



Walking the Walk, Talking the Talk: A Learning-Centered Approach to the Design of a Workshop on Teaching for McGill Librarians

April L. Colosimo

McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Sara Holder

McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Amber Lannon

McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Abstract

McGill Library, in partnership with the University's Teaching and Learning Services unit, offers a 1.5 day workshop, *Designing and Delivering Effective Information Skills Sessions*. This workshop is designed to expose librarians to teaching theory and practice. It provides an opportunity for liaison librarians to (re)design their information literacy instruction according to course context, content, desired learning outcomes, and strategies that facilitate and assess learning. Library literature, and data collected within the McGill Library, indicates that teaching theory and practice are typically not covered in formal MLIS education programs or in on-the-job training. In order to facilitate staff development on learner-centered instructional design, active learning techniques, and assessment, a project team consisting of members from the Library and the Teaching and Learning Services unit at McGill took a learning-centered approach to design the workshop, which incorporates a variety of active learning exercises, and provides opportunities for reflection, assessment, and information literacy instruction session (re)design. In this article, the authors describe the preparation, planning, construction, and presentation of the workshop that resulted from the collaboration.

Keywords: information literacy, professional development, active learning, pedagogy, teaching and learning theory

Introduction

The term information literacy is commonly used to describe the work undertaken by librarians in ensuring that clients gain the skills required to locate, access and use effectively the information resources provided by libraries. A considerable amount of work has been carried out by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) to define the activity, develop standards, and emphasize the importance of ensuring that all students gain competencies necessary to foster lifelong learning. The *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* define the term in the following way:

Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning. (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000, para. 2)

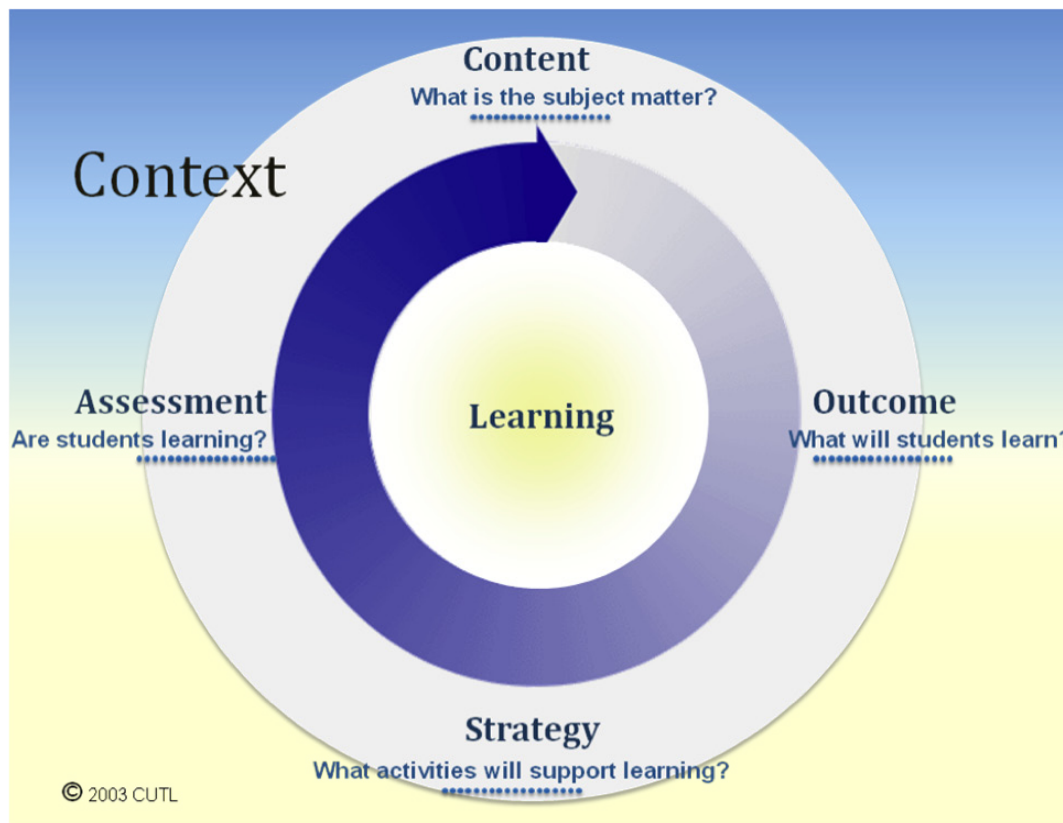
The McGill Library's strategic plan has for some years emphasized the priority of activities related to information literacy, and the position responsibilities of its liaison librarians reflect this priority. The information literacy efforts of the Library have failed if students are unable to continue their own learning through appropriate information resource discovery and analysis techniques. At McGill Library, each liaison librarian is allocated responsibilities within a specific branch library and disciplinary area. Two of the responsibilities include:

