From the President

It’s back-to-school season! No matter what type of library you work in, the energy shifts a little bit as we head into September. Like a freshly sharpened pencil and a brand-new notebook, the world is full of possibilities. And while this fall may not look quite the way we anticipated, we still have opportunities, fresh starts, and blank pages ahead.

This is the third school year that has been turned upside-down by COVID-19. The “before times” seem even further away, and we may have settled into a new normal that involves different methods of online teaching and meeting virtually. For other colleagues, it may mean masking up and instructing in a new way and at a physical distance. And while some may have easily adapted, for many, the sense of loss remains a constant companion. The LIRT community has really stepped up to support each other as we navigate this new normal, and I’m so proud to be a part of this network of caring professionals.

We came together virtually this summer at the ALA Annual Conference and celebrated the accomplishments of libraries and librarians who made a difference with their dedicated work and innovation at the LIRT Awards Ceremony. As a membership, we discussed how to increase diversity within LIRT, how to be more inclusive in our programming and recruiting, and how to make all our members feel valued and appreciated. As individuals and as a collective we can always do more, do better, and be more open when it comes to access, equity, and inclusion. We value your input as we work to move the needle further this year.

There are many ways to be involved with LIRT, and we invite your participation! Please connect with us on social media (don’t just follow – connect!). #LIRT and @LIRT_ALA on Twitter to share your experiences, questions, highs, and lows when it comes to library instruction. Join our Facebook community where we share LIRT happenings, including professional development opportunities and social events. And we are always looking for folks to join our committees! We particularly need more people on our Membership Committee. If you don’t mind sending out some emails or helping to plan networking or social events, we need you!

What’s your vision for the new school year? Share it with LIRT!

Susan

Susan Mythen
LIRT President
From the Editor

Hello LIRT members and friends of LIRT!

This month’s issue is filled with content that I hope will be of interest to many of you:

- Didn’t make it to ALA Annual or some of the LIRT sessions? Read about the LIRT President’s Program, Discussion Forum, and Awards Ceremony in our LIRT @ ALA section.
- Have a librarian or library you’d like to nominate for one of our two annual awards? Find more details in the awards Call for Nominations.
- Want to know who is in running LIRT and our committees this year? Check out the Who’s Who in LIRT 2021-22.
- Interested in Digital Pedagogy and what it really means? Billie Peterson-Lugo has got you covered in this month’s Tech Talk.

And there’s more! I was particularly inspired by Christine Woods’s article “Everything I Need to Know About Library Instruction I Learned from Performing Arts.” I was trying to follow her advice and think of what the title of my essay would be, but I haven’t come up with anything brilliant yet. I was pondering something about learning what I need to know from my cats, but I’m not sure “zoom around the house at 4am” and “if in doubt, take a nap” is really good advice for library instructors . . .

Hope you have a wonderful fall,

Sherri Brown, 
LIRT News Editor
Amber Eakin
Library Services Manager
Strayer University

A little bit about me . . .
I live in West Virginia with my husband Johnny and our menagerie: three cats, two dogs, a rabbit, and a fish. In 2011 I completed my Master of Science in Library Science from the University of Kentucky. Currently, I’m working on my Doctor of Education focusing on how academic libraries can support student success outcomes. My education courses have had a significant and positive impact on my library instruction.

What was your path to librarianship?
It was inevitable. When I was six or seven years old, I made and pasted card pockets into the backs of all my books. I used notecards to make checkout cards and a spiral notebook as a makeshift catalog. I would loan them out to my friends and family. Most people in my life would’ve been shocked had I not entered librarianship!

Tell us about your current position. What do you like most about it?
I’m a virtual instruction librarian, which means I get to teach college students across the country about research, writing, and citation. My university has over 60 satellite campuses, so I love reaching students where they are. I’m passionate about equity of access, and forcing students to attend a physical meeting is not always an accessible option. My favorite sessions are assignment-specific, because I tailor those with the professor to teach the students precisely what they need to know. According to Knowles’s assumptions of andragogy, adult students want instruction with an immediate application or to solve a problem. A general library overview typically won’t interest most adults, but the course-specific or assignment-aligned instruction sessions are perfect to meet their needs.

In what ways does it challenge you?
Given that many other library instructors had to turn to virtual instruction, albeit temporarily, I’m sure most of you can relate to my challenges. Aside from the obvious technical issues, the primary challenge is engagement in the virtual environment. How do you get students to come to an optional session when they aren’t a captive audience at a physical location? How do you keep them interested and participatory if they do log in? How do you create an accessible and inclusive environment? Most of these issues affect in-person instruction, but virtual instruction is a different skill set. I apply the ARCS model and the Universal Design for Learning guidelines to increase equity of access and engagement. It’s challenging but so gratifying.

What brought you to LIRT? What do you like about LIRT, and what would you like to see?
LIRT is a natural fit for me: I’m an instructional librarian, and this group is for library instruction! LIRT transcends our work environment. I would like to see more opportunities for us to collaborate and teach one another. LIRT has the potential to become a robust community of practice, and I would love to engage in that. Library school was a wonderful experience for me, but I learned most of my instructional skills through my M.Ed. and now my Ed.D. coursework. Attending conferences is often cost-prohibitive or inaccessible for various reasons, so I’d love to see low- or no-cost information-sharing webinars or other virtual events. I’d be delighted to share my experiences and to learn best practices from my colleagues!
Member A-LIRT, continued
Amber Eakin

Throughout all of your educational experiences, what teacher inspired you the most and why?

