Discussion Post 1

Prompt:

a) Have you ever used a formal instructional design process to create a unit of instruction? Which one did you use or describe it if you don't know what it was called if named?

b) If not, how do you begin informally to create a unit of instruction, that is begin to teach or create training/learning? Please share your experience of any kind.

c) After you have completed the required readings, how do you understand the value of instructional design? Which one of the readings was the most interesting to you personally or professionally?

Response:

a) No, I have not previously used a formal instructional design process to create a unit of instruction.

b) In the past, the experience I have had with teaching has been as a Teaching Assistant in an undergraduate course, as a Peer Writing Advisor in the Center for Writing and Learning (CWL) at my undergraduate institution, and as an employee training new employees on policies and procedures in the workplace. As a Teaching Assistant, the instructor of the course provided me with his expectations and met with me weekly to go over assignments and answer questions. My role was to conduct the weekly discussion sections in which students could ask questions about the homework assignments and then to grade their work. I was not so much instructing as answering questions, and any instruction that I did (this was 11-12 years ago, so my memories are rather faded) was based on the model of the instructor's classroom teaching and the course textbook. As a Peer Writing Advisor, I went through intensive training sessions with my fellow writing advisors and the Director of the CWL in which we role-played writing conferences, discussed writing center theory and practice, and were provided with expectations for our performance. In actual conferences, I would begin by reviewing the assignment and asking the student about his or her efforts to date, then read the provided draft and provide feedback and guidance based on my training and knowledge of the conventions of academic writing across the disciplines. In a previous job, I was occasionally called upon to train new employees on certain policies and procedures. In those instances, I myself had been trained by other employees, so I largely based my training upon that which I had received. My employer provided certain tools, including documents, which contained most of the information that needed to be conveyed, so I focused on conveying that information clearly and coherently, observing, and communicating with the new employee to ensure that the necessary concepts and processes were learned and successfully implemented.

c) After completing the required readings, I understand the value of instructional design to lie in the facilitation of student learning and in students' achievement of specific outcomes. By focusing on the student in the instructional design process, instructors can ensure that what they teach is relevant and meaningful to students. Instructional design also helps the instructor to spend his or her time more efficiently and effectively, especially when teaching a subject to multiple groups of students over a period of time. A lot of work invested upfront ensures long-term success.

The reading that was the most interesting to me professionally was the Florida Gulf Coast University "Design Principles for Online Instruction." I appreciate the thoroughness of FGCU's treatment of the topic and think the principles would be invaluable for creating online instruction. Personally, the reading I most enjoyed was Felder and Soloman's "Learning Styles and Strategies." I am fascinated by the differences in how people learn, communicate, think, and behave, and I find it very useful to learn about the different styles so that I can become a better learner and communicator.

Discussion Post 2

Prompt:

What is your Learning Style(s)?

In your required readings are several learning style inventories/surveys/questionnaires.

Choose two of them and complete them. Report your results here.

Do you think the results accurately reflect your personal learning style? Does it help you to think about your own preferred learning modes when you're thinking about teaching and/or when you are working in this and other online courses?

Eight Learning Styles (Multiple Intelligence Inventory) - http://www.ldrc.ca/projects/miinventory/miinventory.php?eightstyles=1

Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire - http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html

Learning Styles Tests, Overviews, Links - http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm

Three Different Learning Styles - http://usd.edu/~bwjames/tut/learning-style/

Response:

In the Multiple Intelligence Inventory, I rated highest in the Intrapersonal style (44), followed by Naturalistic (39) and Linguistic and Music (tied at 38). The style on which I rated the lowest was Visual/Spatial (26). According to the NCSU Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire, I moderately prefer reflective to active and global to sequential learning and am fairly well balanced on both the sensing-intuitive and visual-verbal scales.

I think the results of these exercises pretty accurately reflect my personal learning style, although I think that I am adept at navigating different learning environments and adjusting to different instructional styles. I am not surprised that I rated highly in the Intrapersonal category, as I do like to work alone and pursue my own interests, am very inwardly focused and goal-oriented, and do well in self-paced instruction and working independently. I hadn't really thought of myself as a Naturalistic learner prior to taking this inventory, but it makes sense, as I am very tuned in to my surroundings and I do gravitate toward certain environments in which I sense that I will thrive. Rating highly as a Linguistic learner is no surprise to me, as I love reading, writing, and language, but I was surprised to see how highly I rated as a Musical learner. I love music and enjoy singing in my car, and because of the many years I spent playing clarinet and dabbling in piano and guitar, I am good at

rhythm and melody; I even listen to theta wave music while studying or writing because I enjoy it and find that it doesn't distract me from my work—but I never really thought of myself as a Musical learner. Now I am curious to experiment with incorporating more musical learning strategies into my studies to see how it enhances my learning. Looking back, I realize that there are certain sayings I learned in childhood which I continue to use as mnemonic devices, such as "i before e except after c" and "30 days has September, April, June and November," which indicate that I do have an aptitude for musical learning.

