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Teaching Instruction Librarians by Design

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Readers will be able to

- know the components of an instruction internship at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD);
- understand the tasks required to offer an in-depth instruction internship such as the one at UCSD; and
- reflect on our lessons learned to consider if this model is appropriate for their institution.

Introduction

The UC San Diego Library is a large academic setting that serves over 40,000 undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students.[1] At least half of our professional positions require the librarian to provide instruction to their primary user groups. However, we have found that only a few library and information science (LIS) programs include coursework preparing students to step into these positions upon graduation confidently. Against that backdrop, we created an internship practicum focused on providing students with the knowledge and experience to make them competitive candidates for an instruction librarian job.

The UC San Diego library instruction program is typical of most academic library instruction programs: mostly one-shot instruction with some integrated curricular instruction in various departments. Our interns provide support to lower-division undergraduate students enrolled in a writing program course. Our internship is marketed to

students enrolled in the online LIS program offered by San Jose State University, which attracts many San Diego-based students who are seeking opportunities for practical experiences to supplement their formal courses. Our library instruction internship program is unique in that it is supervised by a librarian who has expertise and formal education in instructional design. A core part of the program is ensuring that students have a foundational knowledge of instructional design principles and practices that can be applied to their work as instruction librarians. Additionally, interns have a unique opportunity to work directly with an instructional technologies librarian to learn how to apply instructional design decisions to create online learning objects that can supplement or replace in-person instruction. This experience ensures that students are well prepared to apply for instruction librarian jobs that will require these skills.

Instruction Internship Components

The internship is typically an intensive eight hours per week, fifteen-week program wherein interns learn about pedagogy, instructional design practices, and instructional technology. The learning goals for the practicum include the following:

- Apply instructional design principles and practices to in-person and online instruction.
- Teach at least one part of an in-person library workshop and/or contribute to the creation of an online learning object.

Instructional Design

The instructional design part of the internship curriculum includes a "crash course" in key instructional design pedagogy and evaluation and assessment.

We focus first and foremost on teaching interns how to write effective, measurable learning outcomes using the ABCD model. The ABCD model is well-established within the instructional design field and can be easily adapted to the library's unique environment.[2] The ABCD model requires an instructor to define their audience (A), observable behavior (B), conditions in which the content is presented (C), and the degree to which one knows when learners have achieved the learning outcome (D). We also review Bloom's taxonomy, specifically as it applies to writing the behavior (B) part of the learning outcome since it is imperative that we observe learner behaviors during or after instruction in order to be assessed accurately. After we spend time reviewing examples of how to apply this model to library instruction, the interns have an opportunity to write their own and receive feedback on them as they prepare their own in-person or online instructional materials.

Another essential part of preparing instructional materials is to think about student engagement during the workshop or learning object. To that end, we introduce students to Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction and the concept of performance support and demonstrate how we incorporate them in workshops and learning objects that we have already created.[3] Once they have reviewed some examples, we provide them with an opportunity to identify the elements of engagement in our instructional materials. Interns have an

opportunity to incorporate the instructional events in their own workshop or online learning objects. One of the events of instruction is to "elicit performance" or provide learners an opportunity to practice what has been presented. This naturally lends itself to a conversation and demonstration of active learning techniques that we can incorporate into library instruction.[4] We discuss which techniques we have used in our library, why they were selected, and how effective they were. We also try to have our interns think about active learning techniques that would help them assess the degree to which learners have achieved the learning outcomes for a specific workshop.

While writing learning outcomes and learner engagement may at first glance seem like separate content pieces in our internship curriculum, it is around this point that our interns start to see how all the pieces fit together. One cannot assess learner performance toward achieving a learning outcome if you do not consider how the instructor will observe the behaviors required, which leads to a consideration of learning engagement and active learning.

Evaluation and Assessment

We make a distinction between evaluation and assessment in our instructional practices. Assessment is used to understand learner performance, whereas evaluation is used to understand instructional effectiveness.[5] Within this framework, we address assessment practices as a part of the instructional design process during the planning phase. It is integral to the workshop design, especially since library workshops rely heavily on formative assessment (observing learners applying new learning during the workshop) rather than summative assessment (evidence that learners apply learning after the workshop). This is why we lean heavily on active learning techniques as a way for learners to apply learning during a workshop or within a learning object. Most instruction librarians do not have access to student work after the conclusion of a workshop.

