# Cultivating a Community of Learners: Building a Faculty Learning Group by Bringing Immersion Home

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In the summer of 2013, ACRL offered its first Teaching with Technology track in its intensive Immersion program. This track aimed to "provide a practical and design-minded framework for evaluating instructional technologies in order to integrate them more effectively into face to face and/or online teaching."[1] A small cohort of tech-interested librarians worked over four weeks to achieve this aim, but an important component of any such program must be diffusion: participants need to take the knowledge gained and share it widely in order for it to impact library practices broadly. Determining how to best and most effectively share such intensive experiences can be challenging. One academic librarian used her experiences from the 2013 ACRL Teaching with Technology track to create, develop, and cultivate a library faculty learning community at her institution. This intentional, grounded, individualized professional development initiative in instructional technology exposed library faculty at Oakland University to instructional design and systems theories, and may be useful to other academic librarians seeking to develop these areas of knowledge and practice.

This program helped to accomplish three goals. First, it built librarians' knowledge of systems theory in instructional design. Second, it grounded professional learning in specific and individualized real-world needs. And third, it helped librarians gain valuable hands-on experience with a diverse array of instructional technology tools. These three aspects represent a unique approach to library-focused professional development, and the learning community structure provides a meaningful way to allow for continued faculty development. This paper shares both the theoretical foundation and practical structure for this library faculty learning community, and it highlights the experiences and results from the learning community's first two years of implementation. Furthermore, this scaffold presents a way that librarians can build their aptitude for using instructional technology and design in teaching, regardless of Immersion participation.

## Immersion in Teaching with Technology

To best understand how the ACRL Immersion program in Teaching with Technology was adapted, it is first important to conceptualize how this program was structured and the kinds of learning opportunities it provided to its participants in the summer of 2013. In its inaugural iteration, the Teaching with Technology cohort was led by Char Booth and Tiffini Travis and worked in focused sub-cohorts to create a technology-based course, learning object, lesson plan, or other deliverable. Unlike other ACRL Immersion programs,

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most of this group's work was done remotely, both synchronously and asynchronously, over the course of four weeks after an intensive one-day kick-off at the 2013 ALA Annual Conference. This course format provided its participants with opportunities to fully develop a relevant, useful, and situationally-grounded learning product through the design process.

Within the cohort, sub-groups focused on different ways technology can be integrated into instruction: online course design, including MOOCs and digital badges; flipped or blended classrooms and digital learning object design; technology in face-to-face instruction; and accessibility, usability, and universal design in instruction, especially in technology-rich teaching. These groups were structured so participants could build and share knowledge together while developing their own products from the Immersion experience.

Of central importance to the Teaching with Technology cohort was the Booth's USER instructional design model.[2] This design framework approaches teaching—especially technology-integrated teaching—from a librarian-centric perspective, with special considerations for the unique aspects of library and information literacy instruction. Booth considers this model "a mental or procedural way to approach the four stages of effective instructional planning—*Understand, Structure, Engage,* and *Reflect*" while reminding librarians to "teach simply, reflectively, and with the learner at the center of [their] practice."[3] Within this model, there are four broad stages and, within each stage, two sub-stages:

- **Understand** by *investigating the problem* and *analyzing the learning scenario;*
- **Structure** by *creating targets* and *identifying how learners can be involved and engaged;*
- **Engage** by *developing learning materials* and *delivering instruction,* and
- **Reflect** by *assessing the impact of instruction* and *revising and reusing instructional materials.*[4]

To better explore each of these instructional design components, this paper uses the USER model to unpack how the learning scenario can be conceptualized; learning goals and learner engagement can be structured; instruction in the form of professional development can be delivered; and a program's impact can be assessed, revised, and reiterated in several different formats.