I’m going to cheat and give one teacher and one librarian. The teacher who inspired me the most is Dr. Chris Green, currently with Berea College. I took his Appalachian Fiction and Poetry class years ago, and he showed me how you should teach. He was quietly passionate and empathetic. He made the material come alive, giving us space to imbue our experiences into our writing. He was my first professor to demonstrate that a critical lens and creative thinking can go hand-in-hand. The librarian who inspired me was my elementary school librarian, Mrs. Annyce McCann. She would send me home with bags full of books. She encouraged me to read outside my age level, and that lesson sticks with me today. Adults can enjoy picture books, too! Why pigeonhole a reader? If a book sparks joy, let them enjoy it.

When you travel, what do you never leave home without?

My knitting. (Cue the groans about stereotypical librarian activities.) I have anxiety, and travel is a stressor. Knitting in public—on a plane, in a bar, or at a lake—gives me something to do with my hands, and it’s a natural conversation starter with fellow fiber artists. It’s a creative outlet that can fit in a purse or a bag, and you get an adorable or practical item at the end.

If you could change one thing about libraries today, what would it be?

Mark your bingo cards as I repeat it: accessibility! Libraries should offer equitable access to all, yet many consider accessibility measures an optional add-on rather than a default setting. Subtitles should always be on in virtual meetings and available for recorded events. Screen readers should be on all computers. Every image on the library website should have alt-text. Doors should have automatic openers. I could go on, but the point is that anyone should have an option to participate. If patrons have to ask for these types of standard accommodations, your space is inaccessible. Having to request an accommodation can lessen a patron’s autonomy and agency. The emphasis on accessibility should extend to staff, too. The ADA reasonable accommodation process is needlessly arduous at best, restrictive at worst. We must commit to supporting the library workers who painstakingly support our patrons.
LIRT President’s Program at ALA Annual 2021

By Brad Seitz

Over the past year and a half, time has become more elastic and flexibility is often required. With that in mind, the 2019-2020 Conference Program Planning Committee became the 2020-2021 Conference Program Planning Committee in order to make sure LIRT had a conference program for the (now virtual) annual ALA 2021 conference. It all led up to a successful President’s Program—Smooth Transitions: Developing Information Literacy in the In-Between Places on Thursday, June 24, 2021.

The panel, with an audience of 100 total participants, focused on the many “in-between places” that people find themselves in as they move from one life phase (e.g., middle school to high school) or circumstance (e.g., a new job or volunteer position) to another, and the connections librarians make as they strive to better serve their communities. The program opened with an introduction by co-chair Jen Saulnier Lange and committee member Julie Hornick for the three panelists, who represented public, academic, school, and special libraries.

- Jennifer Bromann-Bender (Librarian, Lincoln-Way West High School) Insta @ lwwestlibrary
- Zoe Magierek (Manager, Knowledge Services, Forefront)
- Melanie Wachsmann (Assistant Director of Adult Services, Lone Star College-CyFair)

Bromann-Bender started the panel off and discussed how she saw other departments of her high school create “vertical teams” (e.g., teachers from the Lincoln-Way English department would meet and work with elementary and middle school English teachers) and she wondered, “Why we didn’t have that at the library?” So, soon thereafter, she took the initiative and created a team with other local librarians to develop “a vertically-aligned program” that provides a “local community of support” for students as they move through different levels of the school system. She cast a wide net, bringing in not just school librarians, but also librarians from the local community college and the public library. They meet twice a year and typically have 10-20 people attend to discuss curriculum, programming, books, library policies, and more. The focus is on learning from each other (e.g., knowledge acquisition, skills development), building relationships, and sharing common concerns. These vertical team meetings have also led to additional opportunities, whether it was meeting up with other high school librarians, a partnership with local public librarians and ten other schools on a Poetry Slam, or additional event programming opportunities such as crafts and escape rooms.

Magierek works at a special library at Forefront, Illinois’ statewide association representing both grant makers and nonprofits, as well as their advisors and allies. She sees it as an “in-between place for non-profit professionals, (high school & up) students and the general public.” They are “public, yet special: a special library with a public face,” as they are not just internal but external as well. Her work focuses on all levels of experience, but especially for beginners such as technology services (e.g., “How do you save an article as a pdf?”) and volunteers who are new to certain aspects of helping run a non-profit (e.g., how to write a budget). Forefront is in-between themselves, as they were moving into a new space in a different part of Chicago right
when COVID hit and are just now trying to move into the new building and resume in-person/hybrid programming. With this backdrop, “changes in programming because of COVID have actually allowed for more equitable access, and actually made it better…we’ve been able to get deeper into the in-betweens” with members across the entire state; for example, someone from Carbondale can now more readily access Forefront programming and resources (such as new databases).

Wachsmann’s job is at a community college, but it isn’t a typical setup—its very nature makes it an in-between place. Lone Star College—CyFair has a joint-use library located on its campus in Cypress, Texas, in conjunction with the Harris County Public Library system and thus operates as “2 Libraries in 1 building.” While her campus alone has 20,000 total students, with their public library setup they also serve children, teens, and help with schools in the Houston school district. They see their patrons primarily as on a “cycle” that moves through different life stages: little ones come for story time; teens for school study (many of whom go on to enroll in Lone Star); young families who bring their kids—which then starts the cycle over. Community outreach to bring people into this cycle is thus a big aspect of what they do, e.g., setting up an information table at a Farmer’s Market or a grocery store (such as HEB) to sign people up for library cards and answer their questions about topics such as class registration and GED completion. Another outreach example is to elementary schools, where in addition to information tables, the library undertakes activities such as “Family Literacy Night.” All this outreach is important, as people may not realize Lone Star College is a public library because of its location on a college campus. For those on the college campus, librarians need to remind the students and faculty that the library is “more than books.” They address this by catering to nontraditional students, performing outreach on evenings and weekends, along with services such as tutoring, pop-up citation formatting, and pop-in tours.

