LIRT's Top Twenty for 1998

By the Continuing Education Committee, Janet Sheets, Chair,
Janet_Sheets@baylor.edu

During 1998, members of LIRTs Continuing Education Committee, Mari Leverence, James Millhorn, Jonathan Helmke and Janet Sheets, read and evaluated scores of articles on library instruction and information literacy. At ALA Midwinter meeting in January of 1999, we chose these 20 articles as the best of the best. The committee tries to cover all types of libraries in the articles considered. Although the majority of the articles examined and most of the articles chosen are written from a higher education perspective, there are four articles where the instruction is set in an elementary or secondary school, and three articles cover all types of libraries. We searched specifically for articles focusing on public libraries, but we found few, and none made our final list. This year the committee considered a number of articles published outside of the United States. Making our list of 20 is an article from Great Britain and one from Canada. Other articles from New Zealand and Australia were discussed but not chosen.

Excellent articles on library instruction were published in many different journals. Articles on our list appeared in 14 different journals. Four were found in College and Research Libraries, while The Journal of Academic Librarianship, College & Undergraduate Libraries, and Emergency Librarian are all represented by two articles.

The Continuing Education Committee would like to recommend the following articles to you. Among these articles you will find successful programs, stimulating ideas, useful research and encouragement for your future planning and your daily teaching.

Arnold, Judith M. "'I Know It When I See It': Assessing Good Teaching." *Research Strategies* 16.1 (1998): 1-28.

> Do you know whether your instruction is effective or what traits and behaviors could increase your instructional performance? The author of this article conducted a study to determine a set of desired traits and their accompanying behaviors for librarians who teach. The article contains a literature review, a description of the study, and the survey results. Discussion covers the relationship between instruction behaviors and reference behaviors. An appendix lists the seven traits and their associated behaviors.

Bell, Steven J. "Weaning Them from the Web: Teaching Online to the MBA Internet Generation." *Database* 21 (June/July 1998): 67-70.

Bell believes business students must learn that online business databases are a vital resource for obtaining quality business information. He finds that many of his current students overlook wonderful online resources with eyes only for the World Wide Web. In this article, he emphasizes strategies for getting the "webcentric" students to remove their Internet blinders and open their minds to ALL online access to business information.

Bopp, Mary Ellen "Tips for Teaching the MTV Generation." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 5 (1998): 91-94.

This library instructor cites new techniques for teaching the challenging age group of 18-25 year olds - "The MTV Generation." These techniques include: breaking material into modules, maintaining a brisk pace, using interesting graphics, using humor and real-life anecdotes and encouraging a high level of interactivity. Her approach sounds like a fun and intelligent way to quickly engage young minds and keep their attention long enough to impart some library instruction!

Burdick; Tracey A. "Pleasure in Information Seeking: Reducing Information Aliteracy." *Emergency Librarian* 25 (Jan./Feb. '98): 13-17.

A sizable number of high school students lack-the motivation or desire to locate, evaluate and use information in a meaningful and effective way. Burdick labels these students as reluctant and discusses possible causes, both external and internal. The author concludes that making information literacy relevant to their lives is the key to changing these students from reluctant to involved. She then provides suggestions on preventing information aliteracy by ensuring active involvement.

Callison, Daniel. "Time on Task: Effective Timing of Instruction." *School Library Media Activities* 14 (April 1998): 32-4.

"Time on task" is defined as that period of time during which a student is actively engaged in a learning activity. The author contends that time must be efficiently allocated for the process of learning. He offers great ideas about factors governing "time linked to learning." For example, two factors that are critical in the effectiveness of information skills instruction are timing the instruction to take place at the time-of-need and placing the instruction within a meaningful context.

Craver, Kathleen W. "Internet Search Skills for the College Bound." *School Library Journal* 44.11 (November 1998): 33-35.

In this article, Craver, head librarian at a private high school, describes how she has taught the Internet to college-bound students. In four hour-long sessions, she covers how to navigate the Internet, how to search online catalogs and their limits, how to choose which electronic database to use, and how to evaluate electronic information. This is an excellent article from which to garner ideas and to gain inspiration.

