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Instructional Design: Toolkits for Paraprofessional Staff and Graduate Assistants

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chapter 8*

Instructional Design: Toolkits for Paraprofessional Staff and Graduate Assistants

Lora L. Smallman

After attending the 2012 ACRL Immersion Teacher Track Program in Burlington, Vermont, I had a greater understanding of how and why careful planning relates directly to student engagement and learning. Perhaps not quite as obvious is how instructional design (ID) corresponds to the confidence of an instructor. In order to meet the demands of our library instruction program, we rely on graduate teaching assistants and library paraprofessionals to teach the one-shot sessions requested by teaching faculty. However, these employees do not always come with teaching experience and they come from outside the library science discipline, so information literacy is many times a foreign concept. With the right tools and training, graduate teaching assistants and paraprofessional staff can confidently and effectively teach engaging lessons on not only how to use library resources but also how to critically evaluate information.

In this chapter, I provide insight into redesigning a lesson plan to meet the needs of both the undergraduates attending the library instruction sessions as well as the graduate students and paraprofessionals teaching the classes. I begin by describing the background of this redesign project: the

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institutional setting, details of the instruction program, and the problem to be addressed. I identified user's needs by conducting interviews, observing instruction, and reviewing existing lesson plan materials. Next, I describe my project, including the instructional design models I referenced, the materials I created, and the collaboration involved in implementing and assessing the new session. Finally, I examine the lessons I learned from the process as well as ways for adapting or customizing the idea at other library settings.

Institutional Setting

Established in 1957, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) is a public university located in Edwardsville, Illinois, which is twenty miles northeast of St. Louis, Missouri. In addition to the 2,660-acre main campus in Edwardsville, SIUE has a campus for Dental Medicine in Alton, Illinois. The SIUE East St. Louis Center is the other campus, which serves the surrounding community with the East St. Louis Charter School and Head Start Program, among other programs and services.

SIUE is the younger of two separate institutions in the Southern Illinois University System and has experienced considerable growth in recent years. According to the *SIUE Fact Book*,¹ the Fall 2015 semester enrollment was the largest on record for the university with a total student headcount of 14,265. Of the students enrolled this term, 30 percent were new to the university, either as first-time freshman or as transfer students. Undergraduates can choose from sixty-five baccalaureate degrees, and many continue on to the Graduate School, which offers forty-nine master's degrees. Students can earn doctoral degrees from the following SIUE Schools: Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing, and Education, Health and Human Behavior.

The university employs 2,399 faculty and staff and is one of the largest employers in the metropolitan area. Library and Information Services (LIS) resides in the Elijah P. Lovejoy Library building on the Edwardsville campus. LIS employs forty employees as well as numerous student assistants and graduate student assistants. Librarians at SIUE are faculty rank, eligible for tenure, and evaluated in the areas of librarianship, scholarship, and service.

As Humanities Librarian, I am the subject specialist for the Departments of Anthropology, English Language & Literature, Foreign Language & Literature, and Philosophy. In addition to collection development responsibilities, I provide reference and instructional services for upper-level courses in these areas. In my first year, I instructed twenty-six information literacy sessions, followed by thirty-nine in my second year, and this past year I conducted fifty-three sessions. In the Fall 2015 semester, I began my additional position as Instruction Coordinator.

The LIS Library Instruction and Information Literacy Program is for first-year students in English and Communication courses and is separate from the aforementioned instruction I provide to upper-level courses. In the past three years, we have taught 382 one-shot sessions (fifty or seventy-five minutes) for a total of 12,818 undergraduate students. Because of this high volume and my ever-increasing demand for upper-level instruction, we currently employ an Instruction Development Specialist (IDS) and four graduate teaching assistants to teach these sessions. SIUE does not have a library science program at either the undergraduate or graduate level, so the graduate students who work for us come from a variety of disciplines, including but not limited to art therapy, engineering, English, mass communications, nursing social work, and speech pathology.