After some questions from the online attendees moderated by committee member Teresa Copeland, co-chair Lauren Kehoe wrapped it up, thanked the panelists, and announced next year’s program on Critical Information Literacy Applications for Academic, Public and School libraries. If you want to get involved, visit, https://www.ala.org/rt/lirt/membership.

LIRT Discussion Forum at ALA Annual 2021

By Mitch Fontenot

On Thursday, June 24th, LIRT sponsored a discussion forum on “How Do We Increase Diversity (and What Kinds of Diversity) in an Already Robust LIRT Membership?” as part of the American Library Association Annual Meeting. The forum (and conference) was held virtually via Zoom with the invaluable assistance of Vision Creative. Approximately 40 attendees were presented with three questions:

1. How would we increase diversity to include more types of libraries such as public, corporate, special, government, etc.?  
2. What other kinds of diversity in LIRT membership should we be striving for?  
3. Do LIRT members have to necessarily be instruction librarians, or should we strive for administrators, management, technical services librarians, etc. to consider and join LIRT?

While the consensus is that LIRT is heavy on the academic side, it was agreed that more efforts should be made to encourage other type of libraries and librarians to join LIRT. Some of the suggestions included changing programming content to make it more general for all types of libraries, increasing outreach to library schools and students, including informal instruction as a part of LIRT, and creating opportunities and encouraging others outside of academic and school librarianship to join.

Training suggestions included more of an inward versus outward focus to instruction, training the trainers, and an emphasis on instruction to staff and student workers.

Recruitment from library schools was also suggested, as well as practical tips for instruction in addition to formal instruction classes in library schools. Administrators and managers – especially in smaller libraries, who instruct or oversee instruction and instructors – were also encouraged to join LIRT. Finally, opportunities for people who cannot afford to attend and travel to meetings such as library students were suggested, as well as increasing diversity in leadership positions in LIRT. The distance education, online, virtual, and Zoom era that requires a different skill set is here to stay, Covid or not, and efforts should be made to educate and encourage librarians for these roles.

The recording for the discussion forum (approximately 40 minutes) can be found at: https://visiondigital.app.box.com/s/wxpuzv8j16ewhtnuz24z05dd4egkcv0a/folder/139861722946, and all are encouraged to attend.
LIRT Programming at the 2021 ALA Annual Virtual Conference

LIRT Awards Ceremony at ALA Annual 2021
By Emilia Marcyk and Rebecca Davis

The LIRT Awards Ceremony was held during the 2021 ALA Virtual Conference on Monday, June 28th, from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. EST. This was the first year that the awards ceremony was held online. The recipients of the Librarian Recognition Award and the Innovation in Instruction Award for both 2020 and 2021 were recognized. All of the recipients were able to talk about their work, the importance of instruction and information literacy, and answer questions from attendees. There were 25 attendees at the Awards ceremony. During the ceremony, 2020-2021 Awards Committee Co-chairs Emilia Marcyk and Rebecca Davis thanked the other Awards Committee members who helped to select the award recipients. At the end of the ceremony, Jen Hunter, 2020-21 LIRT President, gave a few remarks. Overall, the LIRT Awards ceremony was successful.

Have you created an instruction program or developed a unique classroom strategy? Please share your experiences with LIRT!

Send your articles to Sherri Brown sherri.brown@virginia.edu
Everything I Need to Know About Library Instruction I Learned from Performing Arts

by Christine Woods

I grew up singing and dancing around the house. I used to play recordings of Broadway shows, memorized every song, and performed elaborate routines acting out every part in my living room. Eventually I started taking dance lessons, sang in the church choir, performed in community theater, and started to develop some skills. At the height of my ballet performing days, I had the pleasure of dancing a lead part in the ballet *Coppélia* at the grand re-opening of the refurbished Wells Theater in Norfolk, Virginia. I performed in dramas/musicals at church, school, and in the community. I was constantly rehearsing one show while performing in another. I went to Virginia Commonwealth University and majored in music performance. While I was at VCU, I fell in love with working in the library, specifically the media center with the music collection and education materials such as YA and children’s books. A hop, skip, and a jump later I got my MLIS from Catholic University and started as a school librarian. Looking back at my career as a school librarian for 25 years and now an academic librarian for Saint Leo University, I realized that my background in performing arts was really helpful in preparing me for my life teaching information literacy skills.

**Practice Makes Perfect**

Anyone learning a new skill knows that practice makes perfect. When I learned a new song, a new dance movement, or a new scene in a show, I practiced repeatedly. I fell on my butt, sang wrong notes, forgot my lines, but then I tried again until I could get it right. As a teacher, I practice the skills I need to use to reach my students. I consider carefully what I am going to teach and how I am going to teach it. I practice going through presentations, activities, quizzes, demonstrations, and technology skills ahead of time.

**Brush Yourself Off and Keep Going**

Inevitably, as a performer and as an instructor, things are going to go wrong. During my performance of *Coppélia* I had to perform a difficult move I will describe as standing splits (standing leg at 6 and the other leg lifted at 12 on a clock). As I held this position then I had to move in a complete 360-degree circle (don’t try this at home). After performing this move many times flawlessly, the horrible moment came when I wobbled for a fraction of a second. I was mortified, but the audience barely noticed as I mentally forced myself to keep going and physically pushed myself to hold on just a bit longer. This experience and many others helped train me to keep going even when I made mistakes. As a teacher, even with practice I have clicked on the wrong link, lost a document, completely forgotten how to do something with technology and other blunders. When I make mistakes during lessons I keep going.

