

LIRT empowers librarians from all types of libraries to become better teachers through sharing best practices, leadership and professional development, and networking.



School Public Special Academic

Library Instruction Round Table

NEWS

From the Vice President

Carrying On

As we approach the one-year mark of the global pandemic, I can't help but think about the massive upheaval we have all experienced. Remembering the "before days" seems strange now, so it's no wonder many experts tell us that life as we knew it may never fully return. We honor those we have lost to COVID-19, our hearts break for their families and loved ones, and together we grieve for the hurt our communities, our nation, and our world have suffered.

Our jobs have shifted and our profession has changed. As we look to the better days ahead, and as (hopefully!) our campuses and libraries get back to a new normal, what will we take with us? What have we learned this year that we want to hold onto? What have we altered in our practices, our mindsets, our expectations that will continue to serve us in the future? For me, I focused my efforts on teaching the whole student. I tried to remember that each of the individuals in my classes has their own set of unique challenges and strengths, traumas and victories. In my online classes, we checked in via Zoom or Webex. We were more open, more real. I hope that continues.

I'm so thankful that LIRT is a place that we can share these thoughts and ideas. Our ALA Midwinter Virtual Discussion Forum was a fantastic meeting of the minds, and library instruction professionals from diverse backgrounds shared their peaks and valleys, what they've struggled with and what they've been able to accomplish. In LIRT we hold each other up and build each other up.

Are you ready to dive in deeper and be lifted higher? Please consider volunteering for a committee this year! The [Volunteer Form](#) will provide you with our list of committees, and appointments will be made in the coming months. Please join us!

Susan



**Susan Mythen,
LIRT Vice President**

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contents

- 1 ... From the Vice President
- 2 ... From the Editor
- 3 ... Candidates for LIRT Offices
- 5 ... Member A-LIRT Lily Dubach
- 7 ... Article: Sparking Interest with ARCS
- 8 ... LIRT @ Midwinter 2021 Discussion Forum
- 8 ... Call for Volunteers
- 9 ... Article: Moving Library Instruction Sessions Online
- 11 ... Upcoming LIRT Events
- 12 ... Tech Talk: Learning Experience Design
- 21 ... Get Involved with LIRT

From the Editor

Looking for inspiration for improving your online instruction? This issue has you covered.

In this issue of *LIRT News* several of our library colleagues share their experience and knowledge for improving your online classroom impact:

- ◆ Amber Eakin provides tips on how to engage students using the ARCS model.
- ◆ Renee Kiner and Kelly Safin discuss their success in moving sessions on evaluating sources with interactive group work to an online environment.
- ◆ And Billie Peterson-Lugo looks into the literature on Learning Experience (LX) Design that moves the focus from the lesson to the learner.



**Sherri Brown,
LIRT News Editor**

Also in this issue, hear from our candidates for LIRT offices, meet our colleague, Lily Dubach, from the University of Central Florida, and find out about upcoming virtual events in the works.

Enjoy the issue, and as always, feel free to send me feedback or suggestions at slb4kt@virginia.edu.

Sherri

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Contributions to be considered for the **June 2021 issue** must be sent to the editor by **May 1, 2021**.

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Candidates for LIRT Offices

ALA election polls close on Wednesday, April 7th. Members are provided with information about how to vote via email. More details can be found on the ALA web page: <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/alaelection>

Candidate for Vice President/President-Elect

Becca Neel

Assistant Director for Resource Management & User Experience, University of Southern Indiana

As we navigate what it means to establish and maintain meaningful, productive connections with colleagues and students in technologically-dependent pandemic and post-pandemic conditions, I believe that it is vital that LIRT continue to provide an accessible forum for instructionally-focused librarians to explore new strategies, technologies, and ideas. If elected to the LIRT VP/President-Elect position, I will dedicate my efforts to fostering this as an inclusive, innovative, and engaging environment for collaboration across the profession.



Candidate for Secretary/Archivist



Leanna Fry Balci

Instructional Design Librarian, BYU Library
Former LIRT TLT Co-chair

I have been privileged to work with LIRT for several years on both the Membership Committee and the Teaching, Learning, and Technology Committee. LIRT is dedicated to improving instruction within libraries, and I fully embrace that mission. I have worked as an instruction librarian for ten years, teaching thousands of university students, as well as working on digital learning materials for the library. As LIRT faces changes and opportunities for growth, I feel strongly about contributing to the round table.

Candidates for LIRT Offices

Candidates for Vice Treasurer/Treasurer-Elect

Michael Saar

Interim Associate Dean of the Mary & John Gray Library and Department Head of Instructional Services and Assessment, Lamar University

LIRT Intellectual Freedom Committee Liaison & Top 20 Articles Member

I hope to continue the development and growth of this round table by the careful stewardship, analysis, and communication of its budget. I believe an organization is strongest when it provides clear, transparent communication to its members and stakeholders and hope my attention to detail and strong communication skills can help achieve these aspirations.