- Advise clients on discovering, accessing and using effectively the full range of library and information resources available to meet teaching, learning and research needs in specific disciplinary area(s)/subject(s); and
- Conduct information literacy/skills classes and training programs for clients and library staff.

In order to enhance their skills, knowledge, and practice in the areas of teaching and learning, liaison librarians at McGill participate in the Course Design and Teaching Workshop (CDTW) offered by the University's Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) unit. The objective of this workshop is to teach instructors the principals of learning-centered course design and to provide a venue in which they can either create a new course or re-design an existing course using those principles while getting feedback from the workshop facilitators and from their peers. TLS created the concept map shown in Figure 1. The circular design of the map represents the idea that the design of a course should not be stagnant but rather a continuous

process of alignment and adjustment with learning as its central concern. The placement of *Context* in large, bold text at the outside edge of the circle is meant to depict how myriad factors such as location, available technology, the nature of the discipline(s) from which the subject matter will be drawn, and the students themselves influence the overall design of the course. The elements listed around the circle (*Content, Outcomes, Strategies, Assessment*) represent four of the workshop modules as well as the stages of course design.

Figure 1: Concept map depicting the CDTW's learning-centered course design.



Note: Developed by McGill University Teaching & Learning Services (<http://www.mcgill.ca/tls>) and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5 Canada License.

According to data collected, participation in the CDTW has been beneficial to the librarians. However, many librarian participants have remarked that this workshop did not adequately address specific needs related to the nature of their information literacy instruction (e.g., short-term workshops, teaching short segments in formal courses, etc.). Thus, the Library approached TLS to collaborate on the creation of a workshop that would be based on the CDTW, but that would specifically address the challenges of teaching information literacy skills within the

context of a subject-specific course. These challenges include:

- a close attention to contextual factors in order to obtain information about the course, the students, the assignment (e.g., communicating effectively with faculty), and the goal of ensuring that the information literacy instruction incorporates the objectives of the overall course;
- planning specific strategies to engage, inform and provide practice and feedback opportunities during the information literacy instruction;
- effective use of formative assessment strategies suitable to short teaching assignments;
- follow-up mechanisms in order to evaluate the effectiveness of seminars; and
- opportunities to practice and get constructive feedback on actual teaching in order to develop skills and gain confidence as a teacher.

A TLS educational developer joined the authors of this article to form a project team in order to meet the liaison librarians training needs. In this article, the authors describe the preparation, planning, construction, and presentation of the workshop that resulted from the collaboration. They also reflect on its effectiveness and implications for a shift in approach to professional development in partnering with other university units.

Context

Over time, a number of phrases have been used to describe the activities undertaken by librarians in relation to information literacy–bibliographic instruction, library instruction, information skills and, more recently, information competencies and information fluencies. There have also been changes in the type of programs provided within libraries and their methods of delivery, reflecting various changes in teaching and learning. The ACRL (2003) guidelines for information literacy programs suggest that they include pedagogical elements such as: “active and collaborative activities”, “critical thinking and reflection”, and “student-centered learning,” (Category 7) though similar recommendations have been discussed for over a decade (Drueke, 1992; Keyser, 2000; McNeer, 1991). A review of the literature indicates that the most effective programs are those that employ a learning-centered approach, are embedded in general educational activities and are developed by instructors and librarians in close partnership (Atwong & Heichman Taylor, 2008; Brasley, 2008; Desai, Freeland, & Frierson, 2007; Li, 2007).

Some librarians may not be familiar with the concepts of student-centered learning or learning-centered pedagogy. These terms are somewhat self-explanatory and are sometimes used interchangeably. However, they each have a slightly different focus. Student-centered learning is focused on the student and what he or she does (rather than what the instructor does) to facilitate his or her learning. Learning-centered pedagogy differs slightly in that rather than focusing solely on the learner, it focuses on the activity of learning, the determination of whether it is happening, and to what degree. The learner is still a major part of the equation. Bosch et al. (2008) describe learning-centered approaches as: “those that give attention to student motivation, discovery learning strategies, a holistic view of students, assessment choices, remedial opportunities, and respect for students’ prior experience” (p. 96).