**Do Not Be Afraid to Try New Things**

Messing up and making mistakes can lead to fear of trying new things. It is much easier to do the moves you feel comfortable doing. It is especially important as teachers that we continue to learn and grow so that we can try new teaching strategies and reach our students to the best of our abilities. New technology can be especially daunting. Going to conferences, participating in professional groups like LIRT, reading professional journals, attending webinars, and talking to other library professionals are important parts of the recursive process of learning and using that knowledge to improve our teaching practice.

**Do Not Try Something New for the First Time in Front of an Audience**

I remember the first time I tried to perform a triple pirouette (turn). I ended up making it about a two-and-a-half turns instead, so I ended up facing backwards to everyone else. If I had done that in front of a live audience, it would have been embarrassing. It is tempting to try new technology or new teaching strategies, especially after being inspired by a conference or webinar, but it is important to practice, practice, practice! Grab a few fellow librarians or some volunteer students to try out your new skills if at all possible.
Everyone is a Critic!

After every performance I learned to receive notes from the director about what went wrong and what could be better. Library instructors should seek out the same kind of feedback to improve instruction practices. Ask your fellow librarians to observe a lesson. Ask the teachers that you are collaborating with to give you feedback. Survey students and conduct informal and formal assessments to determine if your teaching is effective. Listen to the feedback given to you by administrators who observe you. Take time to reflect on your performances as a teacher and make notes. What can you do better next time? What strategies worked and which didn’t? It is important to learn how to seek out, accept, and use criticism effectively.

The Show Must Go On

I have done performances while I was sick, while I had an injury, and while I suffered from grief. The show must go on is an old expression that anyone in show business knows. As a teacher, I have also learned to put aside what is going on in my personal life. We have all had those days when the last thing we want to do is face a group of people or children and teach a lesson. It is important to recognize when you can continue with a little more effort or acknowledge that you need a substitute or need to postpone a lesson.

Fake It ‘Til You Make It

It is okay to smile and keep your head lifted on days when you do not feel like teaching or helping students and faculty. When you are faking it because there is a good reason hopefully your sincerity as a caring teacher will help you through those tough times. Keep an eye on how many times and how much effort you are making to get through lessons, meetings, and instructional sessions. Reach out to your support system of friends, family, and co-workers to help you decide if you need an understudy to take your part in the show so you can have a break. Talk to your family doctor and mental health professionals when you feel like you are faking it too often due to feeling overwhelmed, overly tired, and other symptoms that suggest the show should not go on. There is a big difference between pushing through occasional days of feeling tired and more serious signs there is something wrong that should be addressed.

Everything You Need to Know About Library Instruction You Learned From . . .

You probably learned the skills I described in this essay from family members, your faith, sports, amazing mentors, and other sources of social emotional learning. What would the title of your essay be? Who or what activity in your life has had an impact on your teaching practice? Taking time to reflect on who we are and where we came from is a wonderful way to start the new school year. If you would like to share your thoughts with me on this topic, please email me.

Author note: Christine Woods is the Online Reference and Instruction Librarian at Saint Leo University.
Contact: christine.woods@saintleo.edu
2022 LIRT Librarian Recognition Award
Call for Nominations

We are pleased to invite nominations for the 2022 LIRT Librarian Recognition Award. The Librarian Recognition Award is given in acknowledgement of a librarian’s contribution to the development, advancement, and support of information literacy and instruction in any type of library. Self-nominations are welcome.

The award will be judged based on the following:

- Contributions to library literature on topics related to instruction/information literacy. These contributions can consist of both formal and informal publications (peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, blog postings, newsletter contributions, etc.). Non-traditional forms of publishing will be considered.
- Key role in the creation of an instruction/information literacy program or project that has shown potential for wide-spread sharing and replication.
- Impactful participation within local, regional, national, and/or international level professional organizations that are devoted to the support and promotion of library instruction and information literacy in any type of library.

Nomination Materials:
To nominate a librarian for the LIRT Librarian Recognition Award, please submit a nomination packet that includes:

- Completed nomination sheet (available on LIRT Awards website)
- Letter from the nominator addressing the award criteria (see rubric on LIRT Awards website), providing concrete examples
- 3 letters of support
- Resume or CV for the individual being nominated

Other supporting materials that show the individual’s contributions to information literacy and instruction are welcome. Electronic submission of nomination materials is expected. Further information regarding the award and the selection process can be found on the LIRT Awards website: http://www.ala.org/rt/lirt/awards

Deadline

Send all LIRT Librarian Recognition Award nomination materials by January 15, 2022 to:

Rebecca Davis
rebecca.davis@simmons.edu

The award winner will be notified following the ALA LibLearnX Conference, no later than February 15, 2022.

The award will be presented at the 2022 ALA Annual Conference. Award winners will receive a $1,000 cash award, a plaque, and a $500 travel stipend to be used toward attending the ALA Annual Conference. Awards are sponsored by the Library Instruction Round Table.

If you have any questions, please contact the LIRT Awards Committee Chair, Rebecca Davis (rebecca.davis@simmons.edu).
2022 LIRT Innovation in Instruction Award
Call for Nominations

We are pleased to invite nominations for the 2022 LIRT Innovation in Instruction Award. The Innovation in Instruction Award is given in recognition of a library’s contributions to the development, advancement, and support of information literacy and instruction in any type of library. Self-nominations are welcome.

The award will be given to a library that has done one (or more) of the following:
- Revamped its public instruction program in response to a new technology, an assessment report, etc.
- Initiated a public program that utilizes best practices of instruction in combination with new methods of delivery.
- Created an original type of instruction, e.g., team-taught interdisciplinary research sessions, a novel form of outreach, etc.
- Practice(s) will be prioritized over scholarship with preference for innovative practices that are low-cost and can be easily reproduced elsewhere.