Problem to Be Addressed

I began my new, additional position as Instruction Coordinator by listening to our IDS and to our graduate teaching assistants. Through these conversations, I prioritized redesigning one of our instruction session offerings: Internet Resources and Evaluation. To prepare for a redesign, I sought out understanding the current state of the session by interviewing those who taught it, reviewing the lesson plan materials, including handouts, and, finally, observing the session.

Interviews

My interviewing plan was two-fold: I wanted to get to know the staff better and I had hoped to learn their opinions about what needed improvement. These informational interviews were informal conversations either in the library instruction classroom or at the reference desk. I asked the following questions:

1. What do you enjoy about teaching information literacy in the library?
2. What sessions, if any, need improvement?
3. If a session needs improvement, what do you find difficult or confusing about it?

The graduate students enjoy their positions, with the most notable explanations being the tuition waiver and teaching experience. They also enjoyed working with our IDS, getting to know the librarians, and mastering the library's resources. While the answers to the first question were not too surprising, it was nevertheless reassuring to hear positive feedback.

As for what needed improvement, the graduate students and the IDS unanimously agreed that reworking the Internet Resources and Evaluation

session should be my top priority. They praised the other sessions we offer: Guided Tour, Introduction to the Online Catalog, and Introduction to Databases. They explained that they felt confident in teaching these sessions because they felt they knew what they were doing. However, when it came to Internet Resources and Evaluation, they cited the following challenges: too many handouts, too many things to remember, confusing content, and lack of confidence. They felt that while the activities designed for the session were meant to engage the undergraduates, they struggled to get them to participate. The other concern expressed was the lack of time. Many English and Communications professors request a library tour or research time to be paired with this lesson on Internet evaluation.

Analysis of Lesson Plan Materials

The previous Instruction Coordinator and a former graduate teaching assistant created the Internet Resources and Evaluation session I was redesigning. Their goal was to take the previous lecture-based lesson plan and create more opportunities for active learning. They developed this session by customizing a lesson plan they discovered in a research article on web evaluation.² The materials designed for the session at SIUE included a script and PowerPoint slideshow for the instructor and handouts for the students. The undergraduate students who attended these sessions received four handouts: one detailing evaluation criteria and the others explained instructions for three activities. I've included these documents in Appendix 8A.

The class begins with stating the objective of the session: "To explore and discover credible websites to use for research purposes." Then students are broken into small groups and given a website to evaluate for the first activity. The instructor tells the class to navigate to a website that is unacceptable for college-level work. They then ask the students to work with their groups to give five reasons why it is not suitable for their academic work. After some discussion of their answer to activity one, students move on to discussing the "The 5 Ws," meaning who, what, when, where, and why. Next, the instructor asks them to work in groups again to create their own gold standard for websites for this topic: "Overrepresentation of minorities in the juvenile justice system." Students receive a handout to organize their criteria into The 5 Ws, and the instructor leads discussion on their answers. The last activity involves asking the groups to search Google to find a website that matches the topic and meets the gold standard criteria. The session ends with reminding the students about research help via the Ask-A-Librarian link on the library website.

In reviewing these materials and the article that inspired them, I determined this lesson plan to be interesting and engaging. Benjes, et al³ were in-

spired by constructivism to design this lesson because, “In a constructivist environment, students learn by doing.” The authors also researched cognitive development to guide them in their design. This resonated with me as I find it challenging to teach information literacy concepts that require critical thinking. I think it’s brilliant to begin a class by saying, “This is the wrong answer, now explain why.” This approach has them thinking through the process rather than emphasizing the correct answer.