One of the long-term benefits of the learning-centered approach is its promotion of retention and knowledge transfer over rote memorization. As Donnelly (2000) explains in her article titled “Building the Learning Library”:

Students may learn about local resources and systems as a positive side effect of the requirement, but the emphasis is on helping students learn to make informed information-seeking decisions. If the initiative is to be valuable to students, they must be able to transfer the concepts from one physical library to another. . . . Even within a single library, specific resources and tools may change frequently as more information is purchased in an on-line format and as vendors continually improve and adapt their interfaces. (p. 72)

The learning-centered approach to teaching includes the incorporation of active and collaborative learning methods. A 2006 study (Stec, 2006) designed to compare the effectiveness in undergraduate courses of active learning methods to the lecture and demonstration method (often used in information literacy instruction) tested whether teaching effectiveness would be the same with instructors of varying levels of teaching experience. The study’s author found that regardless of the instructor’s level of experience, those who used active learning techniques saw more learning gains. She concludes that “the strongest indicator for increasing learning outcomes for this population is use of active learning exercises in addition to time for individual skill practice” (Stec, 2006, p. 110). This is good news for librarians in their first professional position or those who are taking on new job responsibilities that include teaching information literacy.

What about librarians with years of teaching experience in the profession? Some may be much attached to the lecture and demonstration method and therefore be reluctant to try

something new. It should be stressed in this case that the learning-centered approach is not an extreme departure but rather more of a compromise. As Marcia Keyser (2000) explains in her article, “Using active or cooperative learning techniques does not mean you must leave out lectures entirely. Short lectures — 5 to 10 min — are still used to introduce the basic steps of a new skill. Those short lectures are then followed by active or cooperative exercises” (p. 38).

In addition to investigating best practices in teaching and learning, the members of the Library and TLS project team reviewed the literature to identify common knowledge gaps that could be addressed in the workshop. In an international survey of MLIS programs (Julien, 2005), only one out of 93 total responding schools indicated that a course in instructional methods was part of the core curriculum. In their analysis of course syllabi, Sproles, Johnson and Farison (2008) found that out of 45 MLIS programs examined, 39 had a reference course as part of their core curriculum but the topic of instruction was only covered in 26 out of the 39 reference courses (p. 202). The same study found that although most of the programs (85%) offered a separate course on information literacy and that the learning outcomes for these courses indicate good coverage of topics such as instructional design and teaching methods, many lacked coverage of important areas such as assessment, promotion and curriculum knowledge (Sproles, et al., 2008, pp. 203-205).

If librarians are not gaining these important skills (assessment, promotion, curriculum knowledge) from library school coursework, are they learning them at all? And, if so, where? Most, if not all, liaison librarians in their first professional position are expected to begin teaching as soon as they are hired; however, many of these new liaisons have little or no academic training to prepare them nor are they given sufficient on-the-job training (Attebury & Holder, 2008). In their survey using the ACRL’s *Proficiencies for Instruction Librarians and Coordinators* (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2007), Westbrook and Fabian (2010) collected responses from 159 instruction librarians to the following question: “For each proficiency, please indicate the most significant source from which you acquired it AND the most significant source from which you believe a librarian should acquire it?” (p. 578). None of the respondents indicated that library school was their primary source for acquiring any of the 41 proficiencies – the majority acquired them on the job or indicated that they were self-taught.

In designing the liaison librarians’ workshop to provide formal training in the areas not covered in library school or in existing on-the-job training opportunities, the project team members sought to incorporate the elements highlighted in the concept map created for the CDTW. They decided to have participants first concentrate on the context of their information literacy session—primarily who are the learners? This may seem like an obvious element; however, it is one that is often overlooked in the rush to fill in the content of a session. Taking the time to

consider such things like the students' academic and/or developmental level(s), which information literacy standards might fit those levels, or at what point in the information literacy cycle the students' research (or assignment) might fall, leads to the development of more appropriate learning outcomes and thus better content (Jackson, 2007). Though the debate over the relevance of learning styles continues (Reiner & Willingham, 2010), the consensus remains that all learners have preferences in the ways in which they like to learn and that these preferences, as well as their prior learning experiences and current expectations, will have an influence on their level of engagement. Taking these into account is another important step in effective instructional design (Pritchard, 2009).

