

**ACRL Instruction Section  
Analysis of Instructional Environments Task Force  
2005 ALA Midwinter Conference -- Boston, Massachusetts**

**Saturday, January 15, 2005  
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm  
Sheraton, Clarendon A Room**

Members attending:

Beth Woodard, University of Illinois, [bswoodar@uiuc.edu](mailto:bswoodar@uiuc.edu) (ch)  
Barb Mann, University of Southern Maine, [bmann@usm.maine.edu](mailto:bmann@usm.maine.edu)  
Stephanie Michel, University of Portland, [michel@up.edu](mailto:michel@up.edu)  
Terry Taylor, DePaul University, [ttaylor@depaul.edu](mailto:ttaylor@depaul.edu)

Guests attending:

Jennifer Sharkey, Purdue University, [sharkeyj@purdue.edu](mailto:sharkeyj@purdue.edu)  
Joanne Helouvry, Loyola University, [jhelouvry@loyola.edu](mailto:jhelouvry@loyola.edu)

As the organizational meeting of this task force, the group's first agenda was to review the charge of the committee and to make sure that everyone understood what the group's purpose was. The charge is:

To develop a short, practical document to guide instruction coordinators and managers in analyzing their instructional programs, services, and environment for endeavors such as accreditation reviews and strategic planning; suggest how to use documents such as "Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries", "Characteristics of Programs of Information Literacy That Illustrate Best Practices" and national surveys to assess current strengths and characteristics; fill out the ACRL Publication Proposal Form to allow publication of the final document in an ACRL publication; and provide the IS Executive Committee with a final document, Publication Proposal, and recommendations for dissemination prior to the 2005 ALA Annual Conference.

The group discussed the difference between analyzing the environment and assessment of programs, and concluded that what the group is being asked to do is "broader" than assessment.

An aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is the difference between what university documents state about information literacy and the role of the library versus what the reality is. Some of the competing interests on campus need to be understood, such as writing centers, centers of teaching, student services, study centers, and learning communities.

The following items should be considered in developing an analysis of the institution and the instructional environment:

1. Examination of existing public documents is crucial, including: Mission statements for instruction programs, for the Library and the Library's instruction program; goals and objectives, vision statements, core curriculum documents (e.g. general education or first year programs)
2. Examination of constituencies, including incoming freshmen, transfer students, seniors, international students, with information on religious groups, minorities, women, returning adults, commuters, cultures, disabilities, sex, etc. Data from appropriate campus offices, admissions and records, housing, student life, university archives as well as national surveys such as NESSE, CIRP, and more general studies, such as Boyer Commission, PEW, and the Beloit College yearly description of incoming freshmen should be examined. How else can you get information on your own students? Who on your campus administers this information? Are any local surveys conducted? What kind of information can you glean about your students from the student newspaper? What student groups are on campus, such as student-focused groups, and discipline-focused groups? What is this audience about? Check books like *When Generations Collide*...Also, the section's IDP Bibliography may provide some assistance, or check the literature. Faculty information may be harder to collect, such as the length of time on the faculty, demographics, the number of adjuncts used? How does the library communicate with the faculty? Are there mechanisms in place to let faculty know what the library has to offer? What are the marketing initiatives?
3. What role does the library have in course management use and technology in the classroom? What percent of faculty are using library instruction? Does the library keep statistics on instruction...for staff, public, alumni, high school students, undergraduates, graduates, and faculty? What are the total numbers of departments that use library instruction? Does the library keep track of faculty and courses? What assumptions can the committee make about what libraries track?
4. Similarly, what can be gleaned from information about the librarians and staff involvement in instruction? What amount of time is spent on instruction? Numbers of staff? Percentage of time? How flexible is this use of staff? What activities are they involved in...software, web development, time, equipment, facilities, and classroom? Is instruction included in job descriptions? How is this evaluated? At what point has the library maximized its resources? Need to look at Audience/Organization/Resources/Structures.
5. What modes of instruction are used? Distance education? How "distant" is distant? Hong Kong vs. across town. Interplay with instruction as a group and one-on-one instruction. Are these modes of instruction part of the organizational

structure? The RUSA definition calls instruction a separate activity from reference. Information instruction is often a one-on-one encounter at a reference desk, with formal instruction only in the classroom or as a research consultation away from the desk.

6. Can these documents be analyzed for trends?

Possible structure suggested:

Categories / Sources of Information	Audience	Organizational Structures	Resources

Source of information.  
 Paragraph description  
 Website  
 List of examples:

At my institution:

Type of publication:

In order to analyze the environment, what other documents, might people use?

Action Items:

Beth Woodard—draft publication proposal  
 Stephanie Michel—look at Characteristics of Best Practice  
 Terry Taylor—look at Guidelines; send out the old MIS document  
 Barb Mann—look at accreditation items for WECS, Middle States, North Central, New England, SACS

Minutes taken and submitted by Beth Woodard, chair