Statement of Competency K

K. Design training programs based on appropriate learning principles and theories

Libraries are not only repositories of knowledge and information, and keepers of the cultural record, but also play a role in the educational life of our society. This is especially true of libraries that are situated within institutions of higher learning as well as those located within primary, middle and secondary schools (hereafter abbreviated as K-12). In academic and K-12 libraries, librarians often work with members of faculty or teachers to collaborate on instruction. At the highest levels of collaboration, this can take the form of teachers involving librarians in every step of the lesson-planning process. The purpose of this is to allow the librarian to develop sets of resources that students can use to find information for use in their assignments. In many instances, librarians conduct their own library instructions sessions, in cooperation with the teachers. The instruction sessions are generally geared towards a particular lesson or subject. In them, the librarians orient the students to the library’s website, highlighting such features as the search box that allows users to search the library’s catalog, the section of the website containing links to databases, and resources for contacting the librarian if the students have questions. Knowledge of a particular subject that a class is learning is helpful for the librarian, and in academic libraries, librarians act as liaisons to various departments in the university or college where the library is located.

In order for librarians to be integrated into the act of teaching, they must be able to design instructional sessions and lessons, and for this they must be aware of theories of learning, both current and historical. Two of the more common theories of learning are behaviorist and constructivist. Behaviorist theory states that learning takes place through students receiving information from the teacher, who is the source of knowledge. Students who give correct answers are rewarded with good...
grades and progress, whereas students who give wrong answers are subject to remedial action, and do not progress until the right answers are given. In other words, the behavior that leads to the student giving the correct answers is rewarded, whereas behavior that does not produce correct answers is not, in the hopes that lower grades will spur the student to improve.

Constructivist teaching is more current and states that students learn by building on their own knowledge, by evaluating new knowledge and either assimilating it into their current world-view, thus expanding it, or by changing their world-view to accommodate the new knowledge they have acquired. Constructivist teaching also states that learning is best done as a social activity, as people are able to learn more as they share ideas with others. Also, by being able to share ideas, they are open to a far broader range of viewpoints and knowledge than if they were to learn on their own. As a group works together, they build “collective intelligence”, or shared understanding of a given topic.

In addition to being collaborative in nature, constructivist teaching also encourages problem solving as a means of finding knowledge. Students are given a problem, and learn by searching for solutions to the problem, ideally while working together. A means of constructing lessons that are based on problem solving is through the use of a theory known as “understanding by design”, in which the desired learning outcome is the goal of the lesson. The design of the lesson is based on the question, “what do we want students to learn by the end of this lesson?”

In addition to learning knowledge, students also learn how to think and how to use skills and technologies that encourage group decision-making and problem solving. At the dawn of the 21st Century, there are many new technologies that allow students to not only share knowledge and build collective intelligence, but to also share their learning with other classmates, other classes and other schools. Students are learning how to build wikis, and publish blogs to share their findings. Other
people who read the students’ postings can provide comments, which also keep the learning process going after the lesson has reached its formal conclusion.

Librarians play a role in fostering constructivist learning by collaborating with teachers and acting as guides to the learning process. During library instruction, the librarian does not only teach information-seeking skills, but also interacts with students to encourage them to ask questions, which gives the librarian and opportunity to provide feedback to the students. Through the ongoing process of questions and feedback, the students can gain new understandings of good information-seeking practices, and the librarian can gain an understanding of the students’ perspectives, which the librarian can use to refine future lessons.

Evidence and Criteria for Selection

1. LIBR 250 – Design and Implementation of Instructional Strategies for Information Professionals – Module 2: Transformations 1-4

One of the goals of this class was to create what are known as “transformations”, which are ways of transforming a lesson from one based on behaviorist teaching models to one based on constructivist models that put the students at the center of their own learning. In these lessons, the teacher and the librarian act as guides in the learning process, both through instructing students how to use technological tools that foster collaborative learning, and also through guiding students in the practices of good information-seeking behavior and information literacy. In addition, the librarian collaborates with the teacher to find out the subject of the lesson and create appropriate pathfinders for information relevant to the lesson, sets aside library resources and time for the class to work on the lesson, and conducts reference interviews with the students to help them find the information they are looking for. At the end of the lesson, the students reflect on not only what
they have learned, but the learning process itself, evaluating what areas of the learning process worked and why, and what areas of the process could either be improved or discarded altogether. The lessons in the transformations are based on Content Standards created by the California State Board of Education for Grades K-12, and make use of 21st Century Skills, which is the use of Web 2.0 and multimedia technologies through which students can collaborate and share information among themselves and others outside the classroom.

This evidence demonstrates my ability to construct a lesson plan that fosters constructivist teaching of students and that fosters collaboration not only among the students themselves, but also between librarians and teachers who work together on the creation of such lesson plans.

2. LIBR 250 – Design and Implementation of Instructional Strategies for Information Professionals – Module 2: Transformation 5

This evidence is a mock-up of an online knowledge-building center (KBC). The goal of this transformation was to show how a lesson plan could be rendered in practical terms that make it accessible to, and usable by, students, especially as students are increasingly reliant on such systems today. The mock-up provides spaces for asynchronous collaboration (discussion boards, wikis and email) as well as synchronous collaboration (such as Google Docs). There is also a section (Resources) that contains a pathfinder. As with transformations 1–4, the lesson plan is adapted from the California State Board of Education for Grades K-12. In addition, the choices of literature that the students are to read in this lesson plan are drawn from the California State Board of Educations database of Recommended Literature (K-12), which in turn is accessible from the Literature Links for School Libraries web page.
This evidence demonstrates my ability not only to create lesson plans, but also my ability to translate educational goals and objectives into settings that use current technological means that contain spaces for students to collaborate and share information.

**Conclusion**

In many instances, librarians are not thought of as “educators” in the same way as teachers. However, by instructing users on good information seeking and information literacy practices, they are indeed taking part in the educational process. Librarians who are situated in the K-12 education sphere and institutions of higher learning have the opportunity to participate even more fully in the educational lives of the students who attend their institutions. Providing library instruction, often in collaboration with teachers, requires an understanding of the best practices to promote actual learning. Through understanding of educational theories and practices, librarians are able to create instructional plans that encourage students in their search for information, which they can then apply not only in the classes and assignments toward which the library instruction session is geared, but also in other classes and other settings throughout their lives.