Nomination Materials:
To nominate a library for the LIRT Innovation in Instruction Award, please submit a nomination packet that includes the following:
- Completed nomination sheet (available on LIRT Awards website)
- Letter from the nominator addressing the award criteria (see rubric on LIRT Awards website), providing concrete examples
- 3 letters of support

Other supporting materials that show the library’s contributions to information literacy and instruction are encouraged. Only one member of the library nomination group needs to be a librarian. Electronic submission of nomination materials is expected. Further information regarding the award and the selection process can be found on the LIRT Awards website: http://www.ala.org/rt/lirt/awards.

Deadline
Send all LIRT Innovation in Instruction Award nomination materials by January 15, 2022 to:
Wayne Finley
wfinley@niu.edu

The award winner will be notified following the ALA LibLearnX Conference, no later than February 15, 2022. The award will be presented at the 2022 ALA Annual Conference. Award winners will receive a $1,000 cash award, a plaque, and a $500 travel stipend to be used toward attending the ALA Annual Conference. Awards are sponsored by the Library Instruction Round Table.

If you have any questions, please contact the LIRT Awards Committee Chair: Rebecca Davis (rebecca.davis@simmons.edu).
2020-2021 Committee Updates

Awards

LIRT Award Committee noteworthy accomplishments for 2020-2021:

- Hosted the first-ever online Awards ceremony honoring the 2020 and 2021 Award recipients
- Revised and expanded documentation for the committee to facilitate smoother transitions from year to year
- Revised the Innovation in Instruction award rubric

Submitted by 2020-2021 LIRT Awards Committee Co-chairs Emilia Marcyk and Rebecca Davis.

Communications

The LIRT Communications committee published four issues of *LIRT News* in the 2020-21 year. Committee Co-chair Rachel Mulvihill, with the help of then LIRT President Jen Hunter, spearheaded one of LIRT’s three strategic planning goals for the year, to increase LIRT’s social media engagement in order to highlight the great work taking place within LIRT and across the library instruction field. A group of librarians with experience or a special interest in social media met regularly over the year and focused their efforts on Twitter. There’s been a short lull as the Communications Committee transitions to its new roster, but expect regular tweeting to resume soon! Follow us @LIRT_ALA.

Submitted by 2020-2021 Communications Committee Co-chairs Sherri Brown and Rachel Mulvihill.

Conference Program

The LIRT President’s Program Conference Planning Committee spent the year coordinating a virtual program that was initially developed for ALA Annual 2020, but due to the conference’s cancellation, the session was postponed until ALA Annual 2021. Much of the Committee’s work included coordinating speaker availability for a shift to virtual programming, sharing information, and communicating with ALA, the speakers, and committee members, and other event planning logistics. Thankfully, the speakers were able to offer their presentations virtually and a year later than they originally planned. The Committee also prepared for a leadership transition and discussed the ALA Annual 2022 program theme.

The session, *Smooth Transitions: Developing Information Literacy in the In-Between Places*, provided an opportunity for three librarians to present programs they offer in their different libraries to meet users in the “in-between” places for developing info literacy skills. Read more about the program in this newsletter on pages 5-6.

Submitted by LIRT Conference Program Committee 2021 Co-chair Lauren Kehoe.

Membership

The 2020-21 Membership committee included Co-chairs Dr. Carla James-Jackson and Mitch Fontenot, and members Lauren Colburn, Lily Dubach, and Christine Woods.

The committee had a virtual year working by email and Zoom and met twice throughout the year. During the 2020-2021 year: Lily Dubach, Christine Woods, and Mitch Fontenot contributed to the Member A-LIRT column for the quarterly newsletter. The Membership Committee contributed to the discussion forum on increasing diversity in LIRT at the ALA Annual Meeting in June 2021. Lily Dubach is now Co-chair with Mitch Fontenot for the upcoming year and we thank Dr. Carla James-Jackson for her role and work as Co-chair for the past two years.

Submitted by 2020-2021 LIRT Membership Committee Co-chair Mitch Fontenot.
Who’s Who in LIRT 2021-2022

LIRT Elected Officers

**President**
Susan Mythen, Director of Campus Library Services
Florida State College at Jacksonville

**Vice President/President-Elect**
Becca Neel, Assistant Director for Resource Management & User Experience
University of Southern Indiana

**Secretary**
Leanna Fry Balci, Instructional Design Librarian
Brigham Young University

**Treasurer**
Erica England, First-year Experience Librarian
Washington State University

**Vice Treasurer/Treasurer-Elect**
Fagdeba Bakoyema (Bako), Information Literacy and Learning Assistance Coordinator
Alabama State University

**LIRT ALA Councilor**
Victor Baeza, Library Graduate Initiatives and Engagement Coordinator
Oklahoma State University

Appointed Officers

**Archivist**
Michelle Roubal, Associate Professor
Joliet Junior College Library

**Electronic Resources Manager**
Billie Peterson-Lugo, Associate Dean for Library Collections, Systems, and Digital Services
Baylor University

**LIRT News Editor**
Sherri Brown, Research Librarian for English and Digital Humanities
University of Virginia

**LIRT News Production Editor**
Rachel Mulvihill, Head of the Downtown Campus Library
University of Central Florida
LIRT Committee Leadership

**Adult Learners**
Chair: Holly Hebert, Assistant Professor, Womack Educational Leadership
Middle Tennessee State University

Vice Chair: Leslie Rewis, Outreach Librarian
NorthWest Arkansas Community College

**Awards**
Co-Chair: Rebecca Davis, Assistant Professor
School of Library and Information Science, Simmons University

Co-Chair: Wayne Finley, Associate Professor
Northern Illinois University Libraries

**Communications**
Chair: Rachel Mulvihill, Head of the Downtown Campus Library
University of Central Florida

Vice Chair: Renee Kiner, Public Services Librarian
University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

