

From Instruction to Instructional Design: Scalable Approaches to Information Literacy

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Abstract

At Nevada State College, the instructional design librarians are moving beyond one-shot instruction sessions to collaborate with faculty to integrate information literacy outcomes directly into their courses through assignment design. One way they accomplish this is through the Transparency in Learning and Teaching Framework (TILT). The TILT Framework focuses on the *why* and the *how* of what students are expected to learn in their course of study. This intervention has been shown to demonstrably improve the success of first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented college students. In this session, we will review the three core components of the TILT Framework and describe how we apply TILT to research assignments. Participants will work through active learning exercises that we have used in faculty workshops. As a result of this session, participants will be able to utilize the TILT Framework to positively impact student outcomes and reimagine the role of information literacy instruction.

Introduction

At Nevada State College, the instructional design librarians are moving away from traditional library instruction to provide leadership for the integration of scalable and sustainable information literacy initiatives into the curriculum. This shift from more traditional types of library instruction makes more sense when you consider that, with only two instruction librarians, our student to librarian load is 2107 to 1 (Nevada State College). At this ratio, we simply cannot reach every student through traditional instruction, so we had to consider new ways of reaching students. One way we do this is by collaborating with instructors who are on the frontlines of teaching. With an instructor to librarian ratio of 127 to 1, we can more successfully aim to connect with all of our students (Nevada State College).

One way we have done this is through assignment design workshops. In the summer of 2016, the library held a two-day faculty workshop on assignment design. Over the course of workshop, we conducted a series of sessions to guide the participants through the process of creating transparent research assignments. By the end of the workshop, the participants had all made significant progress in either revising or completely overhauling a research assignment.

For this workshop, we used the Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) framework. The Transparency in Learning and Teaching project is based on a study run by Mary-Ann Winkelmes. Multiple institutions have adopted her methods and been a part of larger research surrounding transparency. Through this framework, assignment design rationale is made explicit, helping students understand how and why they are learning in particular ways (Winkelmes, 2015). For the Transparency and Problem Centered Learning study, faculty chose only one or two transparent methods and experimental and control sections of their course were surveyed (Winkelmes et al., 2016). While the TILT model has shown to improve outcomes for all students, significant increases have been shown for first-generation and underrepresented students. Based on the student surveys comparing the control and experimental groups, major gains are seen in important areas such as Sense of Belonging and Academic Confidence (Winkelmes et al., 2016). These are particularly significant because they are tied to greater retention, graduation, and academic achievement.

The transparency framework involves breaking assignments down into three sections: the purpose, task, and criteria for success. During the Summer Library Workshop, we led a series of sessions on each of these components, providing the participants with examples of how to integrate them into their assignments. The purpose covers skills to be practiced and content knowledge to be gained; these often relate back to the learning outcomes and objectives for the course and assignment. When introducing the purpose to the faculty participants, we focused on developing learning outcomes based on information literacy best practices. The task states what students will do and how they will do it; this is the substance of the assignment. When introducing the task during the workshop, we focused on best practices related to the research process such as scaffolding assignments to allow for feedback and improvement. Finally, the criteria shows what excellence looks like, through examples and measures provided in advance. There are many ways to show criteria but the most common are rubrics and samples of exemplary student work. When introducing the criteria to the participants, we provided additional ways to demonstrate criteria, such as checklists, peer review or self-evaluation of student work, and annotated examples of exemplary work.

In order to implement the Summer Library Workshop, we partnered with the provost's office. With their help, we were able to release recruitment materials alongside the other provost sponsored summer institutes. Each day we guided the participants through several sessions that focused around the TILT framework. During each workshop activity, we gave a short lecture and then gave participants time to work on revising or overhauling a research assignment. To collect feedback on the instructor perceptions of the workshop and its impact, we had end of day workshop evaluations and a postsurvey for once the participants had implemented their redesigned assignments. After implementing their redesigned transparent assignment, the faculty member noted, "I thought the quality of the student work was higher than when I required the assignment in spring 2016...The students in fall 2016 had better written abstracts and cited more of the literature in their final product and class presentations." These qualitative measures have shown how the Summer Library Workshop impacted faculty perceptions of both students' research assignments and collaborating with the library.

Resources

CARL Presentation Slides:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1bggg17dZTpz23xPDCTgQUy6sVjLEH3GipnY0oJKiakA/edit?usp=sharing>

Transparency in Learning and Teaching Psychology 101 Example Assignment:

https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/27/ExampleC.pdf

- This was the example TILT assignment used during the activity.
- This is one of many examples assignments provided by the Transparency in Learning and Teaching Project.

Transparent Assignment Template: https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/27/TILT-FacultyTransparentAssgntTemplate.pdf

- This is the template provided by the Transparency in Learning and Teaching Project to develop a transparent research assignment.

Summer Library Workshop Resources Folder: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B-KOlhfaQDt0Q195Tlg3c1Rob2s>

- This is the resources folder that we provided to participants during the Summer Library workshop.

References

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