Fagdeba "Bako" Bakoyema

Head of Instruction & Learning Services Department, Levi Watkins Learning Center, Alabama State University

Co-chair, LIRT TLT

I have served for four years in a LIRT TLT leadership position. I am passionate about LIRT as a round table, and particularly the Teaching and Learning with Technology committee, because it brings meaningful programming that impacts the work of librarians from all types of libraries. I am interested in the treasurer-elect position because of the opportunities to learn about the financial aspect of LIRT. My prior experiences stem from: \$16,000.00 grant manager/principal investigator, department budget management, and library collections budget management.

Member A-LIRT

Lily Dubach



**UCF Connect Librarian for Valencia
College West Campus**
University of Central Florida Libraries
Primary Subject Librarian for Architecture
*Secondary Subject Librarian for Communication
Sciences & Disorders, Nursing, and Psychology*

What brought you to LIRT?

When I am making a meaningful impact, I love my job. One of the most thrilling ways to cultivate helpful change is by teaching. I am always looking for ways to improve my pedagogy. I searched for a group that would share this passion for instruction and was happy to find LIRT right away!

What was your path to librarianship?

As a young child, I did not play with toys or dolls like any other kid I knew. I did not have my dolls talk to each other or play doctor's visit. I categorized all my toys just like animal taxonomy. Each toy had its own name, categories, place, and relation to other toys. My parents, of course, thought that was odd for a five-year-old. However, they were astute and thought these traits and my personality might lead to a career as a librarian, so they provided opportunities to explore this potential. Because of this, I fell in love with librarianship by age 7, at which point I volunteered in a church library. I chose a bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences & Disorders and learned American Sign Language to communicate effectively with many possible patrons and to expand accessibility. During my undergraduate studies and throughout my graduate studies with Florida State University online, I worked part-time at the University of Central Florida Libraries. I graduated in May of 2017 and started a full-time librarian position at the UCF Libraries in September 2017, where I remain today. Long story short, it was no surprise I became "Lily the Librarian."

Tell us about your current position. What do you like most about it?

I do instruction, outreach, reference, collection development, scholarship, and service in my role as a UCF Connect Librarian. The University of Central Florida (UCF) offers classes and library services at many of its partner institutions throughout Florida, and I am the solo UCF librarian for one of those locations, acting as liaison between UCF and Valencia College West Campus. It is an exciting balance between autonomy and a multitude of collaboration opportunities across departments and institutions. I serve as the subject librarian for Architecture and I also help support programs in Nursing, Psychology, Communication Sciences & Disorders, Integrated Business, Electrical Engineering, and Elementary Education. If I had to pick what I like most about my job, it would be the people. Being able to help different individuals across a wide range of majors, departments, and institutions helps me feel that my role has an impact.

Continued on next page

Member A-LIRT, continued

Lily Dubach

In what ways does it challenge you?

My favorite aspect of my job—being able to reach and impact such a wide range of people and places—can also be the most challenging. I need to have knowledge of seven dissimilar subject areas. I also need to understand two institutions—UCF and Valencia College. In many ways it is like having several jobs at once, and in one case I literally do have multiple jobs. Valencia College hired me part-time in order to access their system and help their students fully. In the beginning, this whirlwind was overwhelming. Now, it is exciting, and certainly never dull!

Throughout all of your educational experiences, what teacher inspired you the most and why?

One of my dear friends taught a music theory course. I took it, not because I wanted to know anything about music theory—I am not musical at all—but to support him. He said there was something simple to keep in mind, and not to let yourself feel weak but to feel empowered: “It’s okay to change your mind.” This simple, obvious phrase changed a lot about my life. Tragically, my friend and teacher has since fallen ill to severe mental illness. I hope and pray the medical professionals in his life can bring healing and literally “change his mind.”

When you travel, what do you never leave home without?

If I am traveling, then it is probably winter break, and I am headed to some coral reefs or Florida springs. In that case, I am bringing my wet suit and snorkeling gear.

If you could change one thing about libraries today, what would it be?

The online catalog systems. This varies from place to place, but I am eager for the day when library users can use the online catalog and find things as easy as they shop online.

Tell us one thing about yourself that most of us probably don’t know.

I love nature photography and I dabble with my phone’s camera (<https://www.instagram.com/lilybrarian>). My grandfather was the head photographer of the National Portrait Gallery, and even National Geographic tried to recruit him. He passed away when I was young and before I developed this hobby, but sharing this interest helps me feel connected to him.

What do you like about LIRT and what would you like to see?

I love LIRT’s purpose and mission, but I did not find LIRT until I looked for it. I was surprised that some of my more experienced colleagues at the university had not heard of LIRT. I hope my service in the LIRT Membership Committee can help bring more awareness and expand membership.

What are you looking forward to?

I am looking forward to meeting others interested in instruction—although that may be limited to the virtual realm for the foreseeable future. Even with some Zoom fatigue, my quasi-extroverted self is excited to meet new people!

Sparking Interest with ARCS

By Amber Eakin, M.S.L.S., M.Ed.

I've been working in online library instruction since April 2020, but I have been working with online instructors since 2015. Through trial and error, I have determined a few best practices that work well for students. These tips stem from the ARCS model: Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction (Keller, 2010). The ARCS model can work for any modality, and the following activities are uniquely suited to the online environment.

