

Paving the Way: Cognitive Development and Scaffolding Strategies for Undergraduates in Library Instruction Classes

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Transitioning from High School to College



Library Anxiety

- Students can experience anxiety about using the library due to unfamiliar spaces, terms, procedures, etc.
- Building up student confidence and student comfort-levels can help to combat anxiety



Today's Focus

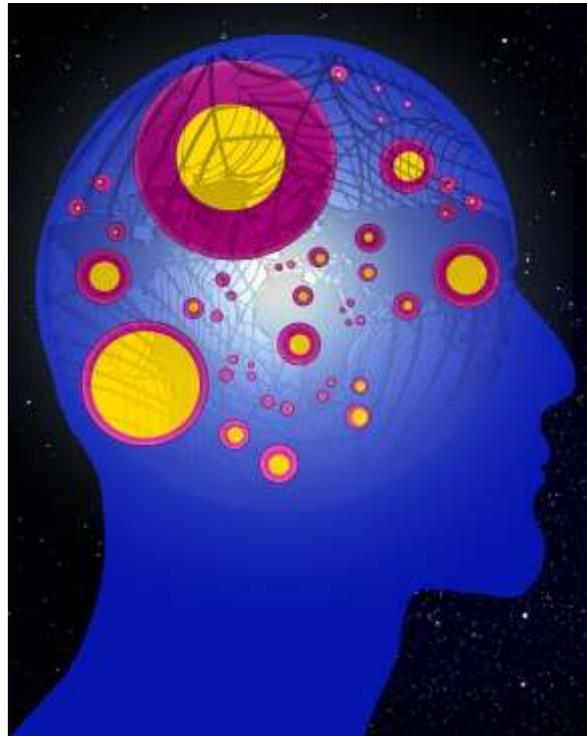
- Exploring ideas and concepts to help librarians and other educators build up skills, knowledge, and confidence levels in their first-year student population

Information Literacy

- Information literacy is a set of knowledge and skills that are closely related to critical thinking skills
- Information literacy includes the skills and knowledge needed to find, access, and use information in a variety of situations

Cognitive Development

- The idea that learners pass through different developmental stages of learning and understanding



Cognitive Development and First-Year Students

- William Perry looks at cognitive development trends in college students
- First-Years often at a “dualism” position
 - Tend to view the world as good or bad; lack of nuance
 - Right answers exist for every question
 - Trust in authority for answers
 - Find information that reinforces pre-existing views
 - Will ignore uncertainty
- Jackson notes that many information literacy concepts and skills are beyond this dualistic position
 - Example: Evaluating sources involves questioning authority and viewing information as complex and nuanced, which might be beyond what a dualistic learner can accomplish on their own

Threshold Concepts

- Concept areas where students can get “stuck” and have trouble progressing in their learning
- Select traits of a threshold concept
 - Transformative — cause the learner to experience a shift in perspective;
 - Integrative — bring together separate concepts (often identified as learning objectives or competencies) into a unified whole;
 - Troublesome — usually difficult or counterintuitive ideas that can cause students to hit a roadblock in their learning

Learning About First-Year Students

- Gathering student data
- Building relationships with groups, departments, and individuals who work with first-year students to share ideas and information
- Talk with students to get a sense of how they approach assignments, what they think about their assignments
- More formal classroom assessment methods, including rubrics, tests, etc.

Why does this matter?

- An understanding of cognitive development theories and related concepts can help provide concepts and a language for creating cross-campus partnerships
- Cognitive development concepts can help educators create learning opportunities for students

Instructional Strategy: Scaffolding

- An instructional process and design strategy that focuses on providing support and guidance to students as they learn and master new skills and ideas.
- Some key traits of scaffolding:
 - Break down complex tasks
 - Start at an appropriate developmental level
 - Help to avoid information overload
 - Build up confidence by starting somewhere familiar and gradually building up autonomy and new skills

Instructional Strategy: Integrated Course Design

- A variation of backwards design, where you begin with a learning outcome and work back from there to design class activities
- Integrated Course Design places an emphasis on contextual factors that can impact learning, such as student population demographics, previous coursework, classroom setting, etc.

The Key Components Of INTEGRATED COURSE DESIGN

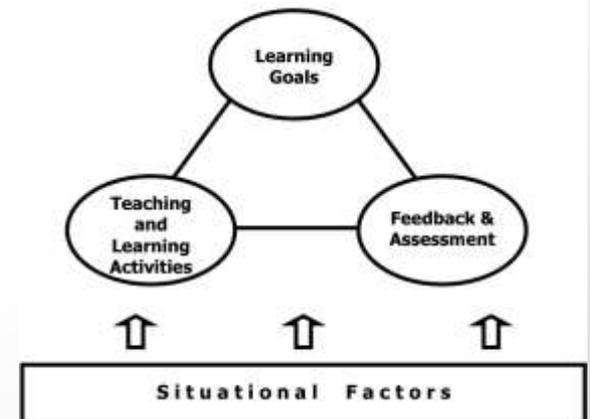


Image from
<http://sites.temple.edu/edviceexchange/integrated-course-design>

Instructional Strategy: Learning Styles

- Learning styles refer to how someone processes information
- Learning styles can encompass a learner's preferences, strengths, weaknesses, etc.
- Key to create a learning environment that appeals to multiple learning styles by providing diverse instructional experiences



Working with First-Year Students at the Loyola University Libraries



Questions?

