

**National Forum on Information Literacy
Meeting Summary
May 13, 2005**

**Meeting Host: Council on Independent Colleges
Washington, D.C.**

Present:

Patricia Breivik, Chair
Julia Blixrud, Association of Research Libraries
Barbara Cambridge, National Council of Teachers of English
Shelley Carey, American Association of Colleges and Universities
Nancy Davenport, Council on Libraries and Information Resources
Mary Ellen Davis, Association of College and Research Libraries
Craig Gibson, Association of College and Research Libraries
Steve Gilbert, Teaching and Learning with Technology Group
Trudi Bellardo Hahn, National Council on Libraries and Information Science
Sarah Hamrick, Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies
Woody Horton
Lana Jackman, Melange Information Services
Lorna Jones, Melange Information Services
Anne Jordan, Governing Magazine
Irvin Katz, Educational Testing Service
Barbie Keiser
Carrie Lowe, American Library Association
Chuck Melley, Educational Testing Service
Catherine Quinlan, University of British Columbia
Mary Ann Rehnke, Council of Independent Colleges
George Smith, Institute of Museum and Library Services
Julie Walker, American Association of School Librarians
Sharon Weiner, Vanderbilt University

1. Introduction to future co-chairs

Patricia Breivik announced that Sharon Weiner of Vanderbilt University, along with Lana Jackman of Melange Information Services, will be the two co-chairs of the Forum in the future.

2. Report on UNESCO thematic debate/presentation by Albert Boekhorst

Dr. Albert Boekhorst reported on the UNESCO debate on information literacy, and presented on the state of information literacy in the Netherlands in particular. His research interests focus on the teaching of information literacy, knowledge management, and similar topics. He has especially focused on information literacy teaching, practices, and processes in school libraries.

On the theoretical plane, information seeking involves the effective navigation within an “information space” through three methods: (1) observation, involving objects and processes; (2) conversation, with persons, and (3) consultation, focused on recorded I information. These three methods can occur in both “real” and “virtual” dimensions.

Dr. Boekhorst discussed the ALA definition of information literacy and moved on to other theoretical underpinnings, and recalled Harris and Hodges’ identification of 19 separate “literacies” related to information literacy.

He discussed related conceptions: the ICT Concept, encompassing both information literacy and technology fluency; the “Information Resources” concept; and the “Information Process” Concept.

Fundamentally, information literacy is a competence involving attitude/motivational aspects, knowledge, and skills.

Learning information literacy requires the appropriate social interactions and can occur in the following ways: “by doing”; through formal education or training; and through information education. It cannot be learned in isolation; integration with content is essential.

Learning information literacy is a developmental process that moves through a number of stages, paralleling maturational stages of (1) “unconscious incompetent” and (2) “conscious competent”. Assessments available include: self-assessment; peer review; and tutor assessment.

In the Netherlands, Dr. Boekhorst found the following trends and practices: a large IT emphasis; enormous differentiation in approaches to information literacy education in schools; most initiatives originating with librarians, with resistance from teachers.

The placement of information literacy into school curricula, based on the Netherlands experience, requires the following: sequencing, developing relations among skill levels; with frequent repetition; and the linking of library lessons with assignments, allowing teachers to delve more deeply into their subjects. Pilot projects have involved distinguishing “partial skills”, classifying skills by grade levels; and using a “bookmark” schema to capture steps in information literacy process. In addition, public libraries have cooperated with school libraries in developing leaflets for secondary school students; and students have created digital portfolios.

The professionalization of teachers in the Netherlands has also assisted with information literacy education. Workshops, assessment training, and a book with good practices have all been made available to teachers.

For higher education in the Netherlands, there is a web site: www.loowi.org. To the “ACRL norms” have been added “responsibility” and “priority”.

Dr. Boekhorst also discussed various European initiatives relating to information literacy, including: ENIL (a network of researchers focused on creating a common research agenda and exchanging best practices); PHILOS, a European Union initiative; ENSIL, the European Network for School Libraries and Information literacy; and LIS Education in Europe.

To sum up: questions about information literacy center on What? (Dynamic Container Concept); When? (Lifelong learning); and How? (Integrated into all subjects).

Dr. Boekhorst’s home page is at: www.hum.uva.nl/akb.

At the UNESCO “Thematic Debate on Information Literacy”, Phillip Candy was the Forum’s representative. The report from this debate suggested a wide-ranging focus on definitions of information literacy, and the associated challenges in transcending I.T. skills as the prevailing conception.

Woody Horton reported that information literacy is now considered part of the “Information for All” program; this poses a jurisdictional challenge because of the impact of information literacy on the agendas of educational ministries of UNESCO member countries.

Barriers to information literacy: (1) in K-12, the problems associated with high-stakes testing, and (2) in higher education, faculty don’t have time for information literacy instruction; information literacy needs to save faculty time.

3. Approval of Summary of January 2005 meeting

The meeting summary was approved as read.

4. Discussion of proposed book on 21st Century Literacies

Mary Jo Godwin of Neal-Schuman Publishers discussed with Forum members a Neal-Schuman proposal to publish a comprehensive “Encyclopedia of Literacies”, inclusive of all types of literacies, including information literacy.

Questions from Forum members included: would a handbook format be more appropriate? How will this encyclopedia deal with the definitional morass surrounding

information literacy? Perhaps a compilation of experiences with information literacy as part of this work would be more appropriate? Who is the intended audience?

5. High Level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning

Patricia Breivik referred to papers from the Prague conference as a foundation for understanding the purpose and goals of the planned High Level Colloquium.