Attention

Attention can be any method of actively engaging students. This strategy might involve playing a song at the start of instruction or chatting with students as they enter. One process well-suited to online education involves using polls at the beginning, end, and sometimes in the middle of a session. Because you do not benefit from seeing students and gauging body language, polls can take the place of knowledge checks.

Relevance

Relevance means demonstrating why patrons should care about your instruction. This concept also aligns with Malcolm Knowles's andragogical assumption of the immediacy of application (Knowles, 1990). How does this relate to what they are learning in their classes? Will this help them at work? Adults want to understand the reason for integrating new information, especially if the instruction is supplemental and ungraded.

Confidence

Confidence refers to self-efficacy. Do patrons believe they have the skills to conduct research and evaluate sources? Setting an agenda can support students in developing their self-esteem. Begin by explaining what you plan to demonstrate in order to set their expectations, and then highlight what you covered at the end of the presentation. You can also give them control by recording the session to replay anything they missed and including links to resources they can review later.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction highlights the benefit that students receive either during or as a result of the instruction. What is their motivation for attending? Are they trying to learn a skill? Did an instructor offer extra credit for them to join the lesson? Intrinsic reinforcement is a more powerful motivator than extrinsic rewards, so be sure to reinforce the instruction session's benefits.

In Practice

A vicarious experience by watching a demonstration can increase patrons' self-efficacy, but only if the demonstration aligns with their search experience. One way to help them develop confidence is to demonstrate barriers and how to overcome them. Rather than planning the minutiae of your search strategy, use a poll (attention) to ask patrons what they want to search (relevance). As you conduct a search on the topic they choose, you can explain your strategy, including what to do when you inevitably hit a stumbling block (confidence). Finally, you can reinforce why these strategies are valuable (satisfaction). Although this example models a single instruction session, librarians can adapt the methodology to incorporate the ARCS model of motivation to a series or even a full-length course.

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LIRT @ ALA

Midwinter 2021 Discussion Forum

Pivot, Nimble, Sprint: Learning with a Curve During a Crisis

2020 was quite a year, and the different ways we all “do” professional development has definitely been affected. The LIRT Midwinter discussion forum, hosted by the LIRT Liaison Committee, focused on how the past year has altered our plans for how we learn. Did you attend virtual conferences? Take online classes? Talk with colleagues? Step back to focus on family? Dive into the literature? Put your own learning on the back burner?

Over sixty people attended our one-hour discussion where, after brief introductions, we assembled in breakout rooms to discuss several prompts. Small group discussion led to a shared [Google doc](#) where people put their thoughts, suggestions, and resources. Ideas ranged from hoping conferences stay, at least in part, virtual in the future; recommending helpful webinars and books to add to our reading lists; and providing support for those who are struggling. Thank you to everyone who attended and supported this discussion, and best wishes to all for 2021.

VOLUNTEER FOR A LIRT COMMITTEE

LIRT is looking for volunteers to join committees and help us move LIRT forward. Joining a committee does not have to be a huge time commitment and it can help you:

- Build skills that you want to develop but aren't necessarily part of your core job.
- Give you leadership experience to talk about if you are looking to move into a supervisory position.
- Develop a community of like-minded individuals who you can connect with now and in the future.

Learn more about the [committees](#) and their work, and if you have questions, please feel free to reach out directly to the chair(s) of each committee. Indicate your interest by filling out the [ALA volunteer form](#), and we'll be in touch with your committee assignment.

Moving Library Instruction Sessions Online

By Renee Kiner and Kelly Safin

During the summer of 2020, administrators at the University of Pittsburgh implemented a hybrid course model for the fall semester at all five campus locations. Instructors had the ability to choose to teach fully online or in the classroom, with COVID-19 precautions in place. Students also had the option to decide if they wanted to attend classes online, in person when conditions permitted, or both. Adjustments were also made to the start and end dates of the term—the semester started a week earlier and no longer included a fall break—so students living on campus could finish classes and return home by Thanksgiving. This was a major adjustment for campus faculty, who had taught primarily in-person prior to the pandemic. Librarians at the Greensburg campus had to quickly revise lesson plans to bring group activities to an online setting. Almost all of the classes that librarians would be working with remained online for the entire semester, with a few meeting both in-person and online.

All Composition 2 classes on the Greensburg campus include a library component. Before the pandemic, librarians held one 50-minute session on evaluating sources in our library classroom, along with a 20-minute follow-up on another day in their classroom for a database searching refresher, as requested by the instructors. The session on evaluating sources was group-work focused. We provided each group with a file folder which included three short articles they were asked to skim, a copy of the PROVEN test by Ellen Carey, and a blank grid for each group to complete with their observations about how well each article matched PROVEN criteria. We would discuss the answers as a group.