Geffert, Bryn, and Beth Christensen. "Things They Carry: Attitudes toward, Opinions about, and Knowledge of Libraries and Research among Incoming College Students." *Reference and User Services Quarterly* 37.3 (Spring 1998): 279-285.

This article uses information gathered from a short quiz and questionnaire administered to 521 incoming students in order to examine their attitudes toward, opinions about, and knowledge of libraries and research. The findings both reinforce and contradict stereotypical assumptions about incoming students and provide information that can be used when developing bibliographic instruction programs. In addition this information about the students should go into the classroom with every instruction librarian.

Heckart, Ronald J. "Machine Help and Human Help in the Emerging Digital Library." *College and Research Libraries* 59.3 (May 1998): 250-259.

The author envisions a future where there is virtually no mediation between patron and librarian. He focuses on recent advances in customer interaction software that, he argues, are not only smart, but allow users a high degree of self-sufficiency. Heckart does not claim that we have yet arrived at the point where traditional reference can be dismissed, but projects that over the next fifteen years we will see a significant decrease in reference transactions. In this scenario there would be no need for BI, period.

Holmes, Barbara DeVeaux, and Arthur A. Lichtenstein. "Minority Student Success: Librarians as Partners." *College & Research Libraries* 59 (July/August, 1998): 496498.

This article profiles the contribution of library instruction to the APT (African Americans Partnering Talent) summer program at the University of Central Arkansas. It provides rich details about the program and how library instruction can be used to increase the success rate of participants. Although the program focuses on retention rates for a specific population, the article applies to a

broader audience with specifics on the program, the research skills' portion taught by librarians, and what each of the 10 research sessions contains.

Kaplowitz, Joan, and Janice Contini. "Computer-Assisted Instruction: Is It an Option for Bibliographic Instruction in Large Undergraduate Survey Classes?" *College & Research Libraries* 59.1 (Jan. 1998): 19-27.

This article describes a computer-assisted library instruction program developed by librarians at UCLA for a large undergraduate course and includes a formal summary evaluation of the program's effectiveness. This study, with quantitative pre and post tests and a qualitative follow-up survey, featuring open-ended questions, provides a good look at computer-assisted instruction.

Kilcullen, Maureen. "Teaching Librarians to Teach: Recommendations on What We Need to Know." RSR: *Reference Services Review* 26.2 (Summer 1998): 7-18.

Few librarians have had any formal coursework in teaching. However, librarians continue to need to learn how to teach. This article begins with a look at what librarians need to know in order to teach. Then, for each need identified, the author suggests appropriate resources. Areas included are 1) creating the information literate person; 2) methods of instruction, 3) learning and motivational theories, 4) planning instruction, 5) the lecture, 6) basic how-to, and 7) working with faculty. The second half of the article is an annotated list of recommended books and web sites.

LaForty, Jo-Anne. "A New Literacy for a New Age: A High School Course in Information Technology." *Emergency Librarian* 25.5 (May/June 1998): 8-10.

This teacher-librarian turned Information Studies teacher talks in depth about a course created in Information and Electronic Literacy for Grade 11 of high school. Since there is hardly a job untouched by information and technology today, the need will only grow for tomorrow's workers. The suggestion is that this course, which is outlined here in detail, be mandatory for all high school students. The technology is not optional-it is here to stay!

Macdonald, Janet, and Robin Mason. "Information Handling Skills and Resource-Based Learning in an Open University Course." *Open Learning* 13.1 (February 1998): 38-42.

The British have been working with distance education (often called "open earning") for many years now. This article focuses on an Open University course, "Information Technology and Society." In the course students used core articles, provided in both print and CD-ROM, accompanied by related papers, video clips,

animations and computer based training on CD-ROM. The information supplied for each article included hypertext links to parts of related documents. Use of e-mail a wide variety of electronic conferences, and the Internet were also provided. A survey of21 students from two tutorial groups found an almost equal division between those who liked resource-based learning and those who did not.

Mosley, Pixey Anne. "Creating a Library Assignment Workshop for University Faculty." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 24.1 (January 1998): 33-41.