Notes from Observation

My analysis of the lesson plan materials did not align with my findings from interviewing the staff teaching the sessions, so I scheduled a time to observe Internet Resources and Evaluation. I chose to observe the graduate assistant who had been teaching this redesigned lesson the previous two semesters because I wanted to see someone who had more experience with it. This particular session was paired with a library tour, which the graduate teaching assistant did first. The class came back to the library instruction classroom with thirty minutes left to teach the lesson on Internet evaluation. My impression was that she felt rushed and overwhelmed with the amount of material to cover in very little time.

A lesson plan like this requires classroom management skills, which are not so easily mastered. The English professor attended this session and encouraged participation. The students nevertheless appeared distracted, disinterested, and disengaged. I questioned if this could be attributed to the lesson plan itself or simply the script the staff was given to follow. I also wondered if more training or team teaching could help improve student participation.

Through this analysis, I realized that I actually had two audiences to consider in my instructional design. Not only did I need to plan for the undergraduates attending the session, but I wanted to consider the graduate teaching assistants and staff who would be teaching. My challenge would be to create a lesson that was engaging and meaningful for first-year students while providing enough direction for a staff member to teach it.

Description of the Project

ID Models

There are several ID models for librarians to consider, and I combined elements of two models that best matched my design needs. I learned of an ID process by Debra Gilchrist by attending the ACRL Immersion Teacher Track Program in 2012. While I was familiar with Gilchrist’s work in assessment and learning outcomes from that experience, I also attended a webinar

she gave in 2015, which served as a great refresher. In the webinar, Gilchrist shared an ID model, “5 Questions to Instructional Design,” that had the following stages, each combined with a guiding question:

1. Outcome: What do you want the student to be able to do?
2. Content: What does the student need to do this well?
3. Pedagogy: What’s the activity that will enhance the learning?
4. Assignment: How will the student demonstrate the learning?
5. Criteria: How will you know the student has done this well?⁴

This language and process was clear, concise, and very learner-centered. For me, I understood that I needed to write learning outcomes, decide on content, design activities, and develop an assessment along with a rubric.

The other step I needed to include in my design was staff training. In *Instructional Design for Librarians and Information Professionals*, Farmer provides a thorough explanation of multiple ID models.⁵ One of these models, ADDIE, is a process that includes the following phases: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. Farmer describes this ID model as the “most popular,”⁶ and Davis argues that ADDIE works best in collaboration with teaching faculty and/or librarians who have experience using it.⁷ I read elaborations of each stage of the ADDIE model, but felt the only step missing from my project was implementation. Farmer provides these questions for the implementation stage, “How will the activity be implemented? Where and when will it occur, and who is responsible for each aspect?”⁸ As I began to document my design, I made sure to give these questions consideration.

Learning Outcomes

My first step was to identify the goals I had for the undergraduate students attending Internet Resources and Evaluation sessions. It is interesting to note that in this model, it may appear that assessment comes in a later stage, but I actually began with assessment. Establishing learning outcomes in the beginning of my project helped to clarify what I would later assess after implementing the redesign. When I compose learning outcomes, I rely on Gilchrist’s formula: verb or action phrase + in order to + why phrase.⁹ I decided on the following two outcomes:

1. Students will identify librarian contact information in order to later ask for research help.
2. Students will discuss evaluative criteria and language in order to gauge websites and justify their use for academic research and projects.

The first outcome is actually one I have for every class I teach. My reasoning is that even if I fail to accomplish my other goals, I will make sure that students know they are welcome in the library and encourage them to ask for

help. In my experience, I find that the student's point of need is not always in the classroom, so I want them to know where and how to find a librarian when they are in need of research assistance. In the second outcome, I wanted to clarify to the undergraduates and instructors why they would be discussing criteria. Evaluating information requires critical thinking skills, and packaging that into a one-shot session of seventy-five minutes or less is challenging. Finding information on the Internet via a search engine is familiar and convenient for students. I want them to be prepared for when a professor may ask, "How appropriate is this information for your college level work?" My goal is for students to not only be able to find information on the Internet, but also be ready to articulate why they chose to use the information they found.

