# Being immersed

## Feedback from ACRL's Institute for Information Literacy's regional and national Immersion programs

### by Joan Kaplowitz

Summer 2004 was a banner year for information literacy in California as ACRL's Institute for Information Literacy's Regional Immersion Program was held here for the very first time. Immersion came to California thanks to the sponsorship and hard work of the Southern California Instruction Librarians group. A great big thank you also goes to the libraries at the Claremont Colleges for providing space for the program.

ACRL's Immersion Program provides instruction librarians with the opportunity to work intensively for four-and-a-half days on all aspects of information literacy. The Immersion Program provides instruction librarians with the intellectual tools and practical techniques to help build or enhance an instruction program. The institute is taught by a faculty of nationally recognized librarians, and participation is limited to ensure an environment that fosters group interaction and active participation.

Four UCLA librarians (Cheryl Bartel, Patti Caravello, Aura Lippincott, and Pauline Swartz) joined 41 other California librarians plus 8 non-California librarians from as far away as Paris in an exciting, stimulating and exhausting immersion into the theory and practice of information literacy instruction. As one of the faculty who had the extreme pleasure of working with this amazing group, I can attest to the fact that it was a wonderful event and that a good time was had by all. Working with them made me proud to be able to call myself a California librarian. But don't just take my word for it, here is Aura Lippincott's review of the program:

"I found the California Immersion Program Track immensely beneficial for my own development as an instruction librarian and for the Management Library's new information literacy campaign. Not only was my understanding of information literacy concepts and practices deepened, but I was able to spend concentrated time and effort exploring ways to move our program forward. My work was informed by highly relevant sessions led by the ACRL Immersion faculty, who are not only practitioners, but excellent teachers and leaders in the field of information literacy. I've returned to UCLA full of ideas and with an action plan in hand!"

And Pauline Swartz adds: "It was nice to have the time to focus on instruction."

The national Immersion program was held the following week in Seattle with UCLA's

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Dominique Turnbow in attendance. Here is what Turnbow had to say about it: "Immersion was an unforgettable experience that inspired me to reflect upon my own teaching pedagogy and create a repertoire from which to build to improve my skills. The Immersion faculty are clearly experts in their field, with a passion for passing on their knowledge. I would highly recommend all librarians with instruction responsibilities to attend the program."

With both the 2004 regional and national programs behind us, we now have a total of nine librarians who have participated in the Immersion experience. For those of you who have not had this opportunity, applications are now being accepted online at www.acrl.org (click "Events & Conferences" then "Upcoming Events") for the National Immersion '05 Program to be held at Eckerd College, July 29–August 3, 2005. The deadline for application is December 6, 2004. ■

To date, other federal agencies have not made investments in the technical infrastructure comparable to PMC. In part, this reflects the differing means by which disciplines share data and research results. As noted by the Council of the National Academy of Sciences, "While we endorse this NIH initiative, we note that it addresses issues relevant specifically to biomedical research, and that it may not be replicable for research supported by other agencies, or in disciplines with different funding levels or different modes of research communication" (www4.nationalacademies.org/news.nsf/isbn/s09162004?OpenDocument).

**12. Does the Information Quality Act apply to the NIH proposal?** The Information Quality Act, enacted in December 2000, directed the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to issue government-wide guidelines that "provide policy and procedural guidance to Federal agencies for ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information disseminated by Federal agencies" (www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/final_information_quality_guidelines.html).

The Information Quality Act is not applicable to the NIH proposal for two reasons. First, the OMB guidance does not apply to archived documents distributed by a federal agency. In fact, the guidelines specifically state, "OMB agrees that archival information disseminated by Federal agency libraries (for example, Internet distribution of published articles) should not be covered by these guidelines." And second, the guidelines do not apply to documents produced by grantees that do not represent "agency views." As noted by OMB, "the agencies have not authored these document and . . . are simply ensuring that the public can have quicker and easier access to materials."

**Note**

With my thanks for the contributions of Rick Johnson, SPARC director, and Peter Suber, www.earlham.edu/%7Epeters/fos/nihfaq.htm. ■

• **Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation (PARE).** A cornerstone of the late and much missed ERIC.AE site, PARE is still a very much alive and essential online peer reviewed journal for all areas of assessment. Readers interested in alternative assessment can find here a resource for study in the areas of the use and development of scoring rubrics, performance assessment in the classroom, and current assessment practice for the Web-based classroom environment. *Access:* http://pareonline.net/Home.htm.

• **TCRecord.org.** A free registration gives access to many areas on this online journal site, which features a rich page on alternative assessment and includes multiple paths for involvement and investigation, including a discussion forum and a weekly e-mail newsletter. *Access:* http://www.tcrecord.org/default.asp. ■