This segues nicely into how we approach evaluation or the measure of instructional effectiveness. Most newly learned research skills take practice, and it is unrealistic to expect learners to be proficient at applying their learning immediately in the workshop. Instead of focusing exclusively on assessment of student learning, we encourage our interns to also think about teaching effectiveness. For example, an instructional goal could be for students to feel confident about applying their knowledge to their research assignment so we consider how we can get that feedback from them in a meaningful way that would also tell us how we can improve our teaching methods, delivery, or content. We introduce our instruction interns to a variety of instructional design approaches that can guide how we might create evaluations that provide these insights. They have an opportunity to review examples and practice creating their own for their internship project.

Making Connections

In addition to gaining the knowledge and skills to provide library instruction, the internship experience also consists of the opportunity to learn about and experience the work environment of an academic library. Interns participate in various collaborative work,

network, and engage in informational interviews with librarians who work in areas outside of instruction based on the intern's interests (e.g., collection development, administration, special collections, etc.). The culmination of the internship is a project presentation that provides the intern with an opportunity to gain practical experience in developing and delivering presentations.

Instructional Technology

Due to the growing need for librarians to serve large student populations, many librarians use learning objects in some format as part of their instructional toolkit. Basic learning object development skills can be the preferred skill that sets entry-level librarians apart from other applicants and provides an avenue for positions in libraries that call for instructional designers or technologists.

Instructional technologists require multimedia knowledge and skillsets associated with text, images, audio, and video. The ability to record and edit audio and manipulate images to create infographics, supplement text instruction, or create videos covers the basics of most instructional technology use needs. During the internship, we identify outdated learning objects or a need for a new learning object to be developed. This development work allows interns to apply freshly acquired instructional design knowledge while gaining an introduction to multimedia theory and skills. These projects may take the form of creating finding aids, instructional videos, or tutorials.

LibGuides, a content management platform by Springshare, is a specialized technology used widely in the United States. We believe interns should gain awareness of its use as a tool because of its popularity. While the practicum focuses on transferable technology skills, LibGuides is the only prescribed technology interns use. Other applications that interns work with are dependent on the instructional design need.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility

Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) are woven holistically throughout the practicum experience. It is foremost in our minds within the training environment, which means we seek to create learning opportunities that speak to the diverse needs of interns. We are aware of the lack of diversity often present in libraries and the power dynamics within the organization between supervisor and employee. Uniquely, we include a mentor for the intern. The mentor's role is to live outside of the structure of the internship and be a resource should the intern choose to engage. Access to a mentor has proven beneficial for our interns of color, who find that a mentor of color can help them feel included and begin to see themselves reflected in librarianship.

Throughout the instructional design and technology training, EDIA practices are shared and applied. For example, we encourage interns as designers to consider how design choices create learning experiences that either enhance or hinder equity and inclusion.[6] They have an opportunity to experience ways of exploring technology applications from a different perspective through the development and testing of learning objects,

like only using keyboard navigation or a screen reader. Interns learn about Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and how to build learning objects that meet these standards.

Examples of Work

The types of projects interns work on vary depending on the instructional need. However, commonly they include an opportunity to create performance support or provide instruction. Below are a few examples of the types of things instruction interns work on in our library.

PERFORMANCE SUPPORT

Performance support is intended to help someone complete a task. It is an instructional tool that complements an instructional event. Using the LibGuide content management system created by Springshare, interns use the platform to design and create support materials for instruction. An example would be creating an infographic of the research process to help students track the steps they may need to take to complete a research project. As this is an online visual product, interns are encouraged to think about the original learning outcome to ensure the infographic helps learners perform the desired behavior and how their design choices, i.e., language, color, and graphics, enhance or detract from inclusion and accessibility.