Source evaluation is an important component of the Composition 2 course, and we wanted to keep our learning outcomes when we moved online. However, to accommodate the virtual setting and the additional time that teaching online can take, we simplified some aspects of instruction. The result was a new Composition 2 lesson plan with similar objectives but very different elements of engagement. Before we met with each class in Zoom, instructors asked their students to read one short MSN article that referenced a peer-reviewed study. Students were also asked to review our Composition 1 and 2 LibGuide and complete a short online questionnaire about what they learned. To make this easier for instructors, the MSN article and link to the LibGuide were placed in a module created for their course Canvas.

Before starting the source evaluation lesson, librarians address any questions or provide clarification on any confusion noted in students' questionnaire answers. We begin the discussion by asking if the MSN article contained any useful information for someone writing a paper on this topic, and we point out the study listed in the article would be a helpful source for them to locate. We then do a short demonstration of searching our catalog, focused on locating the peer-reviewed study mentioned in the article. This short exercise acts as a brief catalog search refresher.

Once the peer-reviewed study is found, we explain the group work activity. Students are placed into four Zoom breakout rooms with a link to a Google Doc. The Google Doc has a section for each of the four rooms with prompts based on the PROVEN criteria: Purpose, Relevance, Objectivity, Verifiability, Expertise and

Moving Library Instruction Sessions Online, continued

Newness. Students complete their portion of the document, answering questions about each of the PROVEN criteria for the two sources. Librarians bounce from room to room to make sure students understand the exercise, encouraging conversation if a group is particularly subdued. We can also monitor the Google Doc for signs the groups are wrapping up. After about 20 minutes, we get back together to discuss all of the groups' observations.

We have found that the Google Doc has been an effective collaboration space for our students in the online environment. Most students are familiar with Google Docs, and they like that the document can be updated synchronously so one person isn't solely responsible for adding information. For the Spring of 2021, we have been able to resume the additional 20-minute database refresher, via Zoom, as requested by instructors. When librarians return to in-person instruction, we will keep the Google Doc option, because it's paperless, allows us to monitor progress, and is easier to read than handwriting. Most importantly, students seem comfortable with the technology.

Of course, we adapted other instruction to the online environment, including first-year seminar courses. With those classes and Composition 2, having a "flipped" (pre-class) component has provided opportunities for students to share questions via those activities and for us to address them synchronously. Faculty expressed appreciation for the way librarians responded to the campus' virtual learning needs. The authors consider these positive outcomes as an avenue to continue and expand this method of engagement with students in their courses.

Reference

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Have you created an instruction program or developed a unique classroom strategy? Please share your experiences with LIRT!

Send your articles to Sherri Brown (slb4kt@virginia.edu)

Upcoming LIRT Events

LIRT Chair's Program at ALA Annual Virtual June 2021

Smooth Transitions: Developing Information Literacy in the In-Between Places

Transitions can be full of excitement, but also anxiety. Faced with these transitions, a person may sometimes struggle to find their balance within a new environment. How are librarians collaborating across institutions (public, school, and academic libraries) to help alleviate this anxiety by teaching information literacy concepts that reach beyond the classroom and into the real world? While most conversations tend to focus on the transition between high school and academia, there are many other types of transitions that a learner can experience, like how publicly provided information can inform professional practice or how public libraries can coordinate and enhance the services students receive in school and academic libraries. This panel, rescheduled from ALA 2020, will discuss how public, academic, and school libraries work together to support the development of information literacy skills for learners of all ages, and how to connect with other librarians interested in this topic.

Our panelists will include:

- ◆ Jennifer Bromann-Bender, Librarian, Lincoln-Way West High School, New Lenox, Illinois
- ◆ Melanie Wachsmann, Reference and Teen Librarian, Lone Star College-CyFair, a joint-use library, in conjunction with the Harris County Public Library system
- ◆ Zoe Magierek, Manager of Knowledge Services, Forefront Library, Chicago, Illinois

Check the ALA conference website for more details on the date and time of the event.

ALA Annual Virtual LIRT Awards Ceremony June 2021

The LIRT Awards ceremony is always a great time to connect with LIRT colleagues and be inspired by the people doing excellent work in our profession. Though we will miss mingling over hors d'oeuvres this year, the LIRT Awards Committee is pleased to announce that the ceremony will take place virtually in 2021. We will be honoring recipients of the Librarian Recognition and Innovation in Instruction awards from both 2020 and 2021 at the event.

Keep an eye out for the date and time announcement coming soon. We hope you see you there!

Join Our Online Discussion Forum, Wednesday, March 24, 2021

The LIRT Transitions to College Committee has planned an online discussion forum for school and academic librarians entitled Fostering Sustainable Collaborations in High School to College Transitions. Join the discussion on creating meaningful and sustainable partnerships to aid students in the information literacy transition from high school to college. The event will take place Wednesday March 24th at 2:30pm Central Time. **Register for the event.**

Tech Talk

By Billie Peterson-Lugo, Baylor University

billie_peterson@baylor.edu

Dear Tech Talk– I’ve recently encountered references to learning experience design. I’m not really sure if it’s a technology kind of thing, but I do wonder if it’s something that is applicable to the instruction I provide?

