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About 130 people attended the LIRT program at the ALA Annual Conference on Sunday, June 17, at the Moscone Convention Center in San Francisco. This year's program was titled "Partnerships for Instruction," and featured two knowledgeable speakers as well as eight poster presentations following the talks.

The theme Partnerships for Instruction focused on ways that different types of libraries can collaborate to provide instructional services. The first speaker, Lisa Rosenblum, Manager of Adult Service and Training at San Jose Public Library, addressed the unique collaboration between her library and San Jose State University Library. The two institutions will combine their libraries in a single new facility in 2003. The new MLK Library will be staffed by librarians from both institutions, and many key services will be merged, including instructional services.

Both institutions currently offer instructional services, though of somewhat different kinds. The public library teaches classes on basic Internet skills including e-mail, and topics such as genealogy; the university library offers course-integrated instruction and faculty development. Both libraries participate in K-12 outreach, and are offering more instruction via the Web.

Rosenblum stated that combining instruction programs could result in a dynamic new level of excellence, or "synergy." New opportunities will be created by the merger, such as the opportunity to create new types of learning communities. The emphasis on information competence and web-based instruction will be heightened, and evaluation methods can be strengthened. As they move towards the merger, librarians at both institutions will prepare by observing each other's instruction; developing similar evaluation methods; developing materials together; and cross-training librarians. After the merger, services will have to be evaluated rigorously and adjustments made if necessary.

The second speaker, Patrick Jones of the consulting firm Connecting Young Adults and Libraries, spoke about the outreach that public libraries can do to connect with schools. Jones started off by describing his experiences with different public libraries around the country, in

can pay off for public libraries. According to an AASL document, information literacy creates