## Understanding the Learner & Learning Environment

Oakland University (OU) is a Carnegie-class doctoral research institution located in Rochester, Michigan, with an enrollment of over 20,000 students. OU's library presence includes the Kresge Library, which serves the campus community at-large, and the OU William Beaumont Medical Library, which focuses its services on the university's medical school. At the Kresge Library there are twelve full-time, tenure-track faculty librarians and four part-time library lecturers. The full-time library faculty members engage in a liaison model and are responsible for delivering library and information literacy instruction across specific curricular units. The Library also partners with the university's Writing and Rhetoric department to provide information literacy instruction to every section of WRT 160, the required introductory writing course. Despite this strong instructional presence on campus, there is great diversity in the library faculty's philosophies on teaching, their expertise in learning design, and their comfort levels in using technology in instruction.

To strengthen the Libraries' overall e-Learning presence, an eLearning and Instructional Technology Librarian was hired in fall 2012, whose responsibilities include helping fellow librarians develop the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary both to integrate library instruction into eLearning environments and incorporate instructional technology tools into face-to-face or blended teaching. To determine where, and how, to initiate this work, the eLearning and Instructional Technology Librarian conducted an informal needs assessment with her colleagues in fall 2012.

Anecdotally, librarian responses reinforced the idea that varying levels of experience and comfort

with instructional technology tools existed within the group. All faculty librarians expressed interest in using technology in their teaching, and they spoke to being interested in venturing more into eLearning environments; however, they found they had little time to do this on their own. To build this knowledge, then, OU's librarians sought best practices from *within* their ranks, where knowledge could be framed in a concrete environmental context. Moreover, they expressed the need to see the meaning behind using instructional design and technology practices in their regular work and in their outreach to their liaison areas. Building their technology capacity, then, would have to be grounded in necessity, concentrated around specific learning situations, and focused on impacting student learning. In addition, the librarians spoke to the need for hands-on practice with new tools, strategies, and principles in a low-risk learning environment before deploying resources to live classrooms. With this understanding of the myriad needs of the library faculty, the eLearning and Instructional Technology Librarian applied to the 2013 Immersion Teaching with Technology program with the aim to provide meaningful professional learning opportunities for her colleagues based on the knowledge from the program.

## *Understanding the Broader Context*

The issues OU's librarians encountered as they sought to develop their expertise in meaningfully using instructional technology are not unique to this group or institution. Although there is limited research on job-embedded professional learning opportunities for academic librarians, the scholarship that *does* exist confirms that librarians feel there is a gap between their needs and their knowledge in meaningfully using technology in teaching.[5] In fact, in a study of academic librarians' technology skill acquisition, Riley-Huff and Rholes found that 62 percent of respondents did not feel that they were adequately equipped for the technology expectations and needs of their work.[6] Shupe and Pung investigated how to best address this need and found that, for the development of technology skills, job-specific training programs can help increase motivation while developing skills and dispositions for ongoing technology use in daily work.[7] Moreover, in their implementation of a technology training program with library staff, Quinney, Smith, and Galbraith found that instructional sessions led by a knowledgeable internal instructor was a meaningful tool for building technology knowledge.[8]

More broadly, it is relevant to consider past research on effective professional learning opportunities, both for academic librarians and others involved in student instruction. Knowles' theory of andragogy presents guidance for designing training or learning opportunities for adults.[9] He notes that such experiences need to meet a number of criteria to be most effective: employ learners' internal, or intrinsic, motivations, which are different for each person; allow for self-direction and integration of prior knowledge; and be specifically related to current needs or issues.[10] Using these principles to design training or learning opportunities specifically aimed at adults helps learners to make meaning and retain knowledge long-term.

While Knowles' theory considers how to best train adults, an important consideration in designing learning specifically for librarians is how *their* learning can be translated into *student* learning. In terms of constructing training offerings that impact instructional practices to influence student success, the most pertinent scholarship comes from teacher development and educational studies. Generally, professional learning has the greatest impact on both educators and students when it connects directly to learning scenarios, facilitates intra-educator collaboration, is grounded in research, and provides opportunities to apply tools and concepts.[11] When specifically considering technology-centric professional development, the most effective learning offerings connect technology knowledge with pedagogical and content knowledge.[12]