– Lacking Experience with Learning Experience

Dear LXLX– As is often the case, something that appears to be new is not as new as we may believe—it’s just gaining visibility. This is the case with Learning Experience (LX) Design. This movement originated around 2007 and is credited to Niels Floor, a Dutch learning experience design pioneer who founded LXD.org (<https://lxd.org>) (Korkmaz, 2018; Batoufflet, 2019). Therefore, let’s start with an LX design definition from LXD.org:

Learning experience design (LX design) is the process of creating learning experiences that enable the learner to achieve the desired learning outcome in a human centered and goal oriented [sic] way. (LXD.org, n.d.c)

So, why is LX design gaining visibility? Korkmaz (2018) suggests that “the fast pace of technology has caused e-learners to have new demands from the format of the content they are learning, the number one being immersion. With the appearance of new learning technologies, instructional design is now shifting towards *learning experience design*.” Vander Ark (2014b) specifies:

A number of factors [that] have made. . . old notions of learning obsolete including the:

- explosion of digital and modular content including adaptive learning and games;
- rapid growth of online and blended learning;
- deeper appreciation for learning sciences, particularly motivation. . . ; and
- expansion of applied and project-based learning.

LX design begins with the learner, with a significant emphasis on empathy—meaning what? Matthews et al. (2017) list 3 concepts for empathy, as identified by instructional designers:

- “Caring for the learner” – caring for the learners moves these designers to produce a learning experience best suited to learners’ needs and context.
- “Referencing personal experience in service of the learner” – reflections on past learning experiences enabled instructional designers to see and understand learners who struggled with personal frustration, disability, or failure.
- “Taking on someone else’s viewpoint” – the process of walking in the shoes of another or seeing from the perspective of somebody else (p. 488).

Add to these concepts Floor’s (2020a) perspective, “Empathy is a **vital skill** [emphasis mine] for learning experience designers. It allows you to see the world through the eyes of the learner”; along with this statement, “working on. . . the ability to put yourself in another person’s shoes is **a key trait** [emphasis mine]

Tech Talk, continued

of successful LX Design. . . *by using empathy in the initial design phases you increase the chances of getting it right from the start* [emphasis mine]" (Anonymous, 2017a).

Those designing learning experiences have a strong desire to *get it right*, determined to attain successful long-term outcomes. So, the next logical question is how does one acquire the level of empathy needed to design effective learning experiences? Although it can happen at any point, it is beneficial to acquire empathy early in the design process. Malamed (2018) suggests that "you are researching the audience as an ethnographer, studying and recording the viewpoint of a group of people" and also identified some techniques:

- **Field Research:** talk to and observe audience members [researchers – students, instructors, other constituents] in their jobs and imagine what it would be like to have that job. Discover problems that may not be obvious.
- **Interviews:** speak with both supervisors and staff [students, instructors, library personnel, other constituents] to understand the issues they face and the characteristics of the people you want to help.
- **Personas:** fictitious person with the collective characteristics and attributes of your audience or a subgroup of your audience (see Learner Personas for Instructional Design)
- **Empathy Maps:** a visual tool to collect what the persona thinks, feels, says and does when faced with the challenge of your focus
- **Attitude Research:** run focus groups to find out what motivates the audience and what demotivates them.

Further, Malamed (2018) suggests that "[e]mpathy may even involve collaborating and co-designing with the audience," which may seem to be a bit of a stretch to those involved in instruction in the library context but is worth consideration.

The instructional designers interviewed by Matthews et al. (2017) identified techniques they have used to connect empathically with their learners, many of which can be transformed to a library context:

- User personas.
- Demographic information obtained from other departments such as marketing.
- Listening in on customer service calls.
- Informal collaboration with, or questioning of, instructors.
- Informal conversations with coworkers or managers.
- Pre- and post-instruction surveys.
- Piloting instruction with individual of a demographic similar to the learner.
- Review of learner's work.
- Interacting with the learner informally at workshops or in classrooms.
- Formal meetings with learners' management (e.g., the client who is contracting the ID work). (p. 489)

Floor (2020a) asserts that "The ability to empathise is not a talent, it's a skill. . . you can develop through practice." To enable that skill development, he created an *empathy map* – a systematic method "to develop a deep, shared understanding and empathy for other people you design for." He walks through the completion of an empathy map, saying "When you answer all eight questions you'll end up with a detailed view of who

Tech Talk, continued

the learner is.” This empathy map is used by LXD.org designers, but it is also accessible for anyone to use.

The image shows a template for an "EMPATHY MAP FOR LEARNERS". At the top right, there is a box labeled "SESSION". The main map is a large rectangle with a central circle. Four lines radiate from the center to the corners, forming a cross shape. The quadrants are labeled as follows: top-left: "Who am I?" with a blue box containing "BE"; top-right: "How do I feel?"; bottom-left: "How do I behave?" with a blue box containing "DO" and "What do I do?"; bottom-right: "What are my views?" with a blue box containing "SEE" and "What do I see?". Below the main map, there are two boxes: "Positive" with the subtext "What motivates or enables me to learn?" and "Negative" with the subtext "What demotivates or disables me to learn?". In the bottom right corner of the map area, there is a small logo that says "CREATED BY NELS FLOOR" and a Creative Commons license icon.