**Conference Program 2022**
Co-Chair: Lauren Kehoe, Accessibility and Accommodations Librarian
New York University

Co-Chair: Julie Hornick, Instructional Services Librarian
Florida Southern College

**Liaison**
Chair: Laura Pearle, Director of the Cox Library
Milton Academy, Massachusetts

**Membership**
Co-Chair: Mitch Fontenot, Humanities and Social Sciences/Outreach Librarian
Louisiana State University

Co-Chair: Lily Dubach, Textbook Affordability Librarian
University of Central Florida

**Organization & Planning**
Chair: Jennifer Hunter, Reference and Research Services Librarian
Princeton University

**Teaching, Learning, and Technology**
Chair: Jennifer Hamilton, Assistant Professor and Head of Instructional Services
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

**Top 20**
Chair: Melissa Gomis, Teaching and Learning Librarian
University of Nebraska

Vice Chair: Meghann Kuhlmann, Instruction and Research Services Librarian
Wichita State University

**Transitions to College**
Co-Chair: Brendan Johnson, Reference and Instruction Librarian
Penn State Abington

Co-Chair: Sarah Simms, Undergraduate & Student Success Librarian
Louisiana State University
Dear Tech Talk— I’d like a better understanding of the concept digital pedagogy. I often hear the phrase used but in seemingly disparate contexts, so I am . . . confused. – Differing Perspectives on Digital Pedagogy

Dear DPDP— It’s not surprising that you hear the phrase – digital pedagogy – used in dissimilar contexts. In their systematic review, Väätäjä & Ruokamo (2021) report that “even though the concept of digital pedagogy was mentioned in many articles, it was often not defined at all” (p. 10). Consequently, with no apparent definition, those invoking the phrase may assign their own interpretation of its meaning, which may or may not reflect the true meaning.

We live in an era infused with technology and technological tools developed to improve our lives. The education realm is certainly no exception to this reality, as is evidenced through the pervasive presence of learning management systems (LMS), online proctoring tools for testing, online research resources from libraries, online support such as chat or one-on-one and group video meetings, and the list goes on. And during the past 18 months of wrestling with COVID-19, all involved with education at any level—including the most determined technophobe—had to rely on technology to enable the continuity of education as well as the continuity of employment. Consequently, many in the field of education may have felt and believed they were deep in the weeds of digital pedagogy, but were they, really?

As we often do, let’s focus on a common understanding of what digital pedagogy is, and perhaps more importantly, what it is not. As early as 2012, Croxall (2012) defined digital pedagogy as “the use of electronic elements to enhance or to change [the] experience of education. . . digital pedagogy is an attempt to use technology to change teaching and learning in a variety of ways.” He further stated, “simply using electronic elements in your teaching does not mean that you are practicing digital pedagogy.” This last statement is key to understanding digital pedagogy, because it’s easy to make the assumption that digital pedagogy is about using technology in teaching and learning environments. However, the journal Hybrid Pedagogy makes it clear that “Digital Pedagogy is precisely not about using digital technologies for teaching. . . it is as much about using digital tools thoughtfully as it is about deciding when not to use digital tools [emphasis mine], and about paying attention to the impact of digital tools on learning” (https://hybridpedagogy.org/tag/what-is-digital-pedagogy/). Additionally, Morris (2014a) states, “Digital pedagogy concerns itself with learning in the digital age. It is – as all pedagogies must be – less interested in technologies and tools, than it is in the person, the learner, and how learning happens.”

Davis et al. (2020) identify key concepts in digital pedagogy:

- Openness – “understood as transparency of practice, removal of boundaries, and sharing of content, tools, and ideas,” including failed teaching practices, open-access publications, open-source software, OERs.
- Collaboration – “openness of individual practice enables collaboration,” including assignments developed through serial collaboration, hashtag syllabi, collaborative learning.
- Play – a “willingness to experiment, to try something new just to see what happens;” “with the
willingness to try comes a tolerance of failure [emphasis mine];” not necessarily a clear end in sight [like an experiment] but rather a focus on the creative process of learning.

- Practice – applied learning; the practical side of acquiring skills.
- Student Agency – encouraging students to develop ownership of, control over, and efficacy for their learning (student centered learning).
- Identity – providing opportunities for demonstrating identity, which also enables student agency. (pp. 4-14)

Related to openness and transparency, Davis et al. (2020) also emphasize that, “Digital pedagogy... includes transparency of teaching practice, even when that practice does not work out” (p. 6). Digital pedagogy requires more than a tolerance of failure, but a willingness to share digital pedagogy practices that did not work out as expected, as was done in the article written by Rosenblum and Harris (2019).

And a caveat/myth buster provided by Davis et al. (2020) related to digital natives:

While instructors sometimes assume that students are ‘digital natives,’ research in multiple studies shows that the last two generations of students are high-functioning consumers and users of digital technology rather than fluent, critical users of digital tools [emphasis mine]. . . For this reason, instructors may want to embed user strategies and evaluation techniques when employing digital pedagogy. (p. 21)

Moving away from digital pedagogy definitions and concepts and looking more historically at digital pedagogy, Jesse Stommel (2015) developed a digital pedagogy timeline, beginning with the introduction of the blackboard in the United States in 1801. His intent was to track “parallel (intersecting) histories of edtech, digital humanities, and digital pedagogy.” As one moves through this timeline, activity slowly starts to increase during the mid-20th century, with a clear uptick around the new millennium, and a significant increase in activity since 2010, as illustrated in the image below.