While academic librarians have content area expertise in library science and information literacy instruction, they may need to construct pedagogical knowledge hand-in-hand with their technology com-

petencies. This kind of understanding is frequently framed as instructional design knowledge, which is defined as "the science and art of creating detailed specifications for the development, evaluation, and maintenance of situations which facilitate learning and performance."[13] While this is not a library-specific term, it does speak to the diverse experiences librarians engage in that address learners' needs. While academic librarians serve as "teachers," they also act, as Shank and Bell assert, as "facilitators [and] navigators" (106) for students, subject-area faculty, and staff. Furthermore, the advent of digital technology has both changed the traditional role of the library as knowledge repository and the expectations of librarian as independent instructor.[14] Library instruction may now take shape as face-to-face one-shot sessions, online synchronous learning experiences, or e-learning objects, among others. Librarians are involved in partnerships with instructors and instructional technologists to design course-embedded learning experiences, and they are moving beyond teaching the mechanics of libraries to asking students to grapple with the nature of information, authority, and the search process.[15]

Instruction for librarians, then, may entail any situation where learning or performance needs to be facilitated, and instructional design knowledge is growing increasingly important. Shank analyzed instructional design librarian positions in academic libraries identified many of the qualifications desired across positions in today's academic library.[16] For instance, many academic librarians, regardless of instructional design title or experience, are expected to create online learning resources, implement information literacy instruction, or possess instructional technology skills. In designing learning scenarios, librarians may employ instructional design models to set goals, structure learning interactions, and assess performance. For instance, Davis considers the ADDIE framework, a popular instructional design model, through the lens of librarians' practices so as to strategically build learning experiences with assessments and activities in mind.[17]

## Structuring the Learning Experience

With broader considerations of best practices in professional learning design and environmental knowledge at hand, OU's eLearning and Instructional Design Librarian used her 2013 Immersion experience to design a faculty learning experience that to fit OU Libraries' needs, culture, and environment. While the Immersion experience is, by design, a focused program, it needed to be translated into an ongoing professional development offering for OU's faculty librarians. This meant that the content needed to be restructured so as to cultivate a community of learners while sustaining learning long-term. To achieve these ends, the learning community model was employed.[18] Baker defines learning communities as relatively small groups of individuals with a clear sense of membership, a common set of goals, and opportunities for interaction.[19] Learning communities can be either cohort- or topic-based and relate back to an educational entity's mission or goals. While learning communities in higher education can engage students, faculty, and/or staff, all-faculty learning communities generally focus on scholarly issues, including learning, instruction, or teaching projects.[20]

Using the learning community structure at OU Libraries allows librarians time to work, time to reflect, and time to collaborate with each other to build new knowledge and contemplate challenging questions. This faculty learning community is built on the cohort model as librarians were the targeted participant group, but there is an overriding topical focus as well. With this scaffold in place, the library faculty learning community focuses on building instructional design knowledge, providing instructional technology experience, and developing a comfort-level with embedding into eLearning environments, while using the USER model as a jumping-off point.[21]

## Engaging Learners

Within the learning community construct, OU's librarians have engaged in three very different professional development programs. First, a year-long, individual project-focused community helped librarians

to build their knowledge about instructional design principles and instructional technology tools. Once OU's librarians had hands-on experience and foundational understandings in these areas, they moved to a semester-long learning community that focused on making meaning of the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* in smaller groups. And from this learning community of small groups, the librarians are presently engaged in a whole-group community that continues to grapple with the *Framework* to better understand what information literacy means in 21st century academic libraries.

## *Building Instructional Design & Technology Knowledge*

Immediately following her Immersion experience, the eLearning and Instructional Technology Librarian structured the first iteration of the Library's faculty learning community as a year-long experience. This community was designed to expose her colleagues to the USER model, build a foundation of instructional design knowledge, and introduce situationally-appropriate instructional technology resources. While the 2013 Immersion program on Teaching with Technology program lasted only four weeks, the OU library faculty learning community took advantage of the academic year and focused on each of the USER model's phases for two months at a time. This time allowed librarians to work on each concept together, take time to explore an idea independently, and then share the questions, applications, and issues they had identified with the group. Moreover, in the context of this initial learning community, the faculty librarians were each tasked with identifying their *own* learning project they could design and develop using the phases of the USER model. By asking librarians to identify an instructional issue they wanted to address or a learning scenario they wanted to experiment with, this part of the learning community sought to ground instructional design and technology in relevant, real-world experiences.