Lesson Plan and Activities

I chose the CRAAP Test for the content of this session for several reasons. First, I have used it in upper-level library instruction and have garnered positive feedback from teaching faculty. Second, I think the language of the acronym is full of meaningful words: currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose. Third, it adds a bit of humor to the classroom without much distraction. The acronym is also easy to remember, so a student could find it again in a quick Internet search. In this stage, I considered, "What does the instructor need to teach this well?" In my preparations for redesign, I decided that the staff needed more directions, training, and a detailed script to effectively teach this content.

The class begins with the instructor's introduction. After passing out the handout designed for the session (one two-sided handout per student; see Appendix 8B), the instructor demonstrates how to navigate to the library's homepage. Then the instructor points out librarian contact information (text, chat, email, and information desk) on the website as well as on the handout. The next activity requires five volunteers to read a portion of the CRAAP test. I modified the CRAAP Test handout¹⁰ by deleting twelve words and placing blanks in their place. Each student volunteer is assigned a letter of the CRAAP test and given a copy of the corresponding full text. The rest of the class must listen to fill in the blanks on their handout. The instructor leads a discussion after each student reads so as to repeat words for the blanks and to clarify any confusion. For example, one of the words in accuracy is peer-reviewed. The instructor asks for a volunteer to explain what that word means, then follows up with another question, "Should all your sources in your academic work be peer-reviewed? Why or why not?"

After completing their CRAAP test handout, students are shown a short video, *The C.R.A.P. Test in action: Websites*, which demonstrates application of this criteria.¹¹ The instructor asks the students to pay attention to and

write down at least one strategy for applying the CRAAP criteria to a website. When the video is over, the instructor gives the class one more minute to finish writing and to share what they wrote down. The class ends with a discussion of strategies for each letter of the acronym and a reminder to ask a librarian for help.

Implementation

The other content I had to create was a script for the staff. I was inspired by the *The Library Instruction Cookbook*,¹² which is a great collection of lesson plans for librarians. There is an entire section on website evaluation, but I chose to develop my own activities. However, I did find the outlines that each “recipe” provided to be a good template for writing a script because they were detailed, in sequential order, and listed an estimated amount of time for each step. My goal was to provide enough detail so that any staff member could pick up the script and teach the session without having seen it first. I have included a copy of the script in Appendix 8B.

Before I describe the training, I wanted to give more details about the staff. Our IDS has a background in education and graphic design and our graduate teaching assistants come from a wide variety of disciplines and backgrounds. When we hire graduate students, we certainly prefer those with teaching experience, but that is not a requirement. We sometimes receive applicants who have substitute or full-time teaching experience at the elementary or secondary level, but we also have international students and those outside the discipline of education apply who have the aptitude to lead classes of undergraduates. Nevertheless, these students typically complete their graduate programs within two years, which alone justifies the need for clear and sustainable lesson plans for them to use.

Once I had the materials created (outcomes, activities, handouts, and script), I scheduled a time to train the staff and graduate students. For training, I decided to do a teaching demonstration and asked them to participate as if they were a class of undergraduates. This experience was very collaborative and fun, as the IDS and veteran graduate students enjoyed acting and sharing experiences of how undergraduates behave in the classroom. I also asked them to consider what could be improved in the lesson plans I designed, and they shared their frustrations with trying to engage students in discussions. This conversation led to a brainstorming session, where the staff suggested adding in discussion question prompts for each word in the CRAAP Test. We also shared tips and tricks with each other for how to remain patient when waiting for students to respond to questions. This training helped them visualize themselves as both instructional design collaborators and engaging

instructors. The other product from this training session was a PowerPoint slideshow. Our IDS suggested that projecting the words of the CRAAP acronym would help students when filling in their handouts. He also included a slide with a link to the YouTube video so the instructor wouldn't have to type the URL into a browser, and the rest of the slides helped with facilitating discussion and pacing the class. Overall, I received a positive response from the library staff about the redesign.

