

ACRL RBMS-SAA Joint Task Force on the Development of Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy

ALA Annual Meeting 2016, Orlando

Sunday, June 26, 2016

10:30 am-12:00 pm

Hilton Orlando, 6001 Destination Parkway, Lake Mizell Room

Present:

Task Force Members:

Anne Bahde, Sarah Horowitz, Robin Katz, Lisa Sjoberg (phone), Heather Smedberg, Morgan Swan, Leah Richarson

Visitors:

Lois Fischer Black, Martha O'Hara Conway, Christian Dupont, Veronica Reyes Escudero, Blynne Oliveri, Cindy Stolt

1. Call to order, Select recorder, introductions

Smedberg called to order at 10:35. Bahde volunteered to take minutes. Attendees introduced themselves.

2. Welcome to visitors, update on charge and work to date

Smedberg reported on task force work to date, including fall workgroups. These were devoted to a comprehensive literature review, researching historical and other organizations who have done some standards work in this area and who may be relevant to reach out to, crosswalking the ACRL framework, and looking at communications planning.

3. Discussion of working draft of Primary Source Literacy Guidelines

- a. Background on how we arrived at this draft
- b. Feedback from visitors and task force members

Smedberg explained that the task force has only very recently distilled the draft into this form. It is posted on ALA Connect, the SAA microsite for the task force, and linked from RBMS home page. The online version allows for annotation and comment through hypothes.is. We will be taking comments through August to allow for SAA members and ACRL members alike to have time.

One visitor asked the task force to consider what kind of document the final draft will be, and its possible impact on many fields. He suggested that the definitions portion of the document will be widely cited, and so must be as accurate as possible. Task force members explained that the group began with terminology discussions and that the group has been grappling with related issues throughout the year. One visitor suggested taking out the phrase "created at the time under study" from the definition of primary source, and discussion ensued about how the task force came to the current definition.

The desire to balance conciseness with readability and accuracy was discussed. Another visitor suggested that memoirs pose a problem in this definition. One visitor suggested adding a glossary appendix for the final document and compiling all of the definitions of primary source and primary source literacy that have been located in our work. This could also be accomplished with an annotated or hyperlinked document online.

Task force members who had attended the Public Services Discussion Group summarized a discussion arising from that group that led to the suggestion of an “In Practice” section as an appendix of the final document, which included sample exercises, rubrics, mapping to different levels and audiences, and examples of adjusting learning goals to different class types, such as the one-shot. Task force members were supportive of this idea, and suggested that by giving examples of these items, the user community will be able to step up after seeing the document to produce similar supplementary items. One visitor suggested that the glossary have examples.

Further discussions about the term primary source followed, with more complex formats such as natural history specimens brought up by visitors. It was suggested that the phrase “cultural heritage” play a larger role in the document, and that including more about primariness being context-dependent would be useful. Other terms and concepts were suggested for inclusion in the definition, including those related to “witness,” “expression,” “raw,” “signs of activity,” “human,” and “inspiration.”

A visitor suggested adding CALM to the list of organizations to reach out to. Another suggested that some of the task force documents already produced, such as the bibliography, could be added as appendixes to the draft. Another suggested that the ACRL Framework be crosswalked with this document after the final draft. It was suggested that the document include a section at the beginning about the practical origin of the document and the task force, alluding to the climate of information literacy change that it was produced within, so that future readers will understand changes in ACRL and other organizations going on currently.

Task force members suggested that the “Ethical” section of the key concepts be expanded to include understanding collecting ethics. It was suggested that the order of the key concepts section be reworked to Theoretical, Analytical, Ethical, Practical. The learning outcomes proceed from practical to theoretical, so the key concepts section of the document may be a good place to lead with more theoretical ideas. It was suggested that more of the language specific to special collections and archives environments be reworded to be more broadly applicable.

The question of “what makes this document ‘guidelines?’” was raised, and a discussion of how the document is expected to be used ensued. One task force member questioned whether we need to have the term “guidelines” in the title of the document. The term “competencies” was suggested, and it was suggested that the task force look at other “guidelines” documents to distill what exactly guidelines might be defined as.

It was suggested that the task force include more on what instructors need to know about teaching with primary sources, to expand the document to include notes on teaching with original materials. This prompted discussion of what audience the document is intended for – can it be used by archivists at the reference desk, for example? A visitor suggested that “how to work with librarians and archivists” is implicit in the document currently, and could be brought out more explicitly as a skill necessary for primary source literacy. Another question that could be more deeply delved into in the document is, “why do libraries and archives exist? Why do we do what we do?” This would bring into focus some issues related to formats, preservation, and collecting that are less evident in the document now.

#### 4. Communication and feedback plan

The task force will be flooding listservs in the coming days with the draft, reaching out to organizations in July and August. The contact email will be [primarysourceliteracy@gmail.com](mailto:primarysourceliteracy@gmail.com). If the task force sees specific questions arising repeatedly, we may host webinars or conference calls to address. One visitor suggested reaching out to the GODORT education committee.

#### 5. Next Steps

The task force will be reaching out to interested parties, bringing this feedback back to the group, and beginning work on our next phase.