(Floor, 2020a)

Download from: <https://lxd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Empathy-map-for-learners-by-N-Floor.pdf>

In using an empathy map, Floor (2020a) identifies some issues to keep in mind:

- An empathy map is just a tool, how you use it determines the quality of the insights you gain and the extent to which you're able to empathise. It takes time and effort to use them.
- You can create empathy maps in different phases of the design process, not just at the start as part of your research. For example, you can also use it to let the learner reflect on the actual learning experience.
- People change and so will your empathy map. The answers on the empathy map depend on the moment you use it. Don't be afraid to update an empathy map once in a while.

Last, while acknowledging the significance of empathy for LX design, one should also acknowledge some caveats, some of which were identified by the instructional designers interviewed by Matthews et al. (2017):

- “Finding the right balance” – *how much* understanding of the learner is necessary; closer contact with learners may have diminishing returns for design projects.

Tech Talk, continued

- Multiple stakeholders with whom to establish empathy – subject matter experts, the learners’ students, project managers, other employees within the same organization, customers of designer’s clients, and others—all of which can result in competing desired outcomes.
- “Practical constraints on empathy” – limited options and doing what is *good enough* (satisficing) (pp. 489-490).

Empathy is one key component for LX design; a focus on *learning* – as opposed to instruction – is another key element. In discussing instructional design versus LX design, Korkmaz (2018) explains, “instructional design emphasizes the *source* [the instructor] of knowledge – in other words, the planning of the teaching activities. However, LX design concentrates more on the *destination* [the learner] of the knowledge.”

Once designers have obtained a level of empathy with the learners—their background, experiences, knowledge, skills, needs—they can apply that insight to develop learning experiences that result in outcomes that best address the learners’ needs. Or, as Malamed (2015) states, “we design, enable or facilitate experiences rather than courses.”

According to a post on the Interaction Design Foundation website, “Learning design attempts to solve one or more of 5 types of problem for the learner” (Anonymous, 2020). To a large extent, these problems are alive and well in the groups to whom librarians provide learning opportunities:

- **A lack of knowledge.** It’s hard to do something if you don’t know what it is you’re meant to do, or you fail to understand what might be involved in doing something.
- **A lack of skill.** I may know how to drive a car but if I lack the practice of driving. . . Skill is the practical application of knowledge.
- **A lack of confidence.** Everyone knows how to speak in public and everyone has the skill to do it – all you need is a voice. Yet, a lot of people struggle to speak publicly. . . because they lack the confidence to do so.
- **A lack of motivation.** You can have all the knowledge, skill and confidence in the world but if you don’t want to do something – it’s unlikely to get done.
- **A lack of resource or tools.** You can’t, for the moment at least, drive a car with no steering wheel. Sometimes the learning is aimed at fixing a problem that exists preventing a motivated, knowledgeable, skilled and confident person from doing what they want to do. (Anonymous, 2020)

Floor (2018a) suggests using a grid to map a learners’ journey, with a horizontal axis representing time and a vertical axis displaying “elements that play a part in the learning experience like the people that participate in the experience, the activities they do and the location where the learning takes place.” The purpose of creating a learner journey is to obtain “critical insights into the process the learner goes through and how all different elements impact this experience. And when you change one thing, other elements can also change because they are related.”

A complementary approach for designing a good learning experience is to work backwards from a desired outcome. “What do you want someone to be able to do? What will the outcome of them doing that be?” Addressing these questions informs the requirements of the learning experience and you can work backwards to ask:

- What does someone need to know in order to be able to do this?
- What do they need to be able to do in order to complete this?
- What equipment or resources must they have in order to deliver the objective? (Anonymous, 2020)