Assessment

The classroom assessment technique I have chosen for this session is the minute paper. According to Bowles-Terry and Kvenild, this assessment is popular because of “its simplicity to administer and its suitability for class sessions in which a great deal of new information is presented.”¹³ At the end of the session, the instructor will distribute a half-sheet of paper with the following questions:

1. What were the two most interesting things you learned today?
2. What is still confusing about the CRAAP Test (either the criteria, applying the test, or both)?

Students are given only two to three minutes to complete the questions. This assessment will be implemented in the Fall 2016 semester for a few reasons: to give the staff time to learn the new material, to provide time for assessment training, and because the spring semesters have fewer than ten of these sessions. My plan is to collect and score the answers from these sessions with guidance from Bowles-Terry and Kvenild. In the meantime, I have positive feedback from the staff, who have said, “I’m not worried to teach Internet Eval!” and “The Internet Evaluation session makes so much more sense.”

Lessons Learned

The LIS paraprofessional staff and graduate assistants at SIUE are incredibly valuable to the library's instruction program. Their assistance with teaching information literacy skills and concepts to first-year students helps to balance the ever-increasing demand for upper-level instruction from subject librarians like myself. This project emphasized their value, but also revealed their needs for being effective instructors. Taking the time to listen and evaluate their needs benefits the undergraduate students just as much as it does the LIS staff. Involving the staff in design is a rewarding collaboration because it builds trust between the staff and librarians and helps them take ownership of the content they teach. Looking forward, I am excited to gain more insight from the perspectives of future graduate students we hire and train.

Creative instructional design is really about finding a plan that works for you. As librarians, we come equipped with the skills to evaluate ID models and organizational minds to modify those models for our needs. I combined elements of two ID models to guide me through my design process and help me stay focused.

When I was designing classroom activities, I realized there was a lot of opportunity for innovation. Librarians share great ideas for teaching information literacy in the scholarly literature and on websites and blogs. Why not be inventive and tweak a lesson plan to fit the needs of your students and instructors?

Finally, assessment does not have to be complicated, but it is important to do. It begins with writing clear and manageable outcomes and cycles around for continuous improvement. I am looking forward to scoring the results over the course of a semester from a minute paper.

Adapting or Customizing this Idea

One thing I would like to customize is the video that is shown during the class. The one we show from Portland State University Library is fantastic, but the acronym in the video is slightly off and does not align perfectly with the handout. I would also like to see a series of videos applying the CRAAP Test to a variety of topics and Internet resources. This could be a great project for the classroom and the reference desk. Showing a video in the classroom takes the pressure off the instructor and having an instructional video on hand at the reference desk is a great resource for questions received via email and chat.

This project works well for libraries looking to assign instructional responsibilities to paraprofessional staff and/or graduate assistants. Especially where there is increasing demand for instruction, with no increase in librarians, it is essential to equip staff with a toolkit to complete the task. This ID model is also helpful for a librarian looking to experiment beyond a traditional lecture or demonstration and create more active learning in their classroom. My analysis of the staff's needs was time-consuming. If this approach is not feasible, I think it could be interesting to have them do some self-assessment as instructors to guide the ID. Great instructional design begins with clear learning outcomes, but creating lesson plans that are clear to follow allows for flexibility in who will teach and application across disciplines.

Conclusion

At the heart of instructional design is having a really good system and plan. When demand for library instruction is high and resources are low, graduate

teaching assistants and paraprofessional staff are invaluable to the success of an information literacy program. I was able to equip our staff with the tools they needed by following a customized system of instructional design. I assessed the needs of both the instructor and student, created detailed lesson plans with prompts to help facilitate sessions, and collaborated with staff to further revise the materials and practice teaching. I believe that teaching and learning flourish best as an intertwined and cyclical process. Empowered with clear goals, lesson plans, and handouts, an instructor can confidently enter a classroom and deliver engaging and effective learning to student participants.

