MLA Bibliography Advisory Committee Report for 2018-2019
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Committee Charge

The Advisory Committee on the MLAIB examines and assesses the direction and philosophy of the *Bibliography*: advises the staff on policies and procedures for compiling and producing the *Bibliography* and on changes in its scope, methods, technology, or form: and aids in identifying and recruiting bibliographers from the academy.

Annual Meeting

The committee held its annual meeting on October 22-23, 2018 at the MLA Offices in New York. Committee members present were Cinthia Gannett (Chair, Fairfield University, Emeritus, CCCC Representative, Andrea Malone (Librarian, University of Houston), Téa Rokolj (Librarian, University of Ottawa, Mark Groundland (Associate Professor of Spanish, Tennessee Tech University), and Amanda Watson (Librarian, New York University). Bruce Sadjak and Lila Harper were unable to attend. MLA Staff members who attended all or portions of the meeting included Executive Director Paula Krebs, Barbara Chen, Mary Onorato, Greg Grazevich, Farrah Lehman Den, and Angela Ecklund.

Supporting Field Bibliographers: The committee generated several suggestions for increasing and supporting field bibliographers. They include EBSCO-sponsored conference registrations and support for retirees who no longer have access to library resources. (The MLA could encourage publishers to grant access to journals for indexers who need it. There’s also an effort underway to encourage bibliographers to index open-access journals.) Mentoring is another possibility for community building: more experienced bibliographers could mentor newer ones, and encourage junior scholars to become bibliographers. Encouraging emeritus scholars may be helpful in ensuring better coverage across the subject areas of the bibliography, as well as efforts to reach out the international scholars, especially in literacy studies, second language, applied linguistics (which are rapidly increasing areas for cross- and transnational research) and modern language studies.

Also, promoting the Fellowship in multiple venues may increase the attractiveness of the field bibliography work for some scholars.

MLAIB teaching tools: The committee discussed where outreach about the online course and tutorial videos would be most effective. Contact at conferences has proved useful, but committee
members suggested additional contact through professional organizations and at summer institutes, with the organization possibly sponsoring a workshop at a conference. Advisory Committee members have begun to act as ambassadors for the MLA's online resources within their professional associations. The committee also suggested adding short descriptions of the videos to the list of tutorials on the MLA Web site in order to explain their uses for teacher and curricular development.

In discussing efforts to create versions of the tutorials in languages other than English, committee members concurred that versions with subtitles in the target languages could be an effective approach when it proves difficult to find native speakers adept at providing voiceover recordings.

Committee members viewed the new field bibliographer recruitment video, in which several field bibliographers talk about their reasons for participating in the program. The committee suggested options for a second field bibliographer recruitment video that would provide more specifics about what being a bibliographer entails, recommended competencies for potential bibliographers, or examples of working on particular areas. Videos in multiple languages were also suggested.

**Scope of the Bibliography**

The committee discussed whether and how various new forms of scholarship might be indexed. They welcomed plans to include videos in the Bibliography, and discussed the potential for including book reviews as well as podcasts and other multimedia scholarship.

They also discussed the question of out-of-scope items included in the new EBSCO full-text version of the bibliography. Because EBSCO is including cover-to-cover full text of journals, the product includes materials that the MLAIB does not currently index, such as short book reviews, creative works, and articles outside our topic areas. Committee members concluded that these should not be suppressed. Advantages of having these additional materials visible through EBSCO include an increased amount and variety of foreign-language content, which can benefit language classes, and the presence of contemporary book reviews, which can be useful for research.

**Convention Session 2020:** “Making and Using the MLAIB for the 21st Century: Human Expertise, Digital Tools.” Participants in this round table discussion will talk about the varied ways in which they use the *MLA International Bibliography* in their professional lives, as well as related teaching resources and progress toward providing the digital infrastructure to support meta-analysis. Part of the session will be devoted to a full audience discussion on the ways in which they can participate more fully in “making” and “using” the bibliography.

**Post-Meeting activities**

**Committee-sponsored session, MLA Convention, January 2019:** “When Digital Meets Information Literacy: What We Can Learn from Following the Research Processes of Individual Students.” Researchers from the LILAC (Literacy Information Conference) group, the Citation Project, and Project Information Literacy discussed their findings on the state of digital and information literacy and research-based writing in college classrooms and identified effective pedagogical interventions for developing students’ research, reading,
writing, information assessment, and source engagement skills. It was a very well attended session, and leaders from Association of Departments of English expressed strong interest in bringing these findings to their organization’s meetings and highlighting the work of the MLAIB.

**CCCC International Writing Studies Research Symposium, March 2019**
In 2019, we continued the collaboration between MLAIB and NCTE/CCCCs with Farrah Lehman Den from the MLAIB, who attended the International Writing Research Symposium for afternoon sessions and the full group discussion, shared MLAIB resources, answered questions, and invited more input on scholars’ needs and interests. She encouraged all the researchers to meet with her across the CCCCs meeting to ensure their own scholarship is included, and that international journals are fully represented. We hope to continue this conversation and identify more and more ways to work together to sponsor international writing studies scholarship.

**Boston Rhetoric and Writing Network 8th Annual Summer Institute, June 7-8, 2019, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA:** At the invitation of Cinthia Gannett, President of BRAWN, BIS staff member Farrah Lehman Den, Associate Index Editor and Instructional Technology Producer, participated in this two-day professional development seminar, which is open by application to teachers and scholars of writing at any institution of higher education in the Boston Area. Lehman Den shared her work in developing instructional tools for using the *MLA International Bibliography*, the bibliography’s coverage of Writing Studies for writing studies scholars, and various ways in which the bibliography can be used in the writing/rhetoric classroom. It is hoped that the BRAWN Network (with over 400 members) can continue to collaborate with the MLAIB to sponsor workshops on its new teaching and scholarly resources.