CO-TEACH A WORKSHOP

When co-teaching a workshop, interns are provided a lot of choice and freedom to determine their level of participation. Some are eager to jump into the "deep end," while others take a more cautious approach. As graduate students, the concepts they are being asked to teach may still be new. Most of the co-teaching occurs in the planning of the workshop to allow the student to practice the instructional design process. All are given the opportunity to watch an instructional session first and, based on their observation experience, choose the amount of instruction they want to deliver.

FINDING AIDS

Part instruction and part performance support, finding aids can be a great opportunity for interns to practice instructional design and technology skills. Many of our interns choose to create videos for their finding aids, which provides them the opportunity to dive deeply into multimedia theory and practices.

A Day in the Life of an Intern

Although the internship is packed with learning and practice opportunities, we strive to make the experience as close to a real-world work experience as possible. Autonomy on time management is given to the intern. A typical full day for an intern would include the following:

- Arrival: The intern arrives at their scheduled time, but check-in with the supervisor

is not automatically required.

- Morning: The morning generally has at least one scheduled meeting. This meeting consists of training or supervisor check-ins. Otherwise, the time is used to complete work.
- Lunch: We encourage a full lunch break, time to reset, recharge, or network—however, the intern wants to use their time.
- Afternoon: The afternoon period may be used to attend programmatic meetings, conduct informational interviews, etc. The intern sets this time slot depending on their needs and interests. Additional time in the afternoon is provided to complete work.
- Sign off: The intern can go when their workday is completed. This usually consists of a polite goodbye but is not used as a punch-the-clock check-out.

While some internships require clocked time to meet internship requirements, we allow the interns to track this time and do a spot check as necessary. It is relatively easy to determine whether or not an intern is on task. Interns who may work schedules that spread out hours during the week have a similar structure. The difference is that the morning meetings for training and check-ins are front-loaded at the beginning of their work week to ensure the intern is equipped with the knowledge and resources they need for tasks throughout the coming week. Afternoon meeting topics generally occur later in the week.

Internship Logistics

Administration

The instruction internship is a specific internship under the Librarians Association of the University of California, San Diego Chapter (LAUC-SD), Graduate Internship Program. LAUC-SD's Mentoring Committee sponsors the internship program. The goal of the committee is to support the professional development of librarians. By extension, the internship seeks to help graduate students gain professional experience to ready them for a career in librarianship. The internship also serves the dual purpose of providing supervision experience for staff librarians interested in growing their management skills. Aligning the internship with the Mentoring Committee includes workload balancing and sustainability because

- the work of managing the internship program is distributed and does not belong to a specific library department;
- individuals involved in the internship can vary yearly; and
- the department where the intern resides can vary yearly.

The administrative work of the internship is dispersed by incorporating the work of several roles: the internship co-coordinator, intern supervisor, and intern mentor. The coordinators work for a two-year term, with terms offset from each other. The coordinators are responsible for marketing the internship, interviewing potential interns, liaising with a graduate program if necessary, and locating a supervisor and mentor for the intern. The internship supervisor manages the intern's day-to-day work and facilitates

the activities' scheduling. The mentor works to ensure the intern feels welcome, provides career guidance, and serves as a contact that is divorced from the supervisor-supervisee power dynamic. Training need not fall on the supervisor alone and is often handed off to the resident expert.

Compensation

The Mentoring Committee routinely converses about the merits of a paid versus unpaid internship. The committee supports and favors paid internships. Unfortunately, funding for paid internships has yet to be secured. Conscious that most of our interns are receiving course credit for their internship, which translates into pay-to-intern for the graduate student, quality of experience is a top concern. This concern is why the training includes opportunities to explore other librarianship areas via informational interviews and practice aspects of librarianship like networking and job-hunting, such as interviewing and presenting.

Marketing

The marketing of the internship is minimal but effective because the state of California has several American Library Association accredited Library Schools. The mentorship coordinators update the internship posting on the San Jose State University School of Information (SJSU iSchool) internship board annually. The Mentoring Committee also maintains the LAUC-SD Graduate Internship webpage on the library's website. We typically offer one instruction internship at a time because of the intensity of the practicum.

