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Meeting Minutes

Library Association of the City University of  
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2005

### LACUNY Instruction Committee Meeting Minutes, March 2005

LACUNY

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MinutesMinutes

LACUNY Instruction Committee Meeting  
Baruch College, Newman Library, Room 415  
March 4, 2005, 2 pm- 4 pm  
Members in Attendance:  
Alexandra deLuise, Queens  
Anne Leonard, City Tech  
Miriam Laskin, Hostos  
Gretchen Gross, John Jay  
Marisa Klages, LaGuardia  
Jeff Wayne, Borough of Manhattan  
Mounir Khalil, City College  
Katherine Parsons, Bronx  
Susan Voге, Lehman  
Charles Keyes, LaGuardia  
Edward Owusu-Ansah, Staten Island

Meeting commenced at 2 pm. Charles Keyes of the library and Marisa Klages from the English department of LaGuardia Community College presented on LaGuardia's efforts with information literacy assessment. They cautioned that theirs was still an evolving approach and could still see modifications in the construction phase, and even more adjustments in the implementation phase and the necessary reevaluations following that.

Providing context, the presenters indicated the attempts at LaGuardia built on a foundation put together by Marisa and encouraged by the lead of the campus-wide institutional assessment committee. Marisa has been developing different rubrics for measuring writing skills, from which the information literacy assessment rubrics evolved. The goal was to institute anonymous assessment to determine if students had the skills to go onto a four year college after their studies at LaGuardia.. The assessment instrument was also to provide guidance to the programmatic review process and help uncover what the various campus programs were speaking to. The goal was to measure what students at the college knew, how prepared they were, for studies at the junior level or for graduation from LaGuardia.

E-portfolios will be used to sample student work. The e-portfolio company creates a lockbox into which students put sample works that they are not allowed to remove once deposited. Assessors then have access to the deposited items, and retrieve them for evaluation. The anonymous process prevents evaluation of individual students, who are not known to the assessors. The goal is to gain knowledge of what the college is teaching and what students are actually learning.

The information literacy assessment part of the campus's assessment plan anticipates the use of rubrics that hope to measure three main learning outcomes. The outcomes are as follows:

Learning outcome I: Determining information needs and searching efficiently  
Learning outcome II: Evaluating information sources  
Learning outcome III: Using information ethically

The first learning outcome related measurement hopes to determine how well students are able to define and articulate their information need, identify appropriate keywords for retrieval, identify which sources might be potentially used, and are able to efficiently access the necessary information. The second looks at ability to critically evaluate information sources and "use information wisely to meet information need." The third seeks to measure student understanding of concepts such as plagiarism, academic integrity, and intellectual property, and also how accurately students are able to cite their sources.

These measurements are to be represented by six scores, described in descending order as excellent, proficient, satisfactory, limited, poor, and insufficient. Rating criteria for each of these scores are provided for each learning outcome. Adjectives to describe the various levels of proficiency represented by the scores are also provided in the rubrics. Thus, for example, an excellent level of proficiency for Learning Outcome I is judged by the following criteria: students being able to "create original thesis statements" or "focused research

questions" appropriate to their research assignment; demonstrate "clear understanding of many different types of information sources and how to access them;" use appropriate information sources; and interpret "insightfully" the information they collect. Adjectives describing such proficiency would be: "academic, analytical, broad in scope, comprehensive in use of resources, creative, exemplary in addressing the prompt, impressive, insightful, original, strongly evidence-based, superior, tightly-argued, well-focused." Lower ratings will reflect increasingly decreasing demonstration of these abilities and right to earn their assigned positive attributes.

Ratings criteria for excellence on Learning Outcome II would involve the ability to evaluate information "very effectively for relevance to research assignment," as well as evaluating information "thoroughly and effectively for reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias."

Descriptive adjectives would be: "academic, accurate, analytical, clear, comprehensive in use of evaluation criteria, creative exemplary, impressive, insightful, original, strongly evidence-based in evaluating materials, superior." Here too, lower ratings reflect increasingly decreasing demonstration of the expected abilities and right to earn their assigned positive attributes.

Learning Outcomes III involves the following criteria for excellence: clear acknowledgement of sources through careful incorporation of citations, footnotes, endnotes, "or other widely accepted documentation style;" and the inclusion of "complete bibliographic information, formatted with almost complete accuracy." Applicable adjectives would be: academic, accurate, clear, complete, consistent, exemplary, impressive, thorough, and superior. Levels 5 through 1 would represent diminishing demonstration of such abilities and the attendant loss of right to the positive adjectives assigned them.

The presenters distributed the rubrics to attending members, together with a copy of an anonymous student paper, and encouraged members to apply the rubrics to evaluation of the paper as an exercise in how the contents of a digital lockbox might be assessed for the competencies that demonstrate a student's information literacy abilities.

Responding to question on what kind of work goes into the lockbox, the presenters reiterated the anonymous nature of the assessment process and indicated the approach was quite scripted, and limited to works such as diagnostic essays from a baseline level writing courses, work from capstone courses (for example, final capstone projects), etc..

On the need for students to be computer savvy to participate in such assessment, the presenters noted that students at LaGuardia are usually put into academic clusters where they are provided the necessary training. Librarians also participate in teaching in such studio courses. The college is also looking at the possibility of mandating a 1-credit course taught by the library or incorporating it into the capstone courses. This is rather at the contemplation stage and has not as yet entered the implementation phase.

On the observation that the approach articulated for information literacy assessment was skewed toward written research and might not address adequately such other processes and competencies related to research activities such as data collection and fieldwork, the presenters suggested that the interdisciplinary nature of the capstone courses (which all students except those in the health sciences have to go through) might offer an avenue for alleviating such concerns. How was not clear.

On whether any kind of assignment could eventually find its way into the lockbox, the presenters noted that no concrete decision had been made yet about what specific assignments are to go into the lockbox, who would use it, and what kind of training assessors have to undergo (and if they need to undergo training first) before they can participate in the use of lockbox content for assessment. It was however clear that assessors would in all likelihood be faculty members.

On the incentive for participation in such an extensive and potentially time-consuming exercise, things like release time for training were mentioned. Presenters also expressed satisfaction with the level of enthusiasm at LaGuardia, noted the supportive nature of the environment, the optimism and energy level of the key stakeholders. The fact that students may not always come in with the desired competencies and the commitment of the college to ensuring success despite such disadvantages was cited as a possible source of the enthusiasm and energy displayed by faculty and administration in an educational environment where all conceded that the institution had to engage as many layers

as it could and as many ways as possibly conceivable to help students succeed. Regarding how the content of a rubric was determined and whether thought had been given to the idea of who should teach/facilitate what among the enumerated competencies, it was conceded that that would have to involve all campus stakeholders. Faculty, as the primary contact for student in their knowledge acquisition aspirations would form the first line of contact and be the initial assessors of what students are capable of. But they need and can use all the help they can get from other campus constituencies willing to assist.

In conclusion, it was noted that the success of any plan like the one envisioned in the information literacy assessment approach at LaGuardia, required as its guiding principle the institution's strategic plan. How such efforts fit into and ensure achievement of the college's overall plan would be the principal arbiter of success.

Members agreed on next meeting dates, and Miriam Laskin of Hostos Community College volunteered to present at the next meeting.

The following meeting dates were selected (to be held at the usual venue at Baruch):

Friday April 15, 2005 (2 pm - 4 pm)

Friday May 13, 2005 (2 pm - 4 pm)

Meeting adjourned at 4 pm.

Submitted by:

Edward Owusu-Ansah

Chair

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