How Can This Column Help You?

Sarah LeMire and Esther Grassian

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In recent years, *Reference and User Services Quarterly*'s "Information Literacy and Instruction" column has covered diverse topics related to information literacy, including MOOCs, universal design, discovery layers, and, of course, assessment. This column has provided a space for librarians from all types of libraries to share how they are engaging with information literacy and instruction in their libraries, as well as to unpack the challenges they faced. As new editors, we will continue to use this space as an opportunity to explore emerging topics in information literacy.

As co-editors of "Information Literacy and Instruction," we bring our own perspectives and experiences to *RUSQ*, along with some overlapping interests. To better reflect our perspectives, we will alternate editorial responsibility for pieces published in this column, although both editors will be providing feedback. Following is biographical information about each of us, as well as a lengthier description of our column interests.

Esther Grassian, who retired from the UCLA Library after forty-one years, is currently an adjunct librarian at Pierce College in Woodland Hills, California. Esther views reference as an important element on the instructional continuum, from reading literacy, to digital/computer literacy, to information literacy. She is interested in the value of reference as a form of instruction, learning outcomes for reference, and librarian outreach across types of libraries to support sequential instruction at various age and educational levels, including the workplace.

Esther offers more detail below regarding her interests, and welcomes column submissions related to these interests.

> For those who may not know, librarians worldwide have used terms like instruction, information literacy, digital literacy, library orientation, library instruction, bibliographic instruction, user education, and media literacy for many decades to describe their efforts to help educate people of many ages and educational levels for school, workplace, and lifelong learning. Some groups within ALA and organizations in other countries, have focused on educating people for specific purposes, such as higher education, or K–12 schoolwork, while others, like LIRT (ALA Library Instruction Round Table) welcome those in all kinds of libraries to share and learn from each other regarding instruction. With the vast technological changes affecting lives worldwide, it is essential for everyone to gain access to and learn how to learn about information tools and resources, for a lifetime. To this end, many

local, regional, national, and international groups like IFLA and UNESCO, as well as individuals, governments, and other organizations are now working on various aspects of empowering people through education and training regarding information tools and resources. I am interested in many topics related to these points, such as: Where does reference fit in the instructional continuum? How does this affect libraries and librarians in all types of information environments worldwide, with differing means of addressing learner needs, as well as a variety of definitions, standards, and conceptual frameworks? In some types of libraries, reference has morphed into a blend of fact-finding in answer to queries, and learner self-guidance to finding useful information, along with instruction in learning how to learn on one's own. In fact, thanks to the ease of using search engines such as Google, and sites such as Wikipedia, learners have been learning on their own, increasingly, since the web became widespread in the mid-1990s. What are they learning, though, and what kind of value can librarians add to this process, particularly through reference? Some even ask if we still need reference librarians and reference service.

I would argue that now, more than ever, the world needs reference librarians and reference desks in public view, as well as online forms of reference, both staffed by those with MLS/MLIS degrees who are trained, skilled, and knowledgeable about information tools and resources of all kinds—how they are developed, who develops them, how they work, what they cover, and what are their pros, cons, and filters. People need to learn to pose questions about information tools and resources regarding all of these points, for educational purposes, for the workplace, and for self-help or personal interest. That is the value that librarians can bring to them, through one-on-one and other types of reference interactions, both asynchronous (any time, any place) and synchronous (simultaneous, in real time).

Sarah LeMire is the first year experience and outreach librarian at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. Before that, she was the assistant head of research and information services at the University of Utah's J. Willard Marriott Library in Salt Lake City. Her information literacy interests include integrating information literacy concepts outside of the traditional classroom, scalable approaches to information literacy instruction, and providing information literacy instruction to underserved or underrepresented groups.

Sarah offers more detail below regarding her interests, and welcomes column submissions related to these interests.

The title of this column, "Information Literacy and Instruction," recognizes that information literacy and instruction are not always one and the same. As the first year experience librarian at a very large university, I focus heavily on instruction. I spend a great deal of time in a formal classroom environment, providing one-shot or two-shot workshops on information literacy to students in first-year composition courses and other lower-division courses. However, many (if not most) information literacy teaching moments on my campus occur outside the formal classroom. For every formal instruction session I teach, there is a staff member at a service point working with a student one-on-one, an outreach presentation at first-year orientation, or a serendipitous conversation that occurs to help students better understand information literacy concepts. I am very interested in better understanding how these smaller-scale information literacy teaching moments comprise part of an academic library's information literacy program, as well as how other types of libraries identify, assess, and scaffold information literacy teaching moments to help their patrons.

My other primary information literacy interest is working with underserved and underrepresented groups in libraries. For example, within higher education, groups such as first-generation college students, post-traditional college students, and student veterans and service members may exhibit different information-seeking behavior than other college students. I am interested in exploring strategies to better support these students and other underserved and underrepresented students during information literacy instruction and other information literacy teaching opportunities. I am also interested in exploring how libraries can better recognize and build on the unique assets and attributes of underserved and underrepresented groups.

As co-editors, we have our own ideas and interests related to information literacy and instruction that we would like to see represented in future columns, but we also want to ensure that the column reflects the interests and needs of you, the reader. Recently, we posted a survey asking *RUSQ* readers which topics they would like to learn more about in "Information Literacy and Instruction." Popular topics included business/workplace information literacy, the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, and critical information literacy, and we will be pursuing columns on these and other topics identified from the survey. We welcome column submissions from all types of libraries and on topics that appeal across all libraries. If you have topics you would like us to consider or if you have interest in writing for "Information Literacy and Instruction," please email estherg@ucla.edu and slemire@library.tamu.edu.

Thank you, and we look forward to hearing from you and learning from each other.