Considerations for a Hybrid Work Environment

Originally, the internship was designed as an in-person learning experience. However, as work has shifted away from in-person models, so has the internship. Logistically, all of the training, work, and networking accomplished in person can be accomplished online via Zoom meetings and other online tools. The remote online option makes the internship flexible to meet the needs of various graduate students. Yet, in most cases, we work with local graduate students and arrange in-person opportunities for instruction and networking. There is value in spending physical time working and experiencing the physical library environment. Also, in terms of preparing a librarian for the workforce, a hybrid split of remote and in-person schedules is the most advantageous for whatever work environment the intern may consider.

Lessons Learned

The internship is an intensive fifteen-week practicum that covers a wide range of job skills. It requires a balance between learning and applied skill opportunities. We have learned that a "less is more" approach resonates with all involved. Finding the balance between teaching "just enough" is crucial to the mental load of an intern who is learning how

to teach for the first time. This is why we scale down instructional pedagogy into basic knowledge needed to design an instructional event and weave ideas about EDIA into application techniques tied to design choices rather than assign specific EDIA literature for reading and discussion. Interns have no or very little instruction experience when they begin the internship, including a lack of public speaking skills. Feelings of being overwhelmed are common.

Admittedly, the instruction internship is labor intensive. While the administration and training can be shared across many individuals and departments, it still requires several individuals to manage. However, we find that it is worth the time and effort. Without this experience, new graduates are not equipped to start teaching within large public research institutions or speak about instruction in their entry-level job interviews. The growth that we see in an intern's ability to overcome feelings of anxiety around instruction and the quality of their finished products, evident via the presentation that culminates their experience, keeps all of us engaged in this work.

Our interns have reported they have found value in talking to librarians in other specialty areas like metadata, special collections, etc. It helps them create a working knowledge of how librarians collaborate and how academic libraries operate. It also is a great way to explore specialties within academic settings and begin to network with other librarians. Some relationships that are developed during the internship live beyond the fifteen-week period and/or serve as references during the job search process.

Conclusion

Our internship is a crash course in instruction. We understand there is a wealth of pedagogy and practices that we simply don't touch upon in the internship, and that, too, is by design. Foremost in our minds is to provide our interns with the ability to say yes to an instruction position and, when faced with delivering their first class, have a starting point about how to begin and how to continue growing as instructors. This is why training with an instructional designer and technologist provides a framework for the intern's future growth as an instructor. Whether the intern goes on to incorporate other learning theories or practices, at the end of the internship, our interns are better able to understand how the body of literature surrounding information literacy instruction fits into their own instructional practices.

Notes

1. "Common Data Set 2021–2022," University of California, San Diego, Institutional Research, https://ir.ucsd.edu/_files/stats-data/common-data-set/UCSD-2021-2022.pdf.
2. Dominique Turnbow and Annie Zeidman-Karpinski, "Don't Use a Hammer When You Need a Screwdriver: How to Use the Right Tools to Crete Assessment That Matters," *Communications in Information Literacy* 10, no. 2 (2016): https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2016.10.2.30.
3. Dominique Turnbow and Amanda Roth, "The Case for Performance Support," in *Demystifying Online Instruction in Libraries: People, Process and Tools* (Chicago: ALA Editions, 2020), https://escholarship.org/uc/item/54k9m600; Joan R. Kaplowitz, *Designing Information Literacy Instruction: The Teaching Tripod Approach* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014).

4. Dominique Turnbow and Amanda Roth, "The Case for Evaluation (Not Assessment)," in *Demystifying Online Instruction in Libraries: People, Process and Tools* (Chicago: ALA Editions, 2020).
5. Amanda Roth, Gayatri Singh, and Dominique Turnbow, "Equitable But Not Diverse: Universal Design For Learning Is Not Enough," *In The Library With The Lead Pipe* (May 26, 2021), https://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2021/equitable-but-not-diverse/.
6. Allison Rossett and Lisa Schafer, *Job Aids and Performance Support: Moving from Knowledge in the Classroom to Knowledge Everywhere* (San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2007).

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