This rise in digital pedagogy seems to parallel the development and practice of digital humanities, and there is a connection. However, Stommel (2015) makes clear that “Teaching the digital humanities is not equivalent to digital pedagogy.” Looking at the definition of digital pedagogy, what should be clear is that effective digital humanities instruction should incorporate digital pedagogy—selecting the appropriate digital tools/resources and non-digital tools/resources to achieve desired learning or research outcomes.
Moving away from digital humanities into the broader realm of library instruction, how does digital pedagogy apply in this more general area of practice? Early on, as online catalogs and CD-ROM and later online databases became commonplace modes of research, librarians focused on teaching researchers the skills needed to use these systems effectively—Boolean logic, keyword vs. field-limited searching, controlled vocabulary, etc. Instruction sessions took place in rooms with computers so students could both observe the instructor’s actions and follow along on the provided computers. Russell and Hensley (2017) refer to this approach as buttonology: “software training that surveys different features of an interface in an introductory manner. In a library one-shot, teaching the library discovery system or showing how to perform an advanced search in a database would be buttonology” (p. 588). Buttonology does not equal digital pedagogy.

In today’s instruction, buttonology may still be appropriate, especially if the desired outcome is effective use of a new tool, for example, a citation software workshop. However, most library instruction has moved past buttonology, focusing on larger research concepts, using flipped classrooms, interactive instructional environments, collaborative learning activities, etc. to help learners grasp these concepts in more meaningful ways. Consequently, as librarians work with classroom instructors to identify the desired student outcomes, they strive to determine the most effective instructional processes to enable success for the students. To this point, Varner (2017) states, “there is a... conversation happening within the disciplines and among faculty about how to creatively and critically incorporate technology into assignments in ways that truly enhance student engagement and encourage them to confront how technology impacts the work they do” (p. 207). Both classroom instructors and librarians have a vested interest in, and see benefits from, incorporating digital pedagogy into their instruction.

From (2017) discusses digital pedagogy competence, indicating that it correlates knowledge, skills, and attitudes with technology, learning theory, subject, context, and learning (p. 43). He further states:

[I]t is not enough merely to understand concepts, be familiar with current research and to know what digital technologies are available. Skills are also needed, e.g., being able to use such technologies, meeting students where they are, and giving them precisely the kind of support they need to progress. (p. 48)

From (2017) also points out that this is a “competence that is likely to develop the more experienced a teacher becomes” (p. 43).

Given this perspective, it’s worth noting that librarians relatively new to instruction may feel less comfortable applying digital pedagogy because of their lack of experience and because of their possible discomfort with experimentation and/or experiencing some level of failure, which are key elements of digital pedagogy. Therefore, it’s important for those working with less experienced instruction librarians to mentor them and be supportive, especially when a new instructional practice doesn’t work out as desired.

Whether a new instruction librarian or a seasoned veteran, consider these recommendations from Hubbard (2018) to develop assignments rooted in digital pedagogy:

1. “[R]eally think through the learning outcomes. You might find that digital isn’t the right medium or you might find additional ways to tap into greater outcomes.”
2. Make enough time. “Students need time to experiment, fail, and then succeed.”
3. “[R]emember that not everyone has equal access to technology. . . To create a more equal ‘playing field,’ you have to think about the students who have the least access.”
4. “[K]now that there is no such thing as a ‘digital native.’ Students are “not comfortable with using technology beyond basic smart phone, internet, and social media use, or because they struggle with the application of technology to scholarship.”

Additionally, consider using some of these resources that support the practice of digital pedagogy:

- Digital Pedagogy Community of Practice: https://www.facebook.com/groups/2823241361097341/
- Digital Pedagogy Cookbook: Toolkit for Educators: http://digitalpedagogycookbook.eu/?page_id=918 Developed to support educators who lack the skills and competences to apply digital pedagogy and to provide practical knowledge and solutions on implementing digital pedagogy in adult classes.
- Digital Pedagogy in the Humanities: Concepts, Models, and Experiments:
Sponsored by the Modern Language Association, it consists of 59 keywords of digital pedagogy. For each keyword a curator has chosen and annotated 10 pedagogical artifacts, written a curator statement, and provided additional resources. There are over 590 annotated artifacts related to teaching and learning that have been openly peer reviewed and ultimately published on GitHub. (Modern Language Association, 2021)

- **DS106 Assignment Bank: https://assignments.ds106.us/**
  “This site hosts the assignments that participants in the open online digital storytelling course, ds106 [https://ds106.us/], complete as part of their work in the course. Rather than specifying assignments everyone must do, participants can choose from an array of ones included on [the] site- all of them have been created by course participants. Each assignment has a rated difficulty of 1 to 5 stars (participants can vote), so for a particular topic, the task might be to complete 10 stars worth of say, Design Assignments.” (https://assignments.ds106.us/about/)

- **Future Classroom Toolkit: https://fcl.eun.org/toolkit**
  “[E]nables teachers, school leaders, education policy-makers and technology suppliers to create and implement Future Classroom Scenarios. . . a narrative description of teaching and learning that provides a clear vision for innovation and advanced pedagogical practice supported by technology.”

When introduced to a new practice, some people appreciate using a model to which they can connect—identify the main elements of the practice, measure where they might fall within the model, and identify areas for further development. To guide their systematic review, Väätäjä & Ruokamo (2021) developed a digital pedagogy model that some may find useful:

1. **Pedagogical Orientation** – an instructor’s “perceptions of what the learning process should look like, how individuals learn, and how they should be taught and counseled.”
2. **Pedagogical Practices** – “methods the instructor uses to teach,” including:
   a. **Foundational ICT (Information Communications Technology) Practices** – “initial thoughts on incorporating ICT into . . . teaching practices.”
   b. **Developing ICT Practices** – beginning to comprehend curricular implications of ICT.
   c. **Skill-based ICT Practices** – “focus on ICT skills rather than the use of ICT to enhance learning.”
   d. **Digital Pedagogical Practices** – comprehension that ICT is a tool that can enable learners’ engagement with problem-based activities.
3. **Digital Pedagogical Competencies** – “skills teachers need to integrate digital technologies successfully into teaching.” (Väätäjä & Ruokamo, 2021, pp. 2-3)

Last, in reading about digital pedagogy, one frequently encounters critical digital pedagogy. Consequently, it’s helpful to have a common understanding of that concept as well, even though this column does not focus on this more specific topic. Waddell and Clariza (2018) write, “Critical digital pedagogy takes into account the limitations of any given technology and centers inquiry over technology. While digital tools may render some power structures visible, they obscure others” (p. 228).