Communication and collaboration with faculty and advocacy for course-integrated information literacy skills can be a bit of a chicken-and-egg situation—either one can come first and (hopefully) lead to the other. Close collaboration with faculty will ultimately lead to better designed library instruction (Atwong & Heichman Taylor, 2008) that aligns with the course outcomes and is tailored to the particular group of learners. Collaborating with faculty can also provide essential subject or discipline-related information when the librarian's familiarity may be lacking. The ways in which different disciplines create, access, and use information are important considerations in designing an effective information skills session (Ragains, 2006). If the faculty member and librarian have established an open channel of communication and a mutual understanding of the importance of integrating information literacy skills session(s) into the course, then there will be a greater openness to the addition of other important elements such as pre and/or post-tests and other assessment methods (Oakleaf, 2008). Using one of the many assessment methods (Walsh, 2009) is a strategy for determining the effectiveness of the information literacy session, as well as identifying areas in which the learners need further instruction or guidance (Ivanitskaya et al., 2008).

Armed with the knowledge gained through the literature review, the project team members moved forward with the next phase of the workshop development process: identifying content and learning outcomes.

Workshop Content and Learning Outcomes

The workshop project team members designed and administered a needs assessment survey which was sent to all McGill liaison librarians. The survey results indicate that nearly all librarians (90%) were delivering instruction sessions targeted to a specific course; most (83%) were

also responsible for giving general tours and orientations. Only 23% gave graded assignments. When asked to rank topics of interest, the top choices were class design, engaging students, and using active learning. Evaluation, classroom management, and creating graded assignments were the choices of least interest to the respondents. When asked about the main challenges faced in their teaching, 42% responded that engaging students was the biggest problem; communicating with faculty and time management ranked high as well. The final question on the survey asked librarians to list any questions about teaching. These responses were grouped into broad themes. The most commonly occurring questions were related to student engagement, teaching strategies, and effectiveness of teaching. There were also a significant number of responses related to time management, volume of content, and presentation skills.

Based on the results of the needs assessment, the team members identified key concepts of the workshop's content areas, reflected on the characteristics of the learners, and identified learning outcomes. The results

Figure 2: Workshop content. This figure includes active and collaborative learning strategies.

Day One
Introduction
How do I learn best? (ice breaker)
Context
Who are the Learners? (mini lecture)
Information Literacy Models (mini lecture)
Exercise 1: How is knowledge communicated in my assigned discipline(s)? (think-pair-share)
Exercise 2: Communicating with Faculty (brainstorming)
Content
Concept Mapping (mini lecture)
Exercise 3: What is the content of my session? (extended think-pair-share)
Outcomes
Levels of Thinking (mini lecture)
Exercise 4: What are my learning outcomes? (write-pair-share)
Strategies
Exercise 5: Reading Assessment Test (background knowledge probe)
People Learn Best... (mini lecture)
Active vs. Passive Learning (mini lecture)
Exercise 6: What instructional strategies have I used or experienced? (four corner exercise)
Exercise 7: What is one new strategy that you would like to try? (one minute paper)
Selecting Instructional Strategies (mini lecture)
Exercise 8: What strategies will I use to facilitate learning (think-pair-share)
Assessment
Which Method of Assessment? Formative vs Summative (mini lecture)
Exercise 9: How will I assess learning? (write-pair-share)
Assessing Your Teaching (mini lecture)
Preparation for Day Two
Microteaching (mini lecture)
Giving and Receiving Constructive Criticism (mini lecture)
Exercise 10: Evaluation of Day One (five minute paper)
Day Two
Microteaching
Sharing lesson plans

comprise the content of the workshop and the knowledge and skills the librarians would take away from the workshop—the learning outcomes. Throughout the workshop, the librarians would experience, as learners, the types of active learning techniques and strategies that they would be integrating into their information literacy sessions. These would include numerous exercises with collaborative and feedback components. Figure 2 outlines the full content of the workshop, including the types of strategies used for purposes of modeling active learning techniques. The workshop's learning outcomes (Figure 3) were then linked to the content of the workshop. During the first day, participants would focus on (re)designing a specific information literacy session (outcome one) and would give and receive feedback on their evolving designs (outcome two). During the second day (½ day) participants would teach small segments of their sessions (10 minutes) and receive feedback from their peers and facilitators (outcomes two and three). These microteaching sessions would be conducted in small groups (3-5 participants).