Appendix 8A

Internet Evaluation Script:

1. Introduce self.
2. State objective.
3. Split into groups for activity one.
4. Have students go to about.com website.
5. Activity one: decide why website is not useable for academic research.
6. Discuss activity one.
7. Introduce 5 W's.
8. Go over each of the 5 W's.
9. Gold standard—finding the best website for research purposes.
10. Go over gold standard handout.
11. Activity two.
12. Go over activity two.
13. Activity three.
14. Go over activity three.
15. Ask librarian tab.
16. Questions/closing.

Answers to Activity Two:

1. Who:
 - a. Academics who are researching juvenile justice
 - b. Lawyers, judges, officers who work within the juvenile justice system
 - c. Formerly incarcerated individuals
2. What:
 - a. Background information: this will give you historical information about the topic
 - b. Actual research—this will give you up to date research on the topic
 - c. Statistics—looking at government sources to determine the ethnic background of juvenile delinquents, or comparing different geographic locations
 - d. Demographic information: Is this an issue concerning both genders? Or does sentencing effect only males? Is the south different from the north?
3. When:
 - a. We want articles and research within the last five years
 - b. This topic is rapidly changing due to the variable sentencing time for offenders

4. Where
 - a. .gov—used for government reports
 - b. .org—able to see what non-profit organizations provide services to the juvenile population
 - c. Stay away from personal websites, they might have bias
5. Why
 - a. Main idea—some can include risk factors, protective factors, or resiliency



Exercise One

Go to the given website. This is an example of a website that should not be used for academic research. With your teammates, give at least five reasons why your professor would not want you to use this website for a paper.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Using the 5 Ws to Reach the Gold Standard

- Who—Think about the author’s expertise level.
 - ▶ Does the author have a degree, relevant work experience, or other credentials related to the topic?
- What—Is the content relevant and are there typographical errors on site?
 - ▶ Is the source just background information or does it have actual research? Are there statistics or demographic information?
- When—Date website was created or revised.
 - ▶ Does the research have a reasonable date? How quickly is this topic changing?
- Where—Domain of site.
 - ▶ Does the information come from a credible domain? Where is it published (blog, newspaper, personal website, etc.)?
- Why—Main idea of the site.
 - ▶ What is the author’s intent (inform, persuade, evaluate, entertain)? Does the writing show bias?



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Domain Types	Domain Search Tip
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .com—commercial sites designed for selling or entertainment, and may include many personal sites (ex: www.aol.com). • .edu—educational, institutional / organizational, or college student sites primarily provide useful information (ex: www.siue.edu). • .gov—sites designed for government entities; provides information that is usually reliable (ex: www.usa.gov). • .mil—sites for a military body (ex: www.dla.mil). • .net—sites for Internet service provider (ISP), or as alternatives to .com domain types (ex: www.isp.net). • .org—organizational sites for non-profit and profit-seeking entities; provides useful information, but may have biases (ex: www.wikipedia.org). 	<p>Step One: Go to google.com</p> <p>Step Two: Type in your topic and hit the space bar</p> <p>Step Three: Type the word “site”</p> <p>Step Four: Add a colon, which is this symbol “:”</p> <p>Step Five: No space after the colon, type in what domain you would like: .edu, .gov, .org</p> <p>Quick Formula: topic__site:.org</p>



Exercise Two: Creating a Gold Standard

Topic: Overrepresentation of minorities in the juvenile justice system.

1. Who
2. What
3. When
4. Where
5. Why





Exercise Three:

Find a website that most closely meets the gold standard criteria developed in class.