**FIGURE 1**

An important part of understanding the learning scenario and its learners involved considering the issues within the instructional interaction. This sample matrix considers how to confront the common research issues faced by lower-division undergraduates conducting psychology research.

| **Instructional Problem/Issue** | |
|---|---|
| Who is affected? | Psychology students - undergraduates; specifically, low-level undergraduates (100-200 level) |
| What are the core issues learners face? | They're not getting library instruction in any way. This means they don't know how to use and maximize the library resources for Psychology. |
| Where are these issues cropping up? | Issues are popping up in research consultations, the few that I get from this department. However, the real issue is that I have little instructional or liaison-related impact here because of the little contact I have with the department. I am trying to figure out another way to reach them. |
| When are these issues becoming apparent? | No single "time" when they're becoming apparent - more that I am just aware of the lack of outreach I have to the department and, with 182 graduates in 11-12, this is a sizable population I'm missing. |
| Why might these issues be occurring? | Previous issues between library and department? Time/effort faculty think they need to put in to develop this relationship? My own outreach not being helpful enough or targeted enough to what they need? Not enough time in the classroom to "fit" library instruction in? |
| How can technology help me resolve this issue? | Technology can mitigate the "time" issue. Technology may also at least SEEM more reliable than a person - can be inputted when/where as necessary. Technology can show my desire to innovate, reach students in meaningful ways, etc. |
| **Understanding the Instructional Elements** | |
| **Learner** | |
| Characterize | Undergraduate students. Specifically, I want to focus on undergraduates in online courses - so, they've chosen to take one of the few PSY courses online; they've self-selected as online learners. So, they want convenience and ease of use |
| *Who are my learners?* | |
| Confront | These learners are relatively recent high school grads. So, do they see the value of the library and its services in what they need or what they're doing? Also, the online component: will this make them see the library as MORE or LESS valuable? These learners also may be getting library instruction in another way, so they might not think they need it. |
| *What are learners' barriers to learning? How can I address these barriers?* | |
| **Context** | |
| Characterize | Online - so, asynchronous, for the most part. Learners have self-selected this structure. Hosted in Moodle, which has some strengths and weaknesses. Traditional teacher-student dichotomy. Weekly format, weekly structure. |
| *What is the environmental context? What is the structural environment?* | |
| Confront | Moodle could not work; anything created in Moodle could not function properly. Also, I could not get IN to the class in the first place - access is mitigated and determined by the instructor. So, this could fail altogether. Instructors online can change, too, so what one instructor permits may NOT be allowed by another instructor. |
| *What issues exist that will need to be mitigated or circumvented? Where can technology fail? How might technology use in this environment inhibit learning?* | |
| **Content** | |
| Characterize | Totally unsure of students' knowledge and what they're bringing because of such limited exposure - probably very little knowledge about OU Libraries (mostly freshmen), and probably very little knowledge about the library in general. I think I want to make a general and broad overview of library services focused on Psychology so they know what's there for them... so, really, they don't need much prerequisitite knowledge. It's more about their ability to log into Moodle, work through a module, answer electronic questions, etc. So, the proficiencies they need are computer-based - how to operate a computer, how to click a mouse, etc. |
| *What do students need to know in order to accomplish what they need to accomplish? What kinds of pre-existing knowledge and experience are students - or AREN't students - bringing to the learning scenario?* | |

**FIGURE 2**

By identifying learning goals, objectives, and outcomes—as well as how these components could be assessed—OU librarians developed scaffolds around which instructional plans could be framed.

