues who are similarly committed to excellence in teaching.

At the start of Saturday, May 5, the conference convened a plenary panel of four local college and university instructors. These professors, who were not librarians, spoke about their experiences teaching information literacy to their students. Because they each saw the importance of critical thinking and information literacy skills, like evaluating and consistently citing sources, they designed research-based assignments that required library use. They devoted class time to teaching about differences among information sources and why these differences matter. They held students accountable for their information-use by basing grades, in part, on how students performed in locating, incorporating, and citing sources. Each spoke highly of the support they and their students had received from librarians at their schools. Nevertheless, they found that they needed to anticipate and defuse student resistance to attending library orientations by explaining what students could expect to get and how they could use the information to improve their writing. They also described promoting the library's services among their colleagues who had not yet incorporated them into their courses. The audience gained insight into the approach some instructors are taking to solve the problems of students' credulity and academic dishonesty that have been getting a great deal of attention in the academy. The panelists made it clear that college and

university instructors are in this fight together with librarians and that collaboration is worth the extra effort and planning that it may require.

Breakout sessions, 39 in all, gave the conference attendees an opportunity to hear from their colleagues. Here are just a few examples of the range of topics shared:

- In the session "Campus Collaboration to Build a Series of Information Competency Workshops," Nancy Getty and Deborah Moore described their ongoing work to develop an instruction program at California's Glendale Community College in which they exclusively offer workshops rather than on-demand, tailored orientations. The growing series of workshops on topics such as critical evaluation of web resources, government documents, and improving library research is successful because of the excellent design of the lessons and because faculty throughout the campus have embraced the increased depth and breadth of workshops versus orientations for their students. Students attend orientations on their own time, their attendance is recorded, and they receive credit from their instructors. Through grant funding, Deborah Moore was able to collect some data indicating the positive impact of workshop attendance on student success and retention. During this session, the audience was prompted to consider how they could apply what Glendale's librarians have learned. Their experience highlighted the importance of communicating with colleagues outside of the library. Attendees answered questions like: If you were going to write a grant proposal with a non-library colleague, with whom would you collaborate? More information on the workshops and the research data are available at the Glendale College Website at <http://www.glendale.edu/library/instruction/>.
- During one of the most talked about sessions of the conference, David Brier and Vicky Lebbin, both from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, used real-life examples of non-ideal PowerPoint slides to illustrate their position that librarians should be more mindful of how they employ this software for conference presentations. Calling their session "Next Slide, Please," Brier and Lebbin reported on the re-

sults of their survey of librarians on the subject of audience attitudes toward PowerPoint slides used in conference sessions. PowerPoint presentations from past conferences, including LOEX 2006 and LOEX of the West 2006, were solicited by the presenters, stripped of identifying information, and evaluated on the basis of criteria enumerated in *Guide to PowerPoint* (2006) by Mary Munter and Dave Paradi. The lessons from this session resonated for the rest of the conference, as subsequent presenters scrutinized their own PowerPoint slides' adherence to or flouting of the rules.

- Kristen Bullard, from the University of Tennessee - Knoxville, and Wendy Holliday, from Utah State University, found that despite the differences in their institutional profiles, the techniques detailed in *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture* (1999) by Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn were useful in starting important conversations about the current and projected situations for their libraries. Attendees at this session, titled "Sailing off the Map: Managing Organizational Change in the Library Instruction Environment," were introduced to a simple but powerful assessment instrument to be used for identifying an organization's culture by focusing on its positive attributes. Librarians talk a great deal about the changes occurring in the academy and in the profession; Bullard and Holliday offer an example for how having a clear idea of your library's organizational character can guide planning and decision making that will allow the library to make the most of the changes it embraces and the ones it simply cannot avoid.

For more information about the LOEX 2007 Break-out and Discussion Sessions, including program abstracts and conference materials, visit the website at <http://public.csusm.edu/acarr/loex/index.html>.

Mark your calendars!

Librarian as Architect: Planning, Building & Renewing