Figure 3: Learning outcomes chosen for the course design workshop for librarians.

At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

1. (Re)design a library session using learning-centered principles
2. Deliver a segment of the session and get feedback from peers
3. Use reflection and feedback to improve teaching and learning

Teaching Strategies

Designing and Delivering Effective Information Skills Sessions was offered for the first time in August 2009. The workshop has since become a basic program for new librarians at McGill and has been extended to librarians in partner hospital libraries.

Upon registration, all participants are asked to respond to a short survey that collects background information on their teaching experience, questions about course design, and what they expected to get out of the workshop. As pre-workshop preparation, they are also asked to select a specific course to work on and (re)design during the workshop. They bring with them their answers to questions about the content of the course, the learners, and the skills and values they want to see them develop.

The workshop begins with introductions, including an icebreaker question (“I learn best when...”) and a discussion of participants’ questions and expectations. In order to demonstrate a learning-centered approach to teaching and to support learning during the workshop, the content is broken down into a series of mini-lectures followed by a variety of active learning exercises.

Table 1 outlines various active learning strategies (some of which were used in the workshop exercises) and examples of how they can be used in an information literacy session. In addition to these examples, the team members provided citations for numerous sources of information on active learning (e.g. Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2005; Fink, 2003; Kenney, 2008; McAlpine, 2004; McKeachie, 2002; Silberman, 1996) in the annotated bibliography included in the workbook given to all participants.

Table 1: Active Learning Strategies with Information Literacy Examples

Strategy	Definition and Example
Ice Breakers	Quick activities (often with a touch of humour) designed to get participants talking about themselves and their expectations for the session. <i>Example: Students are asked to consider one thing each hopes to gain from the session and share with the group.</i>
Background Knowledge Probe	Questioning designed to elicit basic, simple responses (short answers, circling/showing of hands, multiple choice questions) in preparation for learning a new concept. This strategy can help to determine the most effective starting point and appropriate level of instruction and helps to focus attention on important material. <i>Examples: Show of hands, how many of you have found articles for this assignment? Where did you go to find them?</i>
Focused Listing	Participants are asked to recall what they know about a subject by creating a list of terms or ideas related to it and then share the contents of their lists before the instructor begins the lecture. Focused listing need not take more than a few minutes. <i>Example: Ask students to generate a list of keywords and synonyms on a topic that can be used for searching (alone or in pairs).</i>
Brainstorming	Brainstorming goes one step beyond Focused Listing in that participants are encouraged to expand from what they know by finding informed solutions to a problem or to delve deeper into a topic. <i>Example: Take three minutes and brainstorm a strategy for finding articles on a given topic.</i>
Think-Pair-Share	This activity can help to organize prior knowledge, brainstorm questions, or summarize, apply, or integrate new information. It includes three steps: 1) participants are given one minute to reflect on a question or task; 2) in groups of two, participants share their thoughts for two minutes; 3) the instructor chooses a few pairs to give short summaries of their ideas. <i>Example: Ask students where they would look for information on a given topic.</i>
Ten-Two Strategy	Designed to check for learning, after a ten minute mini lecture, participants pair up for two minutes and share their thoughts, to help each other clarify information, and to generate questions. <i>Example: Demonstrates an effective search strategy for finding articles on the given topic, give students two minutes to reflect on how it compares to the strategy they would have used.</i>
Buzz Groups	In this activity, participants are divided into subgroups of 3-6 people assigned to discuss a topic or to solve a problem. Each group presents results to the class, during which the instructor responds to comments and stimulate discussion. <i>Example: Each subgroup is given a case study or scenario to work on for an allotted time period (depending on length of session). Each group presents their findings and comments on the resources they used.</i>

Strategy	Definition and Example
Compare and Debate	<p>This strategy asks participants to use two different resources or methods and then to engage in a group discussion to compare experiences. The group can also be divided to debate the merits of one over the other.</p> <p><i>Example: Ask students to search for information in Google and then have them search for the same information in a Library resource.</i></p>
One-Five Minute Paper/Free Write	<p>Participants write for 1-5 minutes on a topic or in response to a question. This strategy is designed to allow participants to explore ideas before a discussion, to close a session by cementing ideas in their minds, or for evaluation.</p> <p><i>Example: Students are asked to think about what they learned during the session and how it will help them complete their assignment. They are given three minutes to record their thoughts.</i></p>
<p>Note: Adapted from <i>Scenes from a classroom: Making active learning work and Active learning with PowerPoint</i>; University of Minnesota Center for Teaching and Learning (http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/index.html).</p>	

The context section of the workshop introduces the first think-pair-share exercise. Participants are asked to reflect on how knowledge is communicated in their assigned discipline and, consequently, the skills that learners need in order to access, retrieve, evaluate and communicate information. They are next asked to pair with another individual to exchange ideas. Verbalizing responses can aid in organizing thoughts and brainstorming or generating new ideas. Volunteers are solicited to share their responses with the larger group. Think-pair-share is utilized again during the strategies section when participants are asked to consider instructional strategies to facilitate learning in the design of their information session.