| **Lesson Goals** | *big picture ideas - what do you want this lesson to accomplish, at a global level?* | **Assessment plan** | *when, and how, will this be measured* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **SAMPLE: This lesson will** | **expose students to critical concepts of information literacy, such as keyword searching, Boolean operators, the use of quotation marks and truncation tools.** | | |
| This lesson will | expose students to critical skills and concepts of information literacy (finding, accessing, using, and evaluating information). | A checklist will be developed to ensure/denote where thes concepts are addressed, and will be used in the developm process | |
| This lesson will | address the ACRL Psychology information literacy standards and will introduce students to the concepts contained therein. | Appropriate standards will be determined from the list and integrated into the lesson's modules. | |
| This lesson will | demonstrate the role of a library in the research process for this course and for research in general. | A post-lesson survey will be administered that asks stude reflect on if/how the lesson affected their opinion of the lib in the research process. | |
| This lesson will | equip students to complete their research assignment for the course. | Instructors who use the lesson will be informally surveyed quality and nature of student research. | |
| This lesson will | | | |
| **Learning Objectives** | *what knowledge, understanding, or competencies do you want students to achieve at the lesson's conclusion?* | **Assessment plan** | *when, and how, will this be measured* |
| **Sample: The student will learn** | **when to use quotation marks to keep search terms together, and to identify what makes a good search phrase.** | | |
| The student will learn | how to identify key words and phrases to begin their search. | The lesson will contain both practice questions (formative) questions (summative) to measure students' understandin concept and the accompanying skill in practice. | |
| The student will learn | how to use PsycINFO's features, including its facets, thesaurus, and citations/references to expand or narrow his/her search, and will learn how to identify the best features to use in different information-seeking situations. | The lesson will contain both practice questions (formative) questions (summative) to measure students' understandin concept and the accompanying skills in practice. | |
| The student will learn | how to evaluate search results to determine which are relevant to their search topic. | The lesson will contain both practice questions (formative) questions (summative) to measure students' understandin concept and the accompanying skill in practice. | |
| The student will learn | how to broaden and narrow a search using information retrieved through the search process. | The lesson will contain both practice questions (formative) questions (summative) to measure students' understandin concept and the accompanying skill in practice. | |
| The student will learn | when to use PsycINFO and when to use other resources (e.g. encyclopedias, books, news articles). | The lesson will contain both practice questions (formative) questions (summative) to measure students' understandin concept and the accompanying skill in practice. | |
| **Student Outcomes** | *how will students demonstrate the knowledge, understanding, or competencies they gain through this lesson?* | **Assessment plan** | *when, and how, will this be measured* |
| **Sample: The student will be able to** | **identify at least three alternate key phrases or keywords for a given term, and will demonstrate correct use of quotation marks.** | | |
| The student will be able to | identify at least three alternate key phrases or keywords for a term, and will demonstrate correct use of quotation marks. | The lesson will contain both practice questions (formative) questions (summative) to measure students' understandin concept and the accompanying skill in practice. | |
| | | The lesson will contain both practice questions (formative) | |

In September and October, OU's librarians worked to consider their selected learning project and the learning scenario in which it would be presented, through two documents developed to help make sense of these components. First, a matrix helped them to conceptualize, understand, and identify the different components of their learning project.[22] This included considering the content to be taught, the context in which the instruction would occur, the students who would be taught, and how they themselves as the instructor might present the content. From this understanding, the librarians each conducted a technology affordance analysis for a tool of their choice. This process was particularly useful because it asked them to consider an instructional technology tool that may be used to address their instructional issue from many different angles. This activity encouraged the librarians to consider what their selected tool could, and could not, do. By intentionally exploring the benefits and limitations of different technology tools, OU's librarians considered technology resources more intentionally and holistically.

Once the group had articulated the problems they each sought to address, the next step was to begin structuring how the librarians each could tackle these problems. In November and December, they worked to create targets for their instruction and student learning. Through a Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes Matrix, the librarians considered the aims of their teaching, the learning students should experience in the lesson, and the skills and behaviors students should be able to demonstrate as a result of the learning experience. From these targets, the group next considered how learners could be involved and how their experiences could be extended beyond their specific instructional interaction.