Name of website:

Reason for choosing:



Appendix 8B. Evaluating Websites

Outline & Script for Session

- I. Introduction (5 minutes)
 - a. At the beginning of class:
 - i. State your name:
 - ii. What you do OR study at SIUE:
 - iii. An interesting fact about yourself (optional):
 - b. Ask-A-Librarian
 - i. Demonstrate how to get to the library's homepage from www.siu.edu.
 - ii. Then point out the hours, and the ways to get help from a librarian (call, text, chat, email, visit library information desk). Also mention that the info is on the handout they'll receive today.
 - c. Then explain the outcome of the session:
 - i. "Today you will discuss a set of criteria and language in order to evaluate websites and justify their use for your academic research and projects."
- II. Criteria for Evaluating Websites (20 min)
 - a. CRAAP Test
 - i. Pass out CRAAP Test handout. Read the paragraph at the top. Explain there are blanks to be filled out.
 - ii. Ask for five volunteers to read the CRAAP Test. Pass out the reader handout to the volunteers, assigning one of the letters of the acronym to each of the five students (Student 1 reads C, Student 2 reads R, etc.).
 - iii. Explain to class that the volunteers will now read the CRAAP Test, and they will need to listen to fill in the blanks.
 - b. After each of the letters in the CRAAP test is read, pause to make sure everyone filled in the missing words and discuss the following.
 - i. Currency words: timeliness, published, functional
 01. What needs clarification?
 02. What does "links functional" mean?
 - ii. Relevance words: importance, audience
 01. What questions do you have?
 02. How do you determine the intended audience?
 - iii. Authority words: source, credentials
 01. If you're using a source for academic work, what kind of credentials should the author have?

- 02. What other questions about “authority” do you have?
 - iv. Accuracy words: reliability, correctness, peer-reviewed
 - 01. What does peer-reviewed mean?
 - 02. Should all of your sources be peer-reviewed?
 - v. Purpose words: reason, entertain
 - 03. What should be the purpose of the information you use for academic work?
 - 04. What needs clarification?
 - c. Explain: “Now that you know the criteria for evaluating websites, we will watch a video on YouTube to see it in action.”
 - i. Ask students: “Write down one strategy for applying the CRAAP Test that you see in the following video.”
 - ii. Play this YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/lhwB4zQD4XA>
- III. Discussion/ Follow-Up After Video (10 min)
- a. Give them one minute to finish writing.
 - b. Ask for examples of strategies they wrote down. They should cover the following, and make sure to mention the ones they don’t:
 - i. Currency—places to typically find publication date: top of page or bottom; look for “Copyright.”
 - ii. Relevance—skim page for keywords that match their topic.
 - iii. Authority—google the author listed to verify credentials; read “About Us” or “Contact Us.”
 - iv. Accuracy—look for bibliography at the bottom of the page or verify the information in other sources.
 - v. Purpose—Pay attention to language. Sometimes find the purpose on the About Us page.
 - c. Ask students what they would do if they can’t find a publication date or author on the website they’d like to use.
 - i. Read this answer: “If you can’t find important information like a date or author, it may be inappropriate for you to use in your college level research and work. Ask a librarian for help if this happens.”
 - ii. Ask class if they have any final questions about the CRAAP Test.
 - d. Emphasize: “The point of evaluating information is not to determine whether it is good or bad. Using the criteria from the CRAAP test will help you determine if a resource is *appropriate* for your academic work and research at SIUE.”
- IV. Conclusion
- a. Thank the class for their attention and participation, and point out the ask-a-librarian section on their handout.

Evaluating Information—Applying the CRAAP Test

Google and other search engines make finding information today very fast, easy, and convenient, but how do you know when information is credible? The CRAAP Test is a set of criteria and questions to help you determine if the information you find is appropriate for your college-level research.

Directions: Listen and fill in the blanks below.

Currency: The _____ of the information.

- When was the information _____ or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?
- Are the links _____?

Relevance: The _____ of the information for your needs.

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Who is the intended _____?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is the one you will use?
- Would you be comfortable citing this source in your research paper or project?

Authority: The _____ of the information.

