

ARLIS/NA

ART LIBRARIES SOCIETY of NORTH AMERICA

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Customizing Services to Meet Patron Needs

Friday, March 20, 2015

Submitted by Moderator:

Carla-Mae Crookendale, Visual Arts Research Librarian, Virginia Commonwealth University

Session Q & A:

The “Other” Accessibility: Making Art Libraries, Archives, and Visual Collections More Accessible to People with Disabilities

Michelle Strizever, Photo Archivist, U.S. House of Representatives

Christopher Corrigan, Digital Reference Librarian, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress

Approaches to Better Serving International Users

Andrea Malone, Foreign Languages & Ethnic Studies Librarian, University of Houston

Librarians and Gender-Based Topics

Lou Weaver, Chief Executive Officer, Lou Weaver Consulting

Q & A

Q for Lou: What should we know about the use of pronouns?

A: Pronouns are important. Younger individuals, especially in the student population, are paying more attention to pronouns. Ask, incorporate preferred pronouns into IDs and forms.

Q for Lou: What if you make a mistake?

A: Apologize but do not repeat or make excuses.

Q for Andrea: What are some approaches to working with foreign students during phone transactions and via e-mail?

A: A good suggestion is to rephrase to see what e-mails mean.

Q for Andrea: Our library struggles to work with international students at the reference desk. Is it okay to ask students to write things down for clarity?

A: Yes. It is okay to do this. Even during instructional sessions, it is okay to ask a student to participate by writing on a white board, etc. as long as the student is comfortable doing so. They really just want to be understood and will generally be open to trying different approaches.

Q for Andrea: Do you have other ideas for working with foreign students?

A: Orientations are good. Individual attention is helpful. One strategy is to ask about their culture and learn from them to open up a discussion.

Q for Michelle/Chris: Are there funding sources for retrofitting spaces or obtaining equipment for ADA compliance?

A: LSTA grants can help with technology. The Foundation Center can also provide funding.