

The Bibliographic Instruction/ User Education Section of the Indiana Library Federation

by

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Teaching people how to use the library involves a lot of work. When I became an instruction librarian, I had no idea what was involved. I only knew that *it was vitally important to me that students knew how to use the library efficiently!* Back then, there were no classes in library school that taught the specifics of "library instruction." Librarians relied heavily on national and state professional organizations for help. So when I was contacted to support the establishment of a discussion group that would focus on library instruction, I didn't hesitate to put my name on the petition.

As the ILF (Indiana Library Federation) Bibliographic Instruction/ User Education (BIUE) Section prepares to enter its tenth year of activity, I asked Mary Popp, one of the founders of BIUE to reminisce....

Ten Years Young

The ILF Bibliographic Instruction/User Education Section will soon be ten years old! It was begun by Emily Okada and Mary Pagliero Popp with a 1987 petition. The group began its life as a discussion group in early 1988. Its first Steering Committee meeting was held on June 24, 1988 and included membership from public and academic libraries statewide as well as from the Indiana State Library. The group began with four goals:

1. To increase awareness of user education as an essential library service and to play an active role in the development of ILF policies promoting user education.
2. To provide a forum for broad discussion of user education issues within Indiana libraries.
3. To provide opportunities in which library workers from all types of libraries and from throughout the State of Indiana can share user education ideas, materials, and solutions.

4. To help practitioners develop, improve, and promote user education by providing information, skills, and tools.

As one of its major methods of meeting these goals, the BIUE Section has developed a history of distinguished programs at annual ILF conferences. BIUE sponsored one of the first ILF programs about the Internet in 1993. It was called "Is Your Node Clogged?" and featured noted author Jean Armour Polly. Other important programs included a 1994 preconference on the "Internet in Indiana Now" (with ILF's Indiana Academic Library Association as co-sponsor) and a 1995 preconference on "Applying Basic Instruction Techniques to Electronic Resources" (again with the Indiana Academic Library Association) featuring Trish Ridgeway, who spoke about active learning techniques. Recently the group sponsored a 1997 series of Talk Tables about such instructional issues as: motivating students, information literacy credit courses, database dependency, print and electronic handouts, Internet use policies, and the evaluation of data on the Internet. BIUE also recognized the need for providing information about basic teaching/learning techniques and other instructional issues librarians must consider. Conference programs such as "Accommodating Learning Styles: Engaging the Minds of Learners" (1996), "Making the Connection: Librarians and Information Literacy" (1991), "Libraries as Equalizers: Information Literacy for a Diverse Society" (1990), and "Library Users = Information Consumers (1989), are examples of how the section has met its stated goals.

In addition, BIUE keeps its members informed by distributing occasional "member updates." Besides providing information about the section's projects, the updates include practical information, such as an Internet bibliography in 1993.

The Steering Committee has been working in recent years to define minimum competencies for library use/information literacy in Indiana (see Dennis Krep's article in this issue of *Indiana Libraries*). This work has been undertaken with the leadership of an extremely committed Steering Committee, led by chairpersons from around the state: Emily Okada (Indiana University-Bloomington), Marsha Miller (Indiana State University), Janet Meek (formerly Indiana University-Bloomington), Arena Stevens (Indiana University-Northwest), Carol Abell (West Lafayette Public Library), Sally Jo Milne (Goshen College), Jill Hobgood (St. Mary's College), and Rosanne Cordell (Indiana University-South Bend).

The Future

Although more and more conference programs, listservs, Websites, and publications are now available for the instruction librarian, teaching library skills still involves a lot of work! Computers and the Internet have made our work easier *and* harder! There are new things to learn (and teach) everyday! And BIUE will continue to provide Indiana librarians forums in which to share ideas, discuss issues, and learn new techniques to promote information literacy among the citizens of the state.

Now I find myself at the end of a two year "stint" as co-chair of the BIUE Steering Committee. As a charter member of the group, I can look back at the activities that Mary Popp describes above, reflect on the commitment shown by Steering Committee members over the last ten years, and anticipate the exciting projects we'll undertake in the next ten years!