LES Reference Discussion Group
ALA Annual 2008 – Anaheim, CA
Sunday, June 29, 2008
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Grand Hyatt Regency, Orange County Salon III

1. Online modules or learning objects: What types of modules are people creating? What tools are most useful in creating learning objects? Are any repositories for these modules/learning objects available?

- Columbia University Libraries has used Camtasia to create modules on how to use the catalog.
- Aline Soules (CSU-East Bay) is hoping to find somewhere the script is written and the PowerPoint is done. She needs to embed Information Literacy into the TESOL curriculum.
- Another option is SpringShare's LibGuides, which has opened up channels of communication in liaison activities that weren't formerly available. It has been great as a time saver, costs $1,000 – 2,000 per year, and is very searchable.
- Jing, ScreenFlow (for Macs), and Google Docs are other options for creating presentation modules if money is an issue.
- Discussed putting a call on LES-L and on the LES wiki to add assignments under the competencies as a way of sharing and linking to competency standards
- Can insert links on the LES wiki to indicate that content could be added under the guidelines

2. The future of bibliographic control: What are the implications of recent documents written on the bibliographic control and its future? How will the proposed changes affect reference and instruction?

> Documents: Official report from January 10, 2008, and Deanna Marcum's response on June 2, 2008 (http://www.loc.gov/bibliographic-future)

- General discomfort with user tagging. It raises questions about the future roles of catalogers and shelvers
- LES members expressed concern over the notion that our users understand the concept of bibliographic control
- Need to remember that librarians tend to make things for librarians. Need to find something in the middle (between subject headings and tagging).
- While some see it as a money issue, others read it more as LC politics. This seems to be a mission shift and highlights the need for a national library.
- Report of the Working Group: basically the vision that LC doesn't have as wide-reaching responsibilities as it has in the past years. Documents (in government manual) state that LC is responsible for creating bibliographic records for libraries throughout the country and world. Final document doesn't reflect comments about that. Participants felt that the LC gathered feedback but ignored it.

- 2 competing things: 1) people talking about what they do makes sense to me because their library gets most of its cataloging records from other institutions, and 2) needs of researchers versus casual users
- Concern over how to serve real researchers appropriately
- They also teach, and if they can't get their research done. It's encouraging that ALECTS supports controlled vocabulary (will have a final report at Midwinter and a panel at next Annual)
- This shifts costs from federal governments to private, business, academic libraries. As a taxpayer, it's more important that they make records for all instead of catalog their own backlog.
- Hard costs vs. soft costs: Soft costs are hard to measure but are as real as hard costs. Success and time of patrons matters (cost-benefit). Soft cost of not finding what they want are harder to measure but they are real. The answer is not to shift a hundred million thousand soft costs onto the rest of us. If I can fix it on the vendor, then we can all stop creating user guides (which include huge soft costs).
- Seems that they're suggesting to improve the quality of bibliographic data at all points in the chain. Offer incentives to vendors to improve records. Shifting burden of subject expertise.
- Conflicting information: the government manual states that the Library Congress is the national library, and the report states that it is not a national library.
- Debated whether users use subject headings, whether tags will create additional "noise" for other users, and the possibility of having both subject headings and tags in next-gen catalogs
- Could turn tagging to our advantage – could it have a "see also" with it – to move it into a useful direction
- Amazon and Google are concerned with getting the product the user, which is why users want to use them. The problem is they're not concerned with taking care of items (provenance) like we are.
- Proliferating verbal content in catalogs – publisher content, etc. trade-offs (some will find extra things others will see it as noise)
- Do libraries maintain responsibility for social tagging content?
- Concluded that while we do not fully understand the implications of these changes to bibliographic control, it could very well be job security for reference and instruction librarians as our users may need even more instruction on how to locate relevant items in the catalog.

3. Department office hours: Are people keeping them? How receptive have English departments been to the idea? What are the pros? Cons?

> Documents: Mary Claire Vandenberg's BiblioNotes article (http://literaturesinenglish.pbwiki.com/f/BiblioNotes51.pdf) and the Stephanie Willen Brown's "Librarian in the Closet" report on the ACRLog (http://chronicle.com/wiredcampus/article/3056/a-librarian-in-the-closet)

Several LES members are already actively holding departmental office hours. Some observations on the experience:
- Not too many questions, but the face time is worth it. As public relations, it's great.

- Was really slow at the beginning, but part-way into the semester it picks up. One librarian uses a faculty member's office and has started getting e-mails from faculty and staff wanting her to come. Will start going to the theater department too.
- Institution could rethink the way it does reference – change the culture then it changes the reference assignment
- A potential problem is that you can't get a sub if you can't make your hours. One librarian has a literature blog and posts updates there about availability.
- Spaces used vary depending on availability. Currently LES members use department lounges, an office in the department, a student worker desk
- Trends towards departmental office hours are focused on senior faculty and graduate students. Administrative impetus – highly visible. Shift away from FTF general reference at a desk.
- For some it's a way to get back that general reference time
- Can also create a presence without actually being there by having a display with a pamphlet about liaison librarian and the services the library offers as well as a business card. Students take the cards and e-mail them all the time.
- At Indiana University it's a point of administrative pride that the subject specialists work at the reference desk
- Can also e-mail a newsletter to each faculty member each month – highlight new resources and books and a search tip
- Another option is to try to get on departmental listservs

4. Discussion group/LES blog collaborations: How well did it work? Would it be worth trying again? What would improve this type of collaboration?

- Idea was initially proposed by Linda Stein & Tim Hackman from the Publications Committee as a way of both jump starting discussion group conversations and virtually including those who can't attend the conferences.
- Concern that the discussions could become a little fragmented

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa S. Van Vuuren