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- What are the author's _____ or organizational affiliations?
- Is the author qualified to write on this topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source? Examples: .com (business/company); .edu (academic institution); .org (non-profit organization); .gov (U.S. government agency)

Accuracy: The _____, truthfulness, and _____ of the content.

- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been _____?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?

- Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or typographical errors?

Purpose: The _____ the information exists.

- What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform, teach, sell, _____, or persuade?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact, opinion, or propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

CRAAP Test in Action Video

Directions: Watch the video and describe one strategy for using the CRAAP Test to evaluate a website. Where on the website can one find the answers to the CRAAP Test questions?

NOTES

5 Ways to Get Library & Research Help

1. Visit in person: the Information Desk is on the First Floor of Lovejoy Library.
2. Find us on the web: <http://www.siue.edu/lovejoylibrary/>.
3. Chat with a librarian: <http://www.siue.edu/lovejoylibrary/services/ask.shtml>.
4. Text a Librarian: Text **lovejoy** to **66746**.
5. Call for Research Assistance: (618) 650-INFO (4636).

Handout adapted from “Evaluating Information—Applying the CRAAP Test,” California State University, Chico’s Meriam Library. https://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf.

Student Volunteer #1

Currency: The TIMELINESS of the information.

- When was the information PUBLISHED or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?
- Are the links FUNCTIONAL?

Student Volunteer #2

Relevance: The IMPORTANCE of the information for your needs.

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Who is the intended AUDIENCE?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e., not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is the one you will use?
- Would you be comfortable citing this source in your research paper or project?

Student Volunteer #3

Authority: The SOURCE of the information.

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- What are the author's CREDENTIALS or organizational affiliations?
- Is the author qualified to write on this topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source? Examples: .com (business/company); .edu (academic institution); .org (non-profit organization); .gov (U.S. government agency)

Student Volunteer #4

Accuracy: The RELIABILITY, truthfulness, and CORRECTNESS of the content.

- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been PEER-REVIEWED?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
- Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or typographical errors?

Student Volunteer #5

Purpose: The REASON the information exists.

- What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform, teach, sell, ENTERTAIN, or persuade?

- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact, opinion, or propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

Notes

1. Office of Institutional Research and Studies, *SIUE Fact Book* (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville FactBook: Institutional Research and Studies, January 2016), <http://www.siu.edu/inrs/factbook/>.
2. Candice Benjes-Small et al, “Teaching Web Evaluation,” *Communications in Information Literacy*, 7(1) (2013): 39–49.
3. *Ibid.*, 44.
4. Debra Gilchrist, “Assessment-as-Learning,” ACRL Immersion Program, *Immersion Program Participant Notebook* (Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries), slide 6.
5. Lesley S. J. Farmer, *Instructional Design for Librarians and Information Professionals* (New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2011).
6. *Ibid.*, 16.
7. Angiah L. Davis, “Using Instructional Design Principles to Develop Effective Information Literacy Instruction,” *College & Research Libraries News* 74(4) (2013): 205–207.
8. Farmer, *Instructional Design for Librarians and Information Professionals*, 16.
9. Debra Gilchrist, “Learning Outcomes: From the Big Picture to the Classroom,” *Enhancing Library Instruction* (2015), 8, <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/products-services/pub-serv/instruction>.
10. Meriam Library, *Evaluating Information—Applying the CRAAP test* (California State University, Chico, CA, 2010), https://www.csuchico.edu/lins/handouts/eval_websites.pdf.
11. Portland State University Library, *The C.R.A.P. Test in Action: Websites* (2012), <https://youtu.be/lhwB4zQD4XA>.
12. Ryan L. Sittler and Douglas Cook, eds., *The Library Instruction Cookbook* (Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries, 2009).
13. Melissa Bowles-Terry and Cassandra Kvenild, *Classroom Assessment Techniques for Librarians* (Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries, 2015): 13.

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