Next, the librarians considered how to engage learners in their own instructional scenarios by creating his or her e-learning or technology-rich interac-

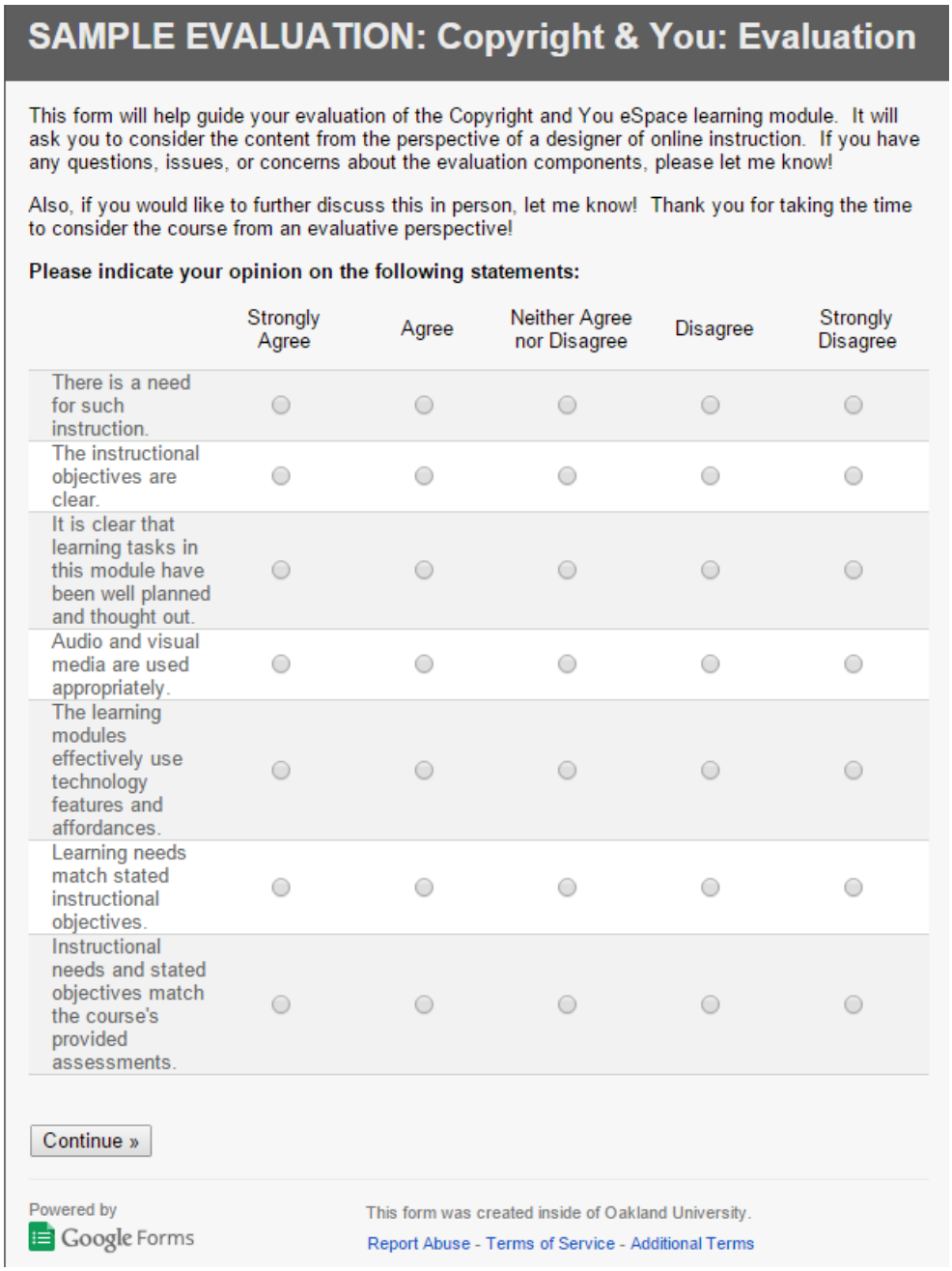
tion. To scaffold this process, two resources provided guidance to the librarians. First, a guide for implementation planning was created to help ensure librarians considered three important questions in their instructional design processes:

- What needs to be planned for?
- What kinds of resources are needed to ensure this learning experience is a successful one, including people, materials, and time?
- What are issues or concerns that can be identified ahead of time?