Participants also have the opportunity to practice communicating with faculty during the context section. After considering what the core benefits are for faculty of information literacy instruction, they are asked to re-write a poorly written email to a faculty member that offers general support for teaching. Following the exercise, sample emails are provided to the group that have been successfully employed by McGill librarians in the past, one addressed to a faculty member offering an in-class workshop targeted to a particular assignment, and another addressed to a Ph.D. student offering services in support of their research and teaching.

As the workshop moves from the overarching context to the content of the information literacy session, the participants are (re)designing, concept mapping is offered as a means to organize the content in a meaningful way. Since concept maps are graphical representations of concepts and their relationships, the first step is to pull out the main concepts from a description from the liaison librarians' information literacy skills instructional session of their choice. Concepts are written on post-it notes so that they can be easily arranged on the inside of a folder. Lines can be drawn and relationships labeled between concepts on the folder. Participants exchange feedback

on their early concept maps and integrate suggestions from their peers. Peer learning is a strategy employed throughout the workshop. Another example is a write-pair share activity that follows a mini-lecture on Bloom's Taxonomy and levels of thinking, when participants develop learning outcomes for their session, returning to their concept map for guidance. Write-pair-share is revisited during the assessment section of the workshop when participants are asked to write down appropriate formative assessment techniques to match a particular learning objective and share this with a fellow participant.

Upon registration, participants are asked to read an article on the subject of active and cooperative learning. This article is used to conduct a Readiness Assessment Test (RAT) at the start of the strategies section of the workshop. Reading assessment is a strategy designed to provide participants with background for what they will be learning in the session and to stimulate discussion and elicit questions on the key concepts that will be covered. The RAT consists of two multiple-choice questions based on the content of the article and a third open-ended question on how it would impact their approach to student learning in the future. For this exercise, everyone answers the questions individually and then comes to a consensus in small groups regarding the answer most suited to each question. When the class reconvenes, answers to the multiple-choice questions are shared by having a person from each group simultaneously hold up the letter representing their group's agreed-upon response. The participants and facilitators discuss the multiple-choice and open-answer responses, which provides a framework for the next portion of the workshop.

Next, the strategy section of the workshop incorporates a mini-lecture on active versus passive learning. Participants engage in a four-corner exercise to share active learning strategies they have used in information skills sessions or experienced as learners. For this exercise, facilitators hang a large sheet of paper in the four corners of the room, each labeled with one of the following headings: introducing the session, informing, practice and feedback, and closing the session. A group of participants is stationed at each corner and given time to list relevant strategies. When instructed, the groups move on to the next corner to add to the previous groups' strategies. The resulting lists of activities are recorded and sent to all participants via email. As part of the debriefing of the four-corner exercise, the class reviews the strategies and each participant writes a one-minute paper to record their ideas on a new strategy they heard about or experienced in the workshop that they would like to try. The one-minute paper is a free-writing exercise designed to give participants a short time to reflect on a topic before discussion, or to bring closure to a session by recording ideas that may be in their minds immediately following, and to give feedback to the facilitators.

A microteaching activity was designed to give participants a chance to practice delivering a portion of their information literacy skills session (10 minutes) to their peers and receive valuable feedback. The microteaching takes place during the second day (½ day) of the workshop. Many participants take the opportunity to try out a new activity in the small group environment. Each presenter introduces his or her session, states the learning outcomes, and specifies any particular areas in which he or she desires feedback (e.g., presentation style or choice of activity). At the end of each 10-minute session, the presenter offers impressions of his or her performance and has the opportunity to ask questions of the group. All participants are given written guidelines on giving and receiving constructive criticism and are asked to complete a microteaching feedback sheet for each presenter.

