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NELIG Meeting - September 19, 2008

New England Library Instruction Group

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NELIG Meeting
September 19, 2008
Eastern Connecticut State University

Minutes
NELIG Co-Chair Laura Hanlan opened the event by describing the format for the meeting, which was to include a “lightning round” on library instruction and a session on assessment of information literacy results. She also described the goals of NELIG for the coming year. These include conducting 3 quarterly meetings (with the December meeting to be held at several locations) updating the NELIG website, maintaining the NELIG Facebook account, and writing a manual for co-chairs.

Laura also thanked Susan Herzog of Eastern Connecticut State University for hosting the event and for ECSU’s library for helping to cover costs. Housekeeping matters were announced, and a list was circulated for volunteers for the planning committed for the Annual Program on June 5, 2009.

Library Instruction Show-N-Tell: Share Teaching Methods, Tips, Ideas and Tricks
The format of this part of a meeting was a “lightning round” with participants given 3 minutes (or 5 minutes by “special permission”) to share a tip or technique, either new or “tried and true”.

Angie Locknar of MIT spoke of an activity in which juniors were given an article, and were shown 3 ways to find a related article: by keyword, by a database feature: “see related article”, and by using Web of Science to find articles that cited the original article.

Sandra Rothenberg of Framingham State described an exercise using Google, the online catalog, and a database, and comparing what is useful about each.

Barbara Kenney from Roger Williams spoke of using the screen capture program Snagit to create handouts. She also described a classroom session in which she told students to write down instructions while their computers were “frozen” and then forcing them to rely on their written instructions when the computers were unfrozen, in order to get them to understand that they must pay attention.

Matt Sylvain of U Mass Dartmouth described his position as a “blended librarian”, involving collaboration with instructional development staff. He is working to integrate library resources into online and “blended” (combination of online with onsite) courses. He uses a tool called Wimba, an online teaching and learning tool, and uses desk sharing technology for instruction sessions and reference appointments.

Cecelia Dalzell at Quinnipiac discussed planning to update the TILT tutorials which had been customized for Quinnipiac as QUILT (Quinnipiac University Information Literacy Tutorial). Academic technologists have been involved in order to attempt to “jazz it up”.

Barbara Rockenbach from Yale discussed the process of bringing in people from the writing center, instructional technology department and graduate teaching center to give teaching tips to librarians who give instruction sessions, in order to encourage innovation and use of active learning techniques. One example used was to have student write down their research problems, have them try to solve it,
and then write down their research strategies in order to try to force them to articulate what they've learned.

Mona Niedbala of URI spoke about using wikis for information literacy instruction to foster critical thinking, collaboration and creativity. She made use of wikispaces.com as a way of supporting faculty/librarian/student interaction and collaborative learning. In this project students learned to scan and to manipulate electronic files, and made use of online discussion groups.

Tish Brennan of Rhode Island College revived an old instructional activity, the research log. Students wrote down what happened in the course of a research project, and what they did to make it go better. She also spoke of a game called “petals around a rose” that was used to encourage abstract reasoning.

Mary Adams of U Mass Dartmouth also spoke about “tried and true” ideas, including working with faculty to plan sessions looking at results from previous classes, using different types of activities and flexibility in workshops, and having students participate in teacher planning by writing evaluation of sessions and telling them that sessions will be changed based on their input.

Laura Hanlan at WPI spoke about trying to “wing it” more. Rather than doing canned searches, she had students throw her words and then go into critical discussion of keywords. She also had students use tools during sessions, such as Ref Works and delicious.

Christine Drew also of WPI was inspired by the last NELIG annual program to use the Cephalonian method. Images were hung up at spots around the library, and when students had that image on a card they were supposed to ask a question. Other technique included a keyword brainstorm using an online stopwatch.

**What are your Results? IL Assessment with Impact**

The next part of the meeting consisted of a presentation by Angie Locknar of assessment results, followed by some discussion of assessment. Angie L., as co-chair of NELIG, began by mentioning that NELIG will be soliciting ideas of a new NELIG logo, with a prize for the winner.

Then she presented on a program that had been conducted at MIT designed to integrate information literacy into the freshman curriculum. A pilot had first been run in the Fall of 2006, and students had to give feedback on different parts of this program, including on the tutorials and the lectures. One example was a card sorting exercise in which students had to rank videos in order of importance.

When in the Fall of 2007 a different version of the program was run, assessment was done by staff from the Teaching and Learning Lab. This included pre- and post-surveys, and a longitudinal study. The findings indicated that the majority of freshman arrived at MIT unprepared to conduct scholarly research, and the data highlighted the need for students to gain an awareness of the importance of scholarly research skills.

After Angie’s presentation, Douglas Black of Amherst College spoke about using data regarding Interlibrary Loan requests for purposes related to assessment. The fact that ILL requests were made for material that the library actually owned was used to conclude that some people don’t know how to find the items, and data was used to study aspects of knowledge gaps.

At the end of this discussion, the Fall meeting adjourned, and was followed by an organizational meeting for the Annual Program Planning Committee.
Ruth Alcabes
NELIG Secretary, 2008/2009