



The AADL also meets strong community needs by providing instruction and resources to residents of diverse backgrounds. One project involved designing an exhibit of the history of the local African-American community. The library also created a video that featured interviews with community residents that was aired on local television. The AADL also promotes resources and services for the visually impaired, such as closed-circuit television (CCTV), and PW Webspeak software, a program that facilitates access to the text of web sites.

Dr. Jean Donham, the final speaker, focused on the theory and practice of teaching and learning in academic and school libraries. Donham emphasized that instructors should know the learning needs of their students. She outlined research indicating that while teens and young adults may have a strong command of current technologies, they do not have the ability to perform efficient, precise information searches, or to identify reliable, authoritative information sources. The literature also indicates that significant numbers of undergraduates have low levels of information literacy; for example, such students do not know how to identify a scholarly journal or a primary resource. Thus, instruction is a fundamental activity in libraries.

Donham emphasized that learning is a constructive process. Students derive meaning from new information by relating it to their personal experiences. Allowing students to reflect during and after an instruction session can facilitate the learning process. Furthermore, learning is a social activity, and, consequently, instructors should provide opportunities for students to verbalize what they have learned.

Donham also indicated that librarians should teach search concepts and processes, in addition to providing information on tools and resources. For example, when presenting a specific database, a librarian can use the opportunity to teach search concepts that apply to all databases. Librarians should share their knowledge of search processes with faculty members, so that professors recognize that we can help students during every step of the research process. This will also help faculty to understand that we promote and foster lifelong learning.

The speakers presented a thought-provoking and informative program, enhancing the awareness, among those who attended, of the importance of their role as educators.

Sharon Ladenson, Social Sciences Bibliographer and Reference Librarian, Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI