

National Forum on Information Literacy

Meeting Summary

May 5, 2006

**Host: National Cable and Telecommunications Association
Washington, D.C.**

Attendees:

Lana Jackman, Melange Information Services, Co-Chair
Sharon Weiner, Vanderbilt University, Co-Chair
Lisa Boyd, National Library of Medicine
Barbara Cambridge, National Council of Teachers of English
Marjorie Cook, SIL International
Felicia Cote, U.S. Department of Education
Michele Farrell, Institute of Museum and Library Services
Frank Gallagher, Cable in the Classroom
Craig Gibson, Association of College and Research Libraries
Barbie Keiser, BEK
Barbara Michelman, Partnership for 21st Century Skills
Elaina Norlin, Institute of Museum and Library Services
Kate Ruffing, National Association of State Directors for Career Technical Education
Carole Sund, National Education Association
Robert Wedgeworth, ProLiteracy Worldwide
Wanda Whitney, National Council on Library and Information Services
Stanley Winkler, Society of Applied Learning Technology
Christy Wright, Prince George's Community College
Karen Zill, Alliance for a Media Literate America

1. Approval of January 2006 Minutes (meeting summary)

The January 2006 meeting summary was approved, with one correction: the January summary lists the Center for Digital Libraries at Syracuse University as a member giving a report, whereas the name of the Center is the "Center for Digital Literacy."

2. The guest speaker for the this meeting of the Forum, Amy Borgstrum of AmeriCorps, was unable to attend. She will be asked to speak and lead a discussion at a future meeting of the Forum.

3. ETS Information Literacy Summit Planning (Lana Jackman, Sharon Weiner)

An invitational summit on Information Literacy, in coordination with ETS (Educational Testing Service), will be held at the National Education Association in Washington, D.C., in October 26, 2006. This summit will focus on mainstreaming information literacy across sectors of society. A list of sponsors will be invited who can contribute to the dialogue about information literacy and assessment of information literacy. ETS will also share data collected to date about the ICT Assessment results.

4. Update on the International Activities and the Slovenia Project—Barbie Keiser

Barbie Keiser provided an update on activities growing out of the Prague and Alexandria leadership conferences on information literacy. As reported by Woody Horton (formerly of NCLIS) at previous meetings of the Forum, UNESCO co-sponsored the Prague and Alexandria Conferences; there will now be partial UNESCO sponsorship as well of regional meetings (in 2006).

Regional meetings planned include: meetings in Chile for Latin American countries; one in North America (with western Europe); an Eastern European meeting; a Middle East/North African meeting; and an Asia meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

Barbie also described the Clearinghouse for Information Literacy project, based in Slovenia.

She also mentioned two articles of interest to members of the Forum: one, in Information Today (May 2006), an article on gaming and its educational implications; and a special theme issue of Information Research (April 2006) dealing with integrated ICT (information and communication technology) frameworks.

5. Virgin Islands Information Literacy Conference—Dr. Lana Jackman

The Virgin Islands Information Literacy Conference, scheduled for December 2006 at the University of the Virgin Islands, will appeal to a wide cross-section of professionals in various sectors of society; it is not intended to be a “library conference.”

6. Strategic Planning for the Forum (Weiner and Jackman)

The co-chairs discussed the following points:

The Forum is at a crossroads as to its purpose. There are questions about “mainstreaming” its mission, accompanied by challenges presented by lack of an administrative structure, an independent financial footing, and a lack of legal status.

Lana reported on the possibility of enlisting assistance from the Heller School (Business) at Brandeis University, whose MBA students have experience working with nonprofit organizations on strategic planning.

[Bob Wedgeworth of ProLiteracy, Inc., commented on the challenges of fiduciary aspects of nonprofit organizations.]

In previous years, Patricia Breivik, formerly Chair of the Forum, used her own institutional resources to provide infrastructure for the Forum.

One proposal that needs to be seriously considered is asking member organizations to contribute member dues to help support the work of the Forum.

A potential dues amount mentioned was \$150.00 per year, to be asked of member organizations that are serious about information literacy.

Wedgeworth suggested that his organization, ProLiteracy, could assume some “fiduciary” responsibilities on behalf of the Forum because it is already a 501(c)3 organization. This could be an interim arrangement for the next year while the strategic planning process for the Forum occurs.

7. NFIL web site—Weiner

Sharon Weiner’s son, a Media Arts graduate, will redesign the current web site, which at the time of the May meeting was still hosted by the Center for Digital Literacy, Syracuse University.

8. Members’ Reports

National Education Association—Carole Sund

Carole discussed a number of projects and activities in which she is involved at the NEA, including daily “Information Alerts”; advocacy for teachers; and

a grants program for libraries affected by Hurricane Katrina, called “Beyond Words.”

