

VALE Shared Information Literacy Sub-Committee Meeting
Monday, March 11, 2002
Alexander Library, New Brunswick, NJ

The first meeting of the proposed VALE Shared Information Literacy (SIL) Sub-Committee was convened by Richard Sweeney and Anne Ciliberti. A list of those who had expressed interest in participating in this initiative was distributed and the meeting called to order.

PURPOSE OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

Sweeney reviewed the purpose of the Sub-Committee as detailed on the preliminary agenda, namely, to

"work collaboratively to develop online information literacy modules (or customize existing efforts) that can be shared easily across institutional boundaries."

Ciliberti asked attendees whether there were any initial problems, questions, or potential conflicts related to this purpose. Of special interest were related initiatives on the part of individual institutions or other groups. Was the proposed work of the SIL Sub-Committee likely to duplicate other efforts? Some discussion arose over the following issues:

* whether the SIL should seek grant funding for its work; the chairs replied that this should be placed on the table for future consideration; another participant mentioned that she had a grant application in process related to an information literacy project at her institution but wasn't entirely sure how it would fit in with the proposed work of SIL;

* a participant pointed out that work is being done on one campus to develop and apply information literacy standards and guidelines in higher education, a "best practices" project following up on her experience in the Institute for Information Literacy (IIL) Immersion program, so perhaps this work could be incorporated into or otherwise connected with that of the SIL?;

* another participant raised the issue of the time involved in information literacy project work; in many cases, there could be a definite benefit from sharing tools and skills if individuals have interests in various steps in the process from initial design to delivery to assessment;

* Sweeney interjected at this point to mention that a key consideration in all of SIL's work should be to maximize the potential for sharing of resources, including the various materials designed for IL and the tools used to make them available. In this context he called attention to the importance of open source software and the principles under which it is made available, as these enable both sharing and adaptation to specific needs or uses. If this principle could be applied to the IL tools and resources developed by SIL, VALE could probably go far in creating a robust IL tool;

* Sweeney gave examples of the types of IL materials that could be developed for sharing among VALE libraries, including tutorials, courseware, assessment tools, and handouts. Although there will certainly be several issues related to the definition of each of these (and other materials), and of information literacy itself, he requested that the group table these issues for the moment so as not to get bogged down;

A participant indicated that there may in fact be some overlap between the work of SIL and ACRL-NJ, but there was no consensus on this issue. Attendees who belong to ACRL-NJ will communicate with ACRL-NJ about this matter to see whether complementary work can be done.

Ciliberti summarized the sense of the group and it was agreed that the purpose of SIL within the scope of VALE was not in direct conflict with other major work in NJ, and that SIL should move forward.

MEANS OF SHARING IL RESOURCES / ORGANIZATION OF SIL

Sweeney and Ciliberti moved to the question of what can be shared and how to share it. The agenda included a list of possible IL resources and materials (e.g., tutorials, courseware, assessment tools, handouts, etc.) and proposed modes of sharing (e.g., discussion group, one-to-one or one-to-many material sharing, development of an index site for material sharing, collaborative planning and development of materials, etc.). In connection with this, the question of the organization of SIL to enable sharing was raised. Sweeney pointed out that - among many other tasks - a survey by SIL of what has already been done will help us identify what has not been done and what is needed. A working group will be needed to conduct this survey and related groups will be needed to clarify standards and permissions for sharing.

Discussion arose over the following issues:

- * a participant suggested that as IL materials are being designed there should be expertise in the area of educational theory and psychology that we can consult so that what we build can be evaluated for its quality in instruction. Any specific project or tool should be assessed for its instructional quality;
- * a participant recommended that in addition to the items already mentioned lesson plans and course outlines be shared, especially in light of increasing demands made on librarians to instruct in areas beyond traditional library use (e.g., critical thinking, evaluation of information, copyright and fair use);
- * Sweeney pointed out that the relation between information literacy and information technology literacy will probably also call for development of some instructional materials that address the latter because most of the online library tools demand some minimum threshold of competence in using computer hardware and software for information seeking, and not every user can be assumed to have these;
- * a participant called upon the group to keep in mind that VALE member libraries vary in size and mission, so materials with the potential for "scaling up" (or down) as necessary should be a consideration when they are designed.

Questions about materials with institutional copyright restrictions in place, the form and content of assessment tools, and the priorities for development of instructional materials led to consideration of the roles that SIL Sub-Committee working groups should take. Ciliberti asked participants for input on the organization and initial tasks of working groups. The following were proposed and agreed to by participants:

- 1) An initial Discussion Group consisting of all participants. This would serve as a forum to address practical issues, identify tasks that need the attention

of working groups, and keep all participants informed about the state of SIL. Participants from Montclair State University offered to host an electronic discussion list and subscribe participants to it. The creation of this discussion group will also be announced through the VALE mailing list.

2) An Indexed Material web page - which will probably be hosted on the VALE site - will be the product of a working group that will survey VALE institutions for those IL materials they currently make available through their sites or which they are prepared to make available for sharing at this time.

3) A Collaborative Materials group will work on the planning and development of common, generic VALE materials that can be made available for use by any VALE library.

4) An Assessment and Design group will work on projects for the design of various IL tools and the assessment of same.

5) A Standards and Protocols group will address questions related to copyright, shared use, standards for materials sharing, and other issues to enable cooperation among all participating institutions.

6) A Technical group will focus on problems and projects related to software development and use for all IL tools produced and shared by SIL.

Participants organized themselves into the various working groups to map out their initial agendas for action, and group "champions" were identified to help steer the work of these groups. Reports of group activity will be reported back to the committee through the electronic discussion list once it is established.

The meeting adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Kearney
William Paterson University

ADDENDUM of Sub-Committee Members (asterisk indicates chairperson or convenor)

Indexed Site for Material Sharing

* Kathy Malanga	William Paterson University
* Patricia Libutti	Rutgers University
Susan Bissett	Union County College
Donna Wertheimer	Rutgers University
Jackie Ballin	NJIT
Linda Cifelli	Kean University
David Lechner	Richard Stockton State College

Standards and Protocols

* Mary Fraser	Rutgers University
* Richard Kearney	William Paterson University
Richard Sweeney	NJIT
Patricia Denholm	Bergen Community College
Nancy Madacsi	Centenary College

Technical Group

Barbara Belicose
Bill Vincenti

Brookdale Community College
Montclair State University

Assessment

*Deborah Sheesley
Barbara Belicose
Greg Fallon
Beth Bloom
Chris Herz

The College of NJ
Brookdale Community College
Passaic County Community College
Seton Hall University
Gloucester County College

Collaborative Development of Material

*Bill Vincenti
Lynee Richel
Pat Denholm
Nancy Weiner
Torris Anderson
Connie Wu
Luis Rodriguez
Susan Bissett
Mary Fraser

Montclair State University
County College of Morris
Bergen Community College
Berkeley College
Ocean County College
Rutgers University
Montclair State University
Union County College
Rutgers University

