ARL Assessment Academy

Focus Groups

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513 ME2/8-03/3

Y Cool. All right. Start somewhere, anywhere so long as you don't interrupt people, which makes it hard for my secretary to take the transcription off the tape. Start somewhere and tell me how you use MERLOT, what your role is, how long you've used it. Let's start there. Anybody.

F I've used MERLOT for the past three years,

712 DE2/8-03/22

So, you know, what would you want to know if somebody said, OK, Robert, you're running—as of tomorrow, you’re running DLESE. What would you need to know about the users out there; what’s the most important question that I need to know? What would I be asking? Tell me.

591 ME2/8-03/17

Y OK. My next question is clearly linked to this when we're done with this question, but who vets the system? Let me ask you to see if I understand, then you tell me how to get it right. My question is this: you have some stuff that represents inaccuracies—grammatical, structural, whatever, engineering stuff that you know about—and if you make a recommendation to somebody. There's stuff up on MERLOT that's peer reviewed that's on a star system, right? Something like a star system. There's some stuff that isn't peer reviewed and in some of that stuff you've gone through, there are inaccuracies in the presentation of this material. Am I right in assuming that the editorial board, the peer reviewers literally can't keep up with it? Is that correct? That there's something added all the time; there's a problem with the un-reviewed stuff. There's more stuff to review than—

597 ME2/8-03/19

Y OK. Let me see if I understand exactly. In each discipline, there's a kind of coordinator person who works with a set of editors. Is that right? OK.

415 DE1/8-03/18

Y Yes, well, but my next set of questions really had to do with an issue with what's going on there. How do you know that it's trustworthy data? How do you know—I mean, with you preparing a lesson plan—how do you know that what you're telling students is, in fact, good science.

418 DE1/8-03/19

M You're left to review it yourself [for trustworthiness] prior the peer-review thing, review sections of the library. And if you had to do that work, which was a complaint of the K12 people, that they don't have the time or expertise to wade through it; but you had to make that decision. So you're kind of limited to your inexperience to go trucking to a university or a federal agency that you could easily recognize.

417 DE1/8-03/18

Y You don’t really know that it’s the most up-to-date science. You don’t really know that data are trustworthy.

684 DE2/8-03/18

Y OK. Um, who do you think is the major audience for your access site [?] and uh high school teachers.

M Ours is a quite broad spectrum. Uh, we've got research scientists using it, because our collection is based on a daily atmospheric radiation measurement program. So, it's a 40 million-year program to gather atmospheric data. So, we visualize that data, and after we visualize it, we make sure it accessible by educators.

737a DE2/8-03/30-31

M I've heard the same things about standards. In fact, it's not the national standards; it's maybe the county standards.

M Yea, that's actually a good point. California, for example is pretty weirdo. They could have used the national standards, but they decided to make up something completely new that doesn't work. But, uh, I'm not getting sarcastic about the state, so.

Y O, what not?!

M I hate those—

Y [?] We.., I really appreciate this. This has been super helpful, and what we do after this is turn these tapes into transcripts, go through and pick out the kinds of issues that you all have raised about which were not smart enough to ask questions, and to try to build and instrument for evaluation that responds to your issues. Those are the next steps in the process: the analysis of the qualitative data and regrounding the instrument[?]. So, I thank you very much and appreciate it.

The End