Dealing with assignments based on the use of library resources is a familiar activity at any reference desk and the concept of working with faculty to improve assignments is not new. The author of this article presents a more assertive approach, an interactive workshop to introduce faculty to the mechanics of designing appropriate assignments that include information seeking and processing skills. The article describes the workshop's framework and explains the interactive teaching methods used. Appended is the flyer advertising the workshop as well as role playing scripts and teaching exercises used.

Simpson, Anthony E. "Information Finding and the Education of Scholars: Teaching Electronic Access in Disciplinary Context." *Behavioral and Social Sciences Librarian* 16.2(1998): 1-18.

This article represents the complete opposite point of view to the previously mentioned piece by Ronald Heckart. Simpson argues that the new information technologies have reached such an advanced level of sophistication, especially with regard to upper level courses, that librarians should now play an integral role in teaching and initiating students to research practices. As a consequence BI should no longer be restricted to one-shot sessions where the librarian plays the role of guest lecturer. In short, Simpson insists on the need for librarians to play a vital role in shepherding students through the research process.

Stamatoplos, Anthony, and Robert Mackoy. "Effects of Library Instruction on University Students' Satisfaction with the Library: a Longitudinal Study." *College & Research Libraries* 59.4 (July 1, 1998): 323-334.

Do our library instruction efforts improve user satisfaction with the library? A partial answer is provided by this study which evaluated changes in student expectations following library instruction and how they were related to overall, long-term satisfaction with the library. Students in several sections of an introductory English composition course received library instruction sessions. Data about expectations of the library collection, library staff and computer- and print-based information; about confidence level regarding library use; and about

basic demographics was collected from the students at 3 times during the semester.

Still, Julie M. "The Role and Image of the Library and Librarians in Discipline-Specific Pedagogical Journals." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 24.3 (May 1998): 225-31.

The author begins with the premise that "if teaching faculty consider librarians to be a part of higher education, to some degree, and include library instruction into their course work, then surely this would be demonstrated by descriptions or mentions of library resources and personnel in discipline-specific teaching journals." There followed a search of the discipline specific teaching journals in ERIC and a more in-depth look at selected titles. The authors conclude that regardless of what teaching faculty might say, the work of librarians is seldom implied let alone visible or acknowledged.

Tomaiuolo, Nicholas G., Richard Churchill, and Joan Garrett Packer. "Access to Government Publications and Library Instruction: Views of Faculty and Librarians." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 5.1 (1998): 127-138.

Librarians know that government publications are underused. A survey of 400 faculty members shows that they agree on the importance of government documents as resources but admit that they are seldom cited on students' papers. Faculty members do note the increased use of the Internet by students. The authors encourage librarians and teachers to use new technologies to design instruction and to incorporate examples of documents in classes. The authors also offer an excellent list of which documents to include in BI and include the surveys used for this research.

Tompkins, Philip, Susan Perry, and Joan K. Lippincott. "New Learning Communities: Collaboration, Networking, and Information Literacy*." Information Technology and Libraries* 17.2 (June 1, 1998): 100-106.

The Coalition for Networked Information's "New Learning Communities Program" brought together pioneer teams from higher education institutions. These teams, which included faculty, librarians, information technologists, students, and instructional designers, developed new courses and curricula that used networking technologies, involved collaboration, and placed an emphasis on the use of networked information resources. Through a series of workshops and conferences, a videotape and a Web site; CNI supported the pioneer teams and disseminated the lessons learned from their projects to others in the higher education community.

Zimmerman, Corrinne, Gay L. Bisanz, and Jeffrey Bisanz. "Everyday Scientific Literacy: Do Students Use Information about the Social Context and Methods of Research to Evaluate News Briefs about Science?" *Alberta Journal of Educational Research* 44.2 (1998): 188-207.

The authors report a study in which twenty-eight psychology students evaluated news reports about scientific topics. The students were asked to rate the credibility of the report and to tell their justification for that judgment. Although this article does not deal with instruction per se, it does provide a useful background when designing instruction