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Instructional Design for Framework-Integrated Active Learning Sessions

My first exposure to instructional design models came from Char Booth's book, *Reflective Teaching, Effective Learning*. Booth (2011) mentioned the ADDIE design cycle (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate) (p.85) and elaborated the USER method (Understand, Structure, Engage and Reflect) (p. 93). Later, I learned the "Backward Design" framework at the ACRL Roadshow, "Engaging with the ACRL Framework." Wiggins and McTighe (2005) proposed the "Backward Design" framework in their book *Understanding by Design*, and laid out a three-stage design process: stage 1- identify desired results; stage 2 - determine assessment evidence; and stage 3 - plan learning experiences and instruction. What recently came to my attention were the Nine Principles of Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) and the Motivational Design (ARCS) models. The Nine Principles of UDI include equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, size and space for approach and use, a community of learners, and instructional climate (Scott, McGuire, & Shaw, 2003). The ARCS model focuses on the motivational aspects of the learning environment and proposed design processes that enhance four motivational categories: Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction (Keller, 2010).

My instructional design for business information literacy sessions (BILS) often follows an abbreviated and personalized version of the USER method blended with the idea of backward design and motivational design. When planning learning experiences and instruction, I've been trying to integrate the ACRL information literacy framework with an active learning activity. Here are some key components of my blended approach:

1) Understanding the Learners and Context

When offering BILS, I think it is important to understand the learners and the instruction context: who are the learners and what motivates them to learn; the learners' backgrounds and prior knowledge; potential barriers to learning; the nature of the library session (a library orientation or a research project); the classroom location and setting;

class size, date, and time; the length of the BILS; available technology; and collaboration model with the classroom faculty.

2) Structuring the Session with a Backward Design Process

With the knowledge of learners and context, I often start the lesson planning with a backward process. Most of my BILS are tied to a course project. As I read the project description and course syllabus, I often draw the concept map of knowledge/sources/search terms and develop some search strategies. Then I would do a test run with some searches and assess the effectiveness of the search strategy. The backward design process and prototype testing ensures that the search strategy yield desired results, which would hopefully increase students' confidence and their satisfaction with the library instruction and their own research. Structuring the BILS also involves developing instructional materials such as library guides, presentation slides, exercise sheets, handouts, etc.; designing the database searching process; and planning the class timeline.

3) Integrating ACRL Information Literacy Framework

I often identify one or two Framework concepts that are most relevant to the BILS and deliberately think about the ways to integrate these concepts. I have tried to:

- Develop Framework-related learning goals such as “students can understand information has value and extend it to understand that there are different kinds of valuable voices on specific issues. They can respond with an effort to seek different opinions in their research and contribute their own.”
- Add the Framework concepts to [graphic guides](#) and class handouts.
- Add them to the presentation title slides, such as “Information has Value – Due Diligence with Confidence,” and “Scholarship as Conversation – Literature Review with a Purpose.”
- Share them as key takeaways, for example, “We are contributors to the information marketplace and we can leverage the value of information to affect changes on our campuses and our community.”
- Introduce the Framework concepts when teaching business research concepts. For example, when introducing industry reports, use the concept “information creation as a process” to help students better understand the complex nature of industry reports.
- Use discrepancies from sources to encourage students to consider “research as inquiry” and ask deeper questions.
- Ask Framework-related questions in the assessment survey such as “What does ‘scholarship as a conversation’ mean to you?”

Overall, I believe the message from the ACRL information literacy framework can be delivered in many ways through engaged conversations with students and active learning activities.

4) Engaging Students with Active Learning Activities

Active learning “elicits effortful cognitive processing from learners and guides them in constructing meaningful relationships between ideas,” (Lynch, 2016). Many researchers have justified the effectiveness of active learning in improving students’ academic outcomes (Lynch, 2016). Some typical techniques for active learning include think-pair-share, minute paper, peer-teaching, case study or problem solving, and classroom polling. Some approaches I have used include: using [Google Bucket](#) for business library orientation; using storytelling to map information creators with source types; using role play to encourage students to think how information is created and disseminated by certain stakeholders; and using Legos to construct citations. Active learning activities create opportunities for more engaged conversation with students and a deeper exploration of framework concepts. It takes great efforts for instructors to design active learning activities, but the deeper learning process can be rewarding.

5) Reflecting and Assessing Impact

I am still on my way to improving my teaching pedagogy. Assessment and reflection helps me grow organically. I often use formative assessment during prototyping and during an in-progress interaction with students in class. The summative assessment often comes with questions either in print or Google Form related to students’ takeaways from the class and their suggestions for improvement. I often leave some space for questions related to the ACRL framework, either by asking about their perception of the core framework concepts mentioned in the class or tying it to the affective domain in students’ learning to see if their attitudes towards information are changed – if they feel more confident about their research skills, more appreciative about their effort or if they value certain attributes of the research process.

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