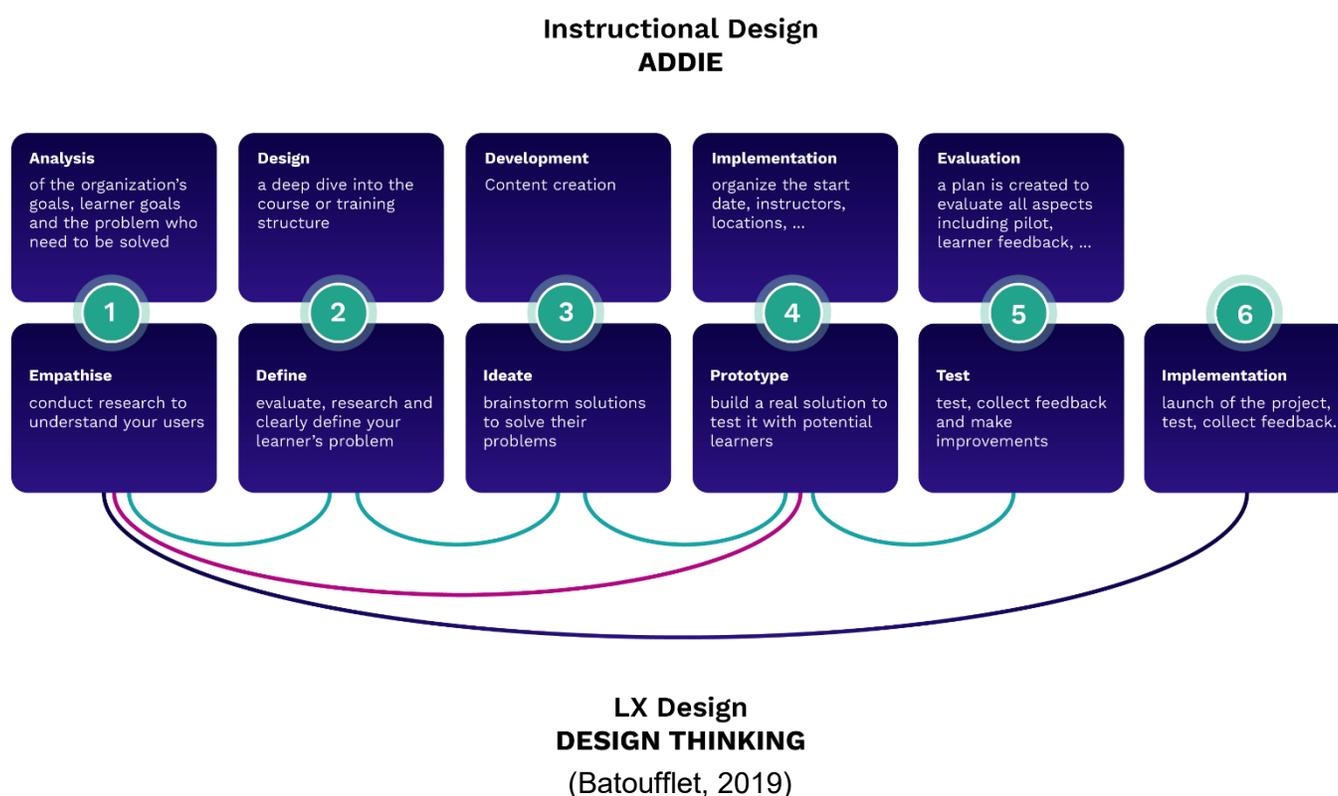
Using this approach, you can begin to make decisions on what content will be needed and its structure. The

Tech Talk, continued

content comprises those things needed by the user to complete a task, while the structure should reflect a logical order for the content in order to complete the task (Anonymous, 2020). However, depending on the nature of the outcome, you may need to divide it into sub-outcomes in order to craft meaningful learning experiences. For example, this process works much differently if the desired outcome is to write a well-researched paper, as opposed to a desired outcome that enables the identification of a discipline-specific, peer-reviewed article in a database.

One more key ingredient to LX design is the use of *design thinking*, “an approach for deeply understanding the audience and their challenges, in order to generate creative and effective solutions. It resembles Agile models in its methods of prototyping and testing. It differs in its emphasis on human-centered solutions” (Malamed, 2018). Design thinking focuses on interdisciplinary creative problem-solving in the learner environment. The emphasis on *human-centered solutions* harkens back to the previous two elements of LX design—empathy and learning centricity.

There are multiple models for the process of design thinking (Batoufflet, 2019; Gragg, 2018; Malamed, 2018) as it relates to LX design. Of these three, Batoufflet’s (2019) model provides a robust comparison between the ADDIE model used in traditional instructional design and the design thinking model used in LX design (click the image below to see a larger version).



As illustrated in the model, the key elements of design thinking include: empathise, define, ideate, prototype, test, and implementation. In particular, note the interconnectivity of the first four elements. The first two elements focus on the learners—who they are and what problems need to be addressed through learning—while the third element focuses on identifying creative solutions for the learners’ problems. The proposed

Tech Talk, continued

solution is built in such a way that learners test it, enabling both the designers and the learners to see if it effectively addresses the learners' needs, and working iteratively to improve the solution. Implementation happens after the testing period ends satisfactorily, but the learning experience continues to be evaluated and adjusted as needed. Malamed (2018) provides specific techniques to work through the first five elements of this design thinking process.

Alternatively, the well-known ADDIE model appears to place more emphasis on the course or training structure, content development, course logistics, etc.—all of which are more closely aligned to *instruction* as opposed to *learning*. However, it is worth noting the opposing viewpoints regarding whether or not ADDIE is learner-centric. Gragg (2018) argues that “[i]n both the ADDIE model and design thinking, your first step is to understand your learner – their needs, interests, and pain points. From there, you create a learning experience. Second, if you are a good Instructional Designer, then you are learner-centered at every step.” Alternatively, Niels Floor commented on Tucker’s (2015) post, noting that “Where instructional design seems to focus on cognition, content and learning from instruction, learning experience design focusses on people, outcomes and learning from experience. Instruction is only a part of a learning experience. The process of designing instruction is, as far as I know, totally different from designing a learning experience.”

One approach to consider is bringing together the components of LX design—empathy, learner-centricity, design thinking—and developing effective learning experiences in the use of *stories*. Particularly the technique of developing personas to create empathy complements nicely with using stories to implement learner-centric learning experiences through the creativity enabled in design thinking.