Stommel (2014) provides additional perspective:

> We are better users of technology when we are thinking critically about the nature and effects of that technology. What we must do is work to encourage students and ourselves to think critically about new tools (and, more importantly, the tools we already use). And **when we’re looking for solutions, what we most need to change is our thinking** [emphasis mine] and not about our tools.

Additionally, he outlines some key components of critical digital pedagogy:

In short, Critical Digital Pedagogy:

- centers its practice on community and collaboration;
- must remain open to diverse, international voices, and thus requires invention to reimagine the ways that communication and collaboration happen across cultural and political boundaries;
• will not, cannot, be defined by a single voice but must gather together a cacophony of voices;
• must have use and application outside traditional institutions of education. (Stommel, 2014)

What jumps out from the comments of Wadell and Clariza (2018) and Stommel (2014) is that critical digital pedagogy ties directly into concepts and practices associated with diversity, equity, and inclusion. Waddell and Clariza (2018) highlight this connection through their discussion of two case studies at the University of Hawai‘i, Manoa in which they apply critical digital pedagogy to library instruction provided in a sciences course and a humanities course where it “is explored alongside practicing cultural sensitivity in the classroom” (p. 229).

Waddell and Clariza (2018) also pose some reflective questions related to library instruction and critical digital pedagogy:

• How do different technologies allow us to make different kinds of critical interventions in our classrooms or professional practice?
• How does the use of technology enable (or hinder) these interventions?
• How does the effective use of technology for instruction vary in different organizational, cultural, and social contexts? (p. 232)

And they aligned critical digital pedagogy with the following ACRL frames:

• Authority is Constructed and Contextual. This frame helps learners critically examine the characteristics and contexts of digital objects and to ask questions about their origins.
• Information Creation is a Process. Creating digital objects involves a unique process.
• Information has Value. Asks learners to consider the value digital information objects have in the information landscape. (pp. 228-9)

At this point, one hopes you have a better understanding of digital pedagogy and perhaps even recognize that you have been using it all along—without even knowing. Now that you are more aware of digital pedagogy, perhaps attending the Digital Pedagogy Lab (https://digitalpedagogylab.com/) would enable further growth in this area. The Digital Pedagogy Lab is “an international professional development gathering for educators committed to critical pedagogy, digital pedagogy, and critical digital pedagogy. . . The Lab is a space for teachers, students, librarians, administrators, and technologists interested in inquiry, praxis, and social justice” (https://digitalpedagogylab.com/about-digital-pedagogy-lab/).

Additionally, you may want to investigate these 2 journals: Hybrid Pedagogy (https://hybridpedagogy.org/) and The Journal of interactive Teaching and Pedagogy (https://jitp.commons.gc.cuny.edu/). Regarding these journals, Varner (2017) states “They tend to focus on concrete examples and practical explanations of assignments that use technology to truly enhance student work. JITP has separate sections for sample assignments, tool tips, and what it calls ‘teaching fails’” (p. 207).

Additional Resources


https://www.seanmichaelmorris.com/technology-is-not-pedagogy/


Get Involved with LIRT

LIRT Standing Committees

Use the online form to volunteer

Adult Learners
This committee is charged with assisting library professionals to more effectively serve adult learners.

Awards
This committee is charged with selecting the recipients for the LIRT Innovation in Instruction Award and the LIRT Librarian Recognition Award.

Communications
This committee is responsible for soliciting and distributing content, in both written and visual formats, for all avenues of communication with LIRT membership. This includes, but is not limited to, preparing and distributing the round table’s newsletter, curating all social media accounts, and providing oversight of LIRT’s online presence. The committee may create and update content, as well as solicit content and advise other committees regarding the creation and maintenance of content.

Conference Program
This committee shall be responsible for annual program preparation and presentation.

Liaison
This committee shall initiate and maintain communication with groups within the American Library Association dealing with issues relevant to library instruction and shall disseminate information about these groups’ activities.

Membership
This committee shall be responsible for publicizing the Round Table’s purposes, activities and image; and for promoting membership in the Round Table.

Organization and Planning
This committee shall be responsible for long-range planning and making recommendations to guide the future direction of LIRT.

Teaching, Learning, & Technology
This committee will be responsible for identifying and promoting the use of technology in library instruction. Special attention will be given to technologies that enhance learning and can be easily adapted to a variety of different learning environments. Activities will include assisting with programs, writing reviews and articles for the newsletter, and promoting research that relates to our charge.

Top 20
This committee shall be responsible for monitoring the library instruction literature and identifying high quality library-instruction related articles from all types of libraries. Annually, this committee shall prepare and publish in the LIRT News a list of the Top 20 articles on library instruction.

Transitions to College
This committee builds and supports partnerships between school, public, and academic librarians to assist students in their transition to the academic library environment.

For more information about our committees, visit: http://www.ala.org/lirt/committees

Library Instruction Round Table News

c/o Danielle M. Ponton
American Library Association
225 N. Michigan Ave., 13th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601
dponton@ala.org
800.545.2433 x3213