ProLiteracy Worldwide—Bob Wedgeworth

ProLiteracy Worldwide is an international literacy training organization. Some specific projects and functions include: publishing of adult literacy learning materials; providing technical assistance for adult/family literacy organizations; and sponsoring small grants through foundation support.

ProLiteracy has 1200 partner organizations around the world, and employs 30 to 40 interns who monitor the international network of literacy agencies (they are responsible for reviewing materials distributed internationally).

Institute for Museum and Library Services—Michele Farrell

In the future, NCLIS (National Commission on Libraries and Information Science) will be under IMLS and will be especially engaged in statistical surveys and other data collection.

IMLS will be involved in state grants programs for libraries.

An important new initiative is the “Youth Initiative” described on the agency’s web site, www.imls.gov.

BER, Inc.—Barbie Keiser

Barbie described the World Computer Exchange, a cooperative that sends computers to schools and libraries in developing countries.

She also discussed the new guidance documents for federal agencies for managing electronic records. Information about the policies can be found at archives.gov.

National Association of State Directors for Career/Technical Education—Katie Ruffing

Katie discussed the role of her organization in promoting broader technical education and training, including information literacy. She described a “Career Clusters Conference” to be held in June 2006.

Alliance for a Media Literate America—Karen Zill

The Alliance is a nonprofit membership organization.

Karen distributed a chart developed by the Alliance showing various definitions of “media literacy” to show the commonalities as well as distinctions among the family of “literacies” discussed in the Forum. She also mentioned the Alliance’s biennial conference.

Prince George’s Community College—Christy Wright

Christy is a first-time visitor to the Forum. She is a doctoral student at Morgan State University who is writing her thesis on information literacy and library education.

National Commission on Libraries and Information Science—Wanda Whitney

Wanda is currently an intern at NCLIS, and an MLS student at the University of Maryland.

Wanda discussed the 2006 Health Information Literacy Conference, a partnership with NLM (National Library of Medicine), with a consumer health information focus.

NCLIS recently released a research report on HIV/AIDs; it is now available on the nclis web site at www.nclis.gov.

SIL International—Marjorie Cook

Marjorie mentioned a “financial literacy” class held in Massachusetts.

SIL International conducts linguistic research around the world. Recently, SIL and the World Bank offered a one-day seminar. SIL is also reviewing definitions of “literacy”; traditionally, SIL has focused on reading skills but it is now evaluating other abilities.

National Council of Teachers of English—Barbara Cambridge

Barbara mentioned several NCTE projects and activities:

--the NCTE and the International Reading Association have developed “Standards for Literacy Coaching” for K-12, and has established a “Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse.”

--the NCTE has a strong policy statement on multi-modal literacy on its web site at www.ncte.org.

--a conference focused on the Partnership for 21st Century Skills is planned for fall 2006 in Berkeley, California.

--“Digital Futures” is a Macarthur Foundation grant-funded initiative focused on copyrighted, fair-use, educational materials for middle school students.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills—Barbara Michelman

Barbara is the Public Relations Officer for the Partnership.

Barbara discussed “Results that Matter: 21st Century Skills and High School Reform”, a report now available on the Partnership’s web site at www.21stcenturyskills.org. The ICT Literacy assessment is part of the framework envisioned in this report.

National Library of Medicine—Lisa Boyd

Lisa discussed NLM’s sponsorship of MedlinePlus.gov, the health information web site.

Society for Applied Learning Technology—Stanley Winkler

The Society for Applied Learning Technology is an advocacy group founded in 1972, to encourage public schools to use technologies. Two conferences are held each year. A recent conference focused on “Interactive Technologies.” Papers from the conferences and SALT-sponsored workshops have been published. The Washington Academy of Sciences has sponsored the STARS Program, which offers workshops and science fairs in public schools.

Cable in the Classroom—Frank Gallagher

Cable in the Classroom is the nonprofit education association of the cable industry. It deals with issues of connectivity and content provided to schools, and works with PTAs and various parents’ groups.

Cable in the Classroom is revamping its web site. The “media smart” part of the web site deals with media/information literacy.

Recently, over 1400 educators and media specialists were surveyed. 60 % believed there is not enough emphasis on estimates of student technology use. Cable in the Classroom will be sponsoring research awards for college, both graduate and undergraduate students.

9. New Business

The ETS Information Literacy Summit will be held October 16, 2006, at the National Education Association in Washington, D.C.

10. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Forum will be held on October 13 (agenda and location will be forthcoming).

--Recorder: Craig Gibson—Association of College and Research Libraries/George Mason University