These questions were designed to help mitigate as many challenges as possible ahead of the instructional interaction.

**FIGURE 3**

This sample subject matter expert evaluation form was shared with OU librarians, and they could adapt it to fit their own purposes as they sought feedback on their instructional design.



**SAMPLE EVALUATION: Copyright & You: Evaluation**

This form will help guide your evaluation of the Copyright and You eSpace learning module. It will ask you to consider the content from the perspective of a designer of online instruction. If you have any questions, issues, or concerns about the evaluation components, please let me know!

Also, if you would like to further discuss this in person, let me know! Thank you for taking the time to consider the course from an evaluative perspective!

**Please indicate your opinion on the following statements:**

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| There is a need for such instruction. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The instructional objectives are clear. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| It is clear that learning tasks in this module have been well planned and thought out. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Audio and visual media are used appropriately. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| The learning modules effectively use technology features and affordances. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Learning needs match stated instructional objectives. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Instructional needs and stated objectives match the course's provided assessments. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

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The other component of engaging learners in the learning scenario addressed evaluating the learning content that librarians created. Revision and evaluation are essential components of any instructional design model, especially in the formative stages. Since this group was working on a year-long project, there was (at least *in theory*) time to gather feedback from many points of inquiry, including librarian colleagues, subject-area faculty members, and intended learners. To facilitate this evaluation and formative assessment, a sample assessment form was developed that librarians could use, or at least consider, as they developed their learning content.

In practice, though, the revision and evaluation did not happen within the learning community. This was in part because, as the OU librarians made sense of **understanding, structuring,** and **engaging** through the lens of Booth's model, they focused on fully exploring these ideas in their own practices before deploying learning experiences for students. Therefore, the final step—**reflecting**—was done internally. As a group, the librarians considered the process of grappling with instructional design and technology as well as the learning community's impacts on practice. OU's librarians provided positive feedback on the process in general, noting that engaging in the learning community had influenced their thinking about designing instruction, both online and in person. Moreover, this knowledge gained was something that librarians felt they would reuse and repurpose in future instructional interactions.

OU librarians also reflected on how a learning community based around inquiry and collaborative practice could be adapted in future iterations to address different needs. For instance, librarians spoke to their own need to engage more in online learning as they considered how to reach learners via the university-provided course management system and online learning tools. Also, they commented on the desire to design learning resources *together* that could then be used to address broader needs. The general sense was that, by working more collaboratively on enacting the phases of this instructional design model, OU's librarians could create relevant learning objects more easily. And finally, they spoke to a desire for a more condensed timeline, which would make it easier for librarians to engage in the community with greater flexibility as their schedules allowed.

## *Building from the Foundation: Using USER to Make Meaning in Small Groups*

With these experiences in mind, the OU Libraries faculty revisited Booth's USER model from a different perspective during the 2014-2015 academic year. Using their knowledge of the different design phases as a foundation, they sought to better understand ACRL's *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. OU's librarians expressed a need to conceptualize how each of these new "frames" could be explored and understood in library instruction, especially through online means. The group decided to divide the identified Threshold Concepts in half, and tackle three each semester as part of the learning community's work.

During the fall semester, OU's librarians self-selected into small, focused groups that each tackled one of the following information literacy frames: **research as inquiry, searching is strategic** (at that time named **searching as exploration**), and **scholarship as a conversation**. Each group aimed to work through the USER model to better understand their frame and to create a general online resource on that concept to include in the Libraries' tutorials interface. The hope was that, within a time-bound structure, librarians could build their understanding of the new information literacy frames while developing online content for the Library's tutorial repository that could be useful for all. To facilitate this work, the learning community met five times, three of which were face-to-face work sessions during which groups could process their frames and develop learning resources using the USER model. Two online synchronous meetings in WebEx, the university's virtual meeting tool, were scheduled between the face-to-face work sessions. These were useful for discussing progress, sharing questions, and identifying issues.