This event will occur in 2006 in Alexandria, Egypt. Teams from various countries around the world will be invited to present on facets of information literacy; team members will be selected from these sectors: education, economic development, healthy, government/policy, and information literacy. Fundraising still needs to raise \$70,000 to hold this conference.

6. Update on ETS ITC Testing

Irvin Katz of the Educational Testing Service reported on the status of the ITC Test (ICT Literacy Assessment). This test assesses information literacy skills in the context of technology. There are many definitional issues involved, of course, in relating technology literacy or “fluency” to information literacy.

The instrument features interactive tasks (scenarios) using simulated software; with tasks of varying lengths, and evidence-based design. Scalability and sustainability are key features of this instrument. Over 4,000 examinees on 40 campuses have taken the test to this point. The test can provide information for: accreditation; institutional improvement; and individual certification.

The initial design of this test is geared to college students (sophomore—junior transition, the “rising junior” stage).

Questions from Forum members: will a “workforce” version of the ICT test be developed in the future? How will information gathered from the test be linked with expectations of the regional accrediting agencies? How would faculty perform on such a test?

7. Report on CLIR proposal for planning summit to alert policymakers about ICT test data

Nancy Davenport reported on a proposal from CLIR to create a planning summit to inform policymakers about the results from the ETS ICT test. This is envisioned as a one-day invitational meeting. Questions center on timing, and writing a grant proposal to support this summit. Interesting topics might include: correlation between students’ use of online courses (via WebCT and Blackboard), and students’ success on the ICT test. (Also, correlations between the ICT test and success with e-portfolios); prototyping of “best practices” in information literacy instruction and assessment based on preliminary results from ICT test; and the connection between workforce development and information literacy assessment.

8. Member Reports

American Library Association—Carrie Lowe

Carrie described a research project on the credibility of online information now being conducted by ALA.

Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies—Sarah Hamrick

Sarah discussed some of ASCLA's initiatives relating to services to people with disabilities.

American Association of Colleges and Universities—Shelley Carey

Shelley is the Director of Publications at AACU.

National Commission on Libraries and Information Science—Trudy Hahn

NCLIS has developed many connections with the information literacy agenda. Trudy described some of NCLIS's interest in services to the aged, in relation to the White House Conference on Aging.

Institute of Museum and Library Services—George Smith

George discussed the mission of IMLS and described those IMLS programs administered through state agencies.

Barbie Keiser

Barbie discussed her work with the Economist Intelligence Unit, involving research applied to other countries' economic development.

Woody Horton

Woody discussed his involvement with the Fulbright Senior Specialized Program, as well as his interest in call centers in public libraries.

National Council of Teachers of English—Barbara Cambridge

The NCTE has started a "literacy coaches" project, which involves providing coaching to classroom teachers to improve their understanding and teaching strategies for literacy instruction.

Melange Information Services—Lorna Jones

Melange Information Services, Inc., has a grant from NIH and is currently involved in Phase 1 of a Feasibility Study relating to Type 2 diabetes, health literacy, and self-care management.

Council on Library and Information Resources—Nancy Davenport

CLIR's interests focus on scholarly communication, the impact of technology, including a study relating to digital objects and information literacy.

Association of College and Research Libraries—Mary Ellen Davis

ACRL is working with disciplinary associations on their implementation of discipline-specific adaptations of the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*. Recent work involves discipline-specific adaptations of these standards to science and technology (undertaken by ACRL's Science & Technology Section), and to music (undertaken by the Music Library Association). ACRL members familiar with the Standards reviewed draft standards produced by both organizations.

University of British Columbia—Catherine Quinlan

Catherine described her interest in the relationship between health care and information literacy.

Council of Independent Colleges—Mary Ellen Rehnke

CIC sponsors workshops for CAOs, librarians, and IT professionals on teaching and learning issues and the transformation of college libraries.

American Association of School Librarians—Julie Walker

At a recent meeting of the AASL, the term "critical literacy" was used. It is well-known by now that information literacy is called many different terms by different stakeholders, in different groups, associations, and venues.

Julie is a board member of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

A session on "Toolkit for Information Literacy" for academic and other types of libraries was offered at the annual ALA conference in 2005.

Association of Research Libraries—Julia Blixrud

Julia described three initiatives of ARL: (1) the Learning Outcomes Working Group and Project SAILS, which has now completed testing of the assessment instrument (phase 3);

70 institutions have participated; (2) the ARL SPEC Kits, with one Kit focusing on Collections of Instructional Best Practices, and (3) Strategic Planning relating to information policy, relating to teaching and learning initiatives

Governing Magazine—Ann Jordan

Governing Magazine focused on trends in state and local government.

SIL International—Marjorie Cook

SIL International addresses literacy issues for populations around the world where languages have never been recorded in written form.

ProLiteracy Worldwide—Bob Wedgeworth

ProLiteracy Worldwide focuses on adults with literacy challenges around the world; it has 1200 affiliates in the U.S. and in other countries. Two current projects involve support for students taking standardized tests, and assistance with online instruction for tutors and students.

TLT (Teaching and Learning with Technology) Group—Steve Gilbert

Steve described the online workshops co-sponsored by the TLT Group and ACRL; a recent workshop dealt with academic disciplines and information literacy.

9. Meeting date and topic for fall meeting

Fall meeting time: September 23, 2005.

Possible future topics: the U.K. metadata project; numeracy/statistical issues.

We should invite to future meetings representatives from government or industry who have become advocates for information literacy.

Also, an editor of The Chronicle of Higher Education will be invited to a future meeting to discuss previous research performed by The Chronicle on college faculty.