For years, software developers have used *stories* (brief descriptions of a task a specific user would perform) along with a *product owner* (an individual who has the final say on whether or not a feature functions as described in the story). For example, *As an Administrator, I should be able to populate a controlled vocabulary through a file upload for a certain field*. The developer programs this action and at some point performs the action for the product owner; the product owner then verifies that the action behaves as expected.

According to Gruen et al. (2002):

Stories help designers determine which functions will be useful; how they should be presented; and what integrations with other tools, people, and information will be important. Stories can prompt innovation by revealing new opportunities to provide value to end users. Because they are powerful communication and teaching tools, stories can also help multidisciplinary teams work together, and help end users understand and discuss how a system would fit into their lives. . . . Stories. . . include fleshed-out characters and settings, dramatic elements, well-formed plotlines, and enough detail to understand the people who will use a system and the value it will bring to their lives. (p. 504)

The use of stories has the added benefit of enabling insight from the users/customers/learners, focusing:

customers on their experience instead of an unfamiliar technology, prompting more accurate, detailed, and honest feedback. . . . [uncovering] potential problems with a planned design that stem from personal or cultural differences; as people hear a story, they can reflect on whether it feels natural and if they could see themselves doing the same thing. (Gruen et al., 2002, pp. 507-8)

Gruen et al. (2002) posit that user needs can be fleshed out by asking “the customer to describe the last time they had a problem with ‘x’ or something similar. This will usually produce a compelling story. Another strategy is to ask customers to imagine if you could have anything you wanted to be able to do with ‘x’, what would it be, and what would it be like?” (p. 513).

Stories help to ‘put a face’ on the user for all the varied team members [e.g., librarian,

Tech Talk, continued

instructor, student]. . . [weaving] together laundry lists of requirements into a cohesive whole that reveals the customers' motivations and priorities. . . Attaching stories to that persona makes them real. It becomes much easier to ask, 'How would this design solve Sue's problem?' when put into the concrete context of a story. (Gruen et al., 2002, p. 519)

Some stories applicable to those who interact with libraries might include:

- As a graduate student, I want to save relevant citations to incorporate into my research paper when needed.
- As an instructor, I want my students to find discipline-appropriate, peer-reviewed articles.
- As an undergraduate student, I want to find the best database for my topic.

Returning to the initial question—is LX design based in technology? Not necessarily. van Broekhoven et al. (2017) state:

LX Design is about people and their goals and not so much about technology. Technology is only a tool that serves a purpose: learning. It's up to you to find out what and how technology can best help the learner to achieve their goals. And don't be afraid to use ancient technologie [sic] if it works best for the learner. (p. 7)

Is LX design worth considering for instruction performed by librarians? The answer is—it depends—for those developing a robust, scaffolded instruction program or a series of workshops, there is value in using LX design. It will take a significant amount of research (phases 1 and 2 of the design thinking model) with the stakeholders (students, instructors, and library personnel) to build learning experiences that address the needs of all involved. It will also take a significant amount of time to brainstorm solutions, create and test prototypes, and make adjustments before the final implementation. For a one-hour instruction session, the cost/benefit analysis doesn't translate well. However, learning experiences developed for the more robust instruction may well be viable options for incorporation in the shorter instruction sessions.

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Get Involved with LIRT

LIRT Standing Committees

Use the online [form](#) to volunteer

Adult Learners

This committee is charged with assisting library professionals to more effectively serve adult learners.

Awards

This committee is charged with selecting the recipients for the LIRT Innovation in Instruction Award and the LIRT Librarian Recognition Award.

Communications

This committee is responsible for soliciting and distributing content, in both written and visual formats, for all avenues of communication with LIRT membership. This includes, but is not limited to, preparing and distributing the round table's newsletter, curating all social media accounts, and providing oversight of LIRT's online presence. The committee may create and update content, as well as solicit content and advise other committees regarding the creation and maintenance of content.

Conference Program

This committee shall be responsible for annual program preparation and presentation.

Liaison

This committee shall initiate and maintain communication with groups within the American Library Association dealing with issues relevant to library instruction and shall disseminate information about these groups' activities.

Membership

This committee shall be responsible for publicizing the Round Table's purposes, activities and image; and for promoting membership in the Round Table.

Organization and Planning

This committee shall be responsible for long-range planning and making recommendations to guide the future direction of LIRT.

Teaching, Learning, & Technology

This committee will be responsible for identifying and promoting the use of technology in library instruction. Special attention will be given to technologies that enhance learning and can be easily adapted to a variety of different learning environments. Activities will include assisting with programs, writing reviews and articles for the newsletter, and promoting research that relates to our charge.

Top 20

This committee shall be responsible for monitoring the library instruction literature and identifying high quality library-instruction related articles from all types of libraries. Annually, this committee shall prepare and publish in the *LIRT News* a list of the Top 20 articles on library instruction.

Transitions to College

This committee builds and supports partnerships between school, public, and academic librarians to assist students in their transition to the academic library environment.

For more information about our committees, visit: <http://www.ala.org/lirt/committees>



Library Instruction Round Table News

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