In the same way that librarians working independently on projects experienced in the prior learning community iteration, the sub-groups varied in how they progressed through the USER model and in their content development. Each of the groups grappled with their information literacy frame and how it could manifest itself as a learning issue for individuals or in class instruction. Some moved into how they would structure a learning interaction to consider their frame, and one group developed preliminary tools that learners could use—either independently or in the context of a course—to make sense of their particular frame, **research as inquiry**. In the broader learning community discussions, it became apparent that to truly grapple with the information literacy frames, they needed to be considered *in relation* to each other. **Searching as strategic**, for example, overlapped in many ways with **research as inquiry**; furthermore, considering **scholarship as a conversation** was essential to both of those concepts.

### *Identifying Intersections: Using USER to Make Meaning as a Large Group*

In the winter semester the learning community decided to focus, one-by-one, as a larger group on the remaining three frames: **authority is contextual and constructed, information creation as a process,** and **information has value**. To continue to practice employing the instructional design principles embedded in the USER model while also engaging with technology tools that could be used in teaching, the group examined how to understand and structure each frame in monthly face-to-face meetings. They then followed up these discussions with a synchronous online meeting, where they shared ideas for how they might engage learners in this concept (including with technology tools) and means of assessment and revision for future iterations. This process is still ongoing, but represents an additional option for scaffolding the faculty learning community model as librarians continue to build and hone their instructional design and technology knowledge.

## Reflecting on the Impact

In reflecting on the implementation of these various learning communities, several important observations become clear. First, design is a process. Instructional design, by its very nature, is a journey rather than a destination. It is iterative and involves revision and reconsideration along the way. While the work of this learning community embodied this idea, the actual group structure also moved through various stages to meet librarians' needs. Moreover, as librarians built a firmer foundation of instructional design knowledge, other areas of focus became clear. For example, after the first year of the learning community, OU's librarians expressed a desire to have time to "play" with online instructional resources more. From this expressed need, the online synchronous meetings developed. Also, as ACRL's *Framework* went through its feedback cycles, OU's librarians sought to ground their instructional design knowledge in these concepts *before* having to implement them into their information literacy instruction.

Also, modeling desired learning and dispositions—even with professionals!—is important. In the case of this learning community, this meant moving from an in-person to a blended format. As OU's librarians sought ways to develop or integrate into online learning environments, it was important for them to experience the student perspective. By better understanding this point of view, as well as the technology tools at both the instructors' and students' disposal, OU's librarians could more effectively consider how to create and embed into these environments.

Finally, this faculty learning community reinforced the idea that assessment and evaluation are ongoing. This is relevant for anyone designing any mode of instruction, for any audience, to consider. Review and revision are not the final steps in an instructional design process, but instead weave throughout each step and iteration. In this context, the eLearning and Instructional Design Librarian was consistently engaging in ongoing informal assessments: has the group had enough time to process this concept? What points or ideas are still unclear? How can learning be

scaffolded, now or in the near future, to clarify these issues? And, what are the most meaningful next steps for this group? All of these questions were essential to the evaluation of this learning community and guided its direction along the way. And assessment and evaluation are ongoing, both at the micro and macro levels. As this model of professional learning continues to evolve, an assessment of participants' perceptions of the community's impact is in process. In the future, an impact evaluation of the program and model may determine ways in which this structure can be adapted by other organizations and groups.

## Cultivating Other Communities of Learners: The Next Steps

OU Libraries adapted the 2013 Immersion Teaching with Technology program through the learning community model to build three different professional development opportunities for its librarians. In doing so, three different structures emerged that can, in turn, be adapted and reused by other libraries. However, before adapting *any* of these models to cultivate communities of learners elsewhere, interested librarians need to consider several points. First, the focus and structure of the learning community– be it cohort- or topic-based –need to be identified in light of academic librarians' needs and interests. It is also important to identify an organization's unique attributes, as they will influence any learning community's success—or failure. OU Libraries' situational factors—such as the Kresge Library's high-level integration into campus instruction, the librarians' interest in instructional design and technology training, and their need for e-learning experience—influenced how the USER model was integrated into the learning community structure. Each institution has its own issues, needs, and strengths. Other libraries looking to implement such a program, then, need to first consider how they can cultivate meaningful and sustained communities of learners with such a model.

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