To accompany the workshop and reinforce learning, the project team created a workbook, which includes the materials, exercises, checklists, and references for each section of the workshop. It also includes a blank lesson plan template with guiding questions. At the end of the first day, participants are asked to work outside of class time on their concept map, learning objectives, strategies to support learning and assessment, and to fill in the lesson plan with their session design. The final activity of the workshop is a poster session for sharing these lesson plans. Materials are posted in the classroom while participants circle the room leaving comments, questions, and encouragement for each other to reflect on later.

Assessment

The project team members meet after each workshop to assess teaching and learning, review feedback, and discuss potential improvements. Throughout the workshop, feedback is solicited from participants through several means: a five-minute paper (similar to the one-minute paper, with several open-ended questions), multiple-choice responses collected using an interactive student response system (clickers), and an informal reflection on the impact on participants' approach to teaching. At the end of the first full day participants take time to reflect on their learning through the five-minute paper activity, answering the following questions: What are the new things you learned today? What would you like to learn more about? What could we have done differently to facilitate your learning? Do you have any additional comments about the workshop? Many participants have expressed interest in having shorter (perhaps a series of half-day) workshops on specific topics such as the use of clickers, effective presentation style, and active learning strategies for use in large group sessions.

Assessment data collected with clickers from a total of 30 attendees has been positive overall:

- 97% reported that the workshop met their expectations
- 93% felt that they had a better understanding of the teaching and learning process
- 93% felt the workshop was useful in terms of their professional development
- 93% felt motivated to try new strategies in their teaching
- 90% would recommend the workshop to another colleague

Facilitators also wanted to obtain informal feedback on the impact of the workshop on participants' approach to teaching. To do this, an eclectic collection of postcards is spread out on a table during the closing lunch. Everyone is asked to select a postcard that best described how they were feeling after having taken the workshop. Each participant holds up his or her chosen postcard for everyone to see and gives a brief description of why he or she chose the postcard and how it expressed his or her post-workshop attitude towards teaching. Overall, most have communicated their excitement and enthusiasm for putting into practice the skills and strategies discovered during the workshop. In an effort to allow for and encourage continued peer feedback, to establish a culture of sharing lesson plans and session materials, and to provide support when questions arise, a listserv was established by the project team members. All workshop participants are invited to join.

Conclusion

A total of 32 librarians (29 McGill liaison librarians and three McGill-affiliated hospital librarians) have participated in the 1.5 day workshop, *Designing and Delivering Effective Information Skills Sessions* in its three iterations (August 2009, November 2009, and July 2011). This represents roughly 75% of McGill librarians for whom information literacy skills instruction is part of their position duties. As shown in the assessment data gathered via clickers, response to the workshop has been overwhelmingly positive (greater than 90% overall approval). Recently, the participants were invited to provide further feedback to the organizers. One participant wrote, "I now incorporate a variety of active learning exercises into the hands-on workshops that I teach. For example, I only used hands-on search exercises in my workshops before, whereas now I also use background knowledge probes and quizzes in my teaching". Another participant provided, "The students are engaged more because I am engaged more. When they are engaged, they learn more concepts and more importantly,

retain the concepts taught.” Some of the best evidence confirming the effectiveness of the workshop was this comment, “I didn’t take an IL course in my MLIS so this was all fairly new to me. I found the workshop incredibly helpful-- I definitely incorporated more active learning techniques into my workshops (I actually didn’t know what active learning was before the workshop--eep!).”

The participation and approval rates, along with the many enthusiastic comments received from participants, have confirmed to the project team the necessity and usefulness of the workshop. Currently there are plans to give the workshop again as new liaison librarians are hired, and to expand the workshop’s reach to other partner organizations. The experience of developing Designing and Delivering Effective Information Skills Sessions in partnership with colleagues from outside the library has inspired the librarians on the project team to investigate opportunities for working together with other groups in the university community to create further professional development options.

As universities and libraries become increasingly complex organizations they will need to provide opportunities for librarians and library staff to acquire new skills. Most libraries continue to face cuts to their budgets, and new money for outside training will be scarce. Thus, libraries will benefit from seeking opportunities for collaborations outside the library that can help fill the void, such as the one described in this article. Collaborations can also lead to an enhanced understanding and appreciation of the work done by both parties. Aspects of the Designing and Delivering Effective Information Skills Sessions workshop have since been integrated into the Introduction to Course Design and Teaching offered to all faculty members at McGill University. These collaborations further the libraries’ evolution and increase its visibility and value during challenging times.

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