I like to think about things before discussing, applying, or explaining them to others, and I generally prefer working alone to working in groups, so my tendency toward reflective learning is no surprise. I was, however, surprised to learn that I am more of a global than a sequential learner, as I am good at picking up on the logical connections between ideas, but after more reflection, I realize that I do better when I can understand the "big picture." Details don't mean much to me unless I can abstract a greater meaning from them. On the sensing-intuitive scale, I rated just slightly stronger on the intuitive side, and in reading over the preferences and learning styles of sensors and intuitors, I see a little of myself on both sides. On the visual-verbal scale, I rated just slightly stronger on the verbal side, which fits me. When I read a research report, I like to be able to see data presented graphically, but sometimes I struggle to interpret the graphics unless there is an accompanying written explanation. So while I do have a slight preference for verbal learning, visual elements are very important to me as well.

It does help me to think about my own preferred learning modes when I'm thinking about teaching and/or when I am working in this and other online courses. In my own studies, being aware of my own learning styles and preferences gives me strategies for using my study time more effectively and efficiently and also for enhancing learning when materials may be presented in ways other than those which I would prefer. And as a teacher, I think it is valuable to realize that each individual has his or her own preferences and tendencies and that we need to make sure we try to present materials in ways that will facilitate learning for each and every student.

Discussion Post 3

Prompt:

What has motivated you to learn other than the requirement for a grade or degree or certificate? How would you choose to motivate learners other than by grading, etc.? Describe specific examples if you can. How much does marketing and promotion of an instructional unit/experience actually influence learner motivation to begin and/or complete the unit? What is your opinion?

Response:

In the past, I have been motivated to learn in various ways. In no particular order, these have included the desire to please my parents and other individuals whose opinions I valued, the desire to gain social status, the desire to earn more money, the desire to solve some sort of problem/puzzle/mystery, the desire to create, and the desire to formulate a sense of personal identity or "find myself." For as long as I can remember, I have enjoyed learning. As a child I loved reading and listening to stories, doing science experiments, solving math problems and logic puzzles, preparing to compete in spelling bees, and watching films about life in other cultures. I was an overachiever from a very young age, and I excelled in school. Part of my motivation was the desire to please my parents, and part of it was the desire to make something of myself, to achieve something. When I got

involved with spelling bees, part of the allure was being #1 among all of my peers. When I started my own business and had to learn how to prospect and sell, I was motivated partly by the desire for more money and partly by the desire to prove to myself that I could be successful in business. Much of the learning I did in high school and college fed my desire to create and to explore and formulate my own identity; my creations took the form of ideas, poetry, journal entries, and my overall life journey. I find the act of creation to be immensely satisfying. I think that any of these can be strong motivations for all sorts of learners, and depending on the context, any of them could be used to motivate learners in lieu of grading or fulfilling the requirements for a grade or a degree or a certificate.

When it comes to the influence of marketing and promotion, I think it can draw attention to an instructional unit and perhaps even stimulate enrollment, but I think that learners really need to be self-motivated in order to complete the unit—especially in a setting where the unit is not leading toward a particular degree or certificate and is not required by the learner's employer. The promise of the piece of paper at the end of the process can be a strong motivator and might spur some learners to complete a unit in spite of their lack of self-motivation. But when there is no piece of paper (or consequences at work) waiting at the end, most learners will abandon the unit unless they are self-motivated.

Discussion Post 4

Prompt:

Reflect on the classes, workshops, informal training sessions, or any learning experience where you've been the student.

List the learning materials aka learning objects (hard copy, paper, multi-media, communications tool, person to person interactions, etc.) with a basic description of an example you remember. Then, rate them in order of how useful the types of materials used were for you. In one or two sentences, describe how/why that particular learning material or 'object' was useful for you. Generalize on what kinds of learning objects you prefer to learn from and if you'd use them for teaching when you're the teacher/instructional designer.

Response:

I have had many opportunities to participate in learning experiences as a "student." In addition to my studies in the SLIS program and other academic settings, I have attended training sessions at work, taken continuing education classes, utilized various training tools to grow and develop my home-based business, and completed online learning experiences for personal growth and development.

In the SLIS program, my various courses have utilized Elluminate sessions, recorded lectures, written lectures, electronic journal articles, Web pages, blogs, printed texts, online tutorials, screencasts, video, discussion forums, and electronic documents. My overall learning experience has been enhanced by the variety of materials and tools utilized, but I would have to say that the more interactive materials, such as video, screencasts, live Elluminate sessions, and discussion forums, have most enhanced my learning. I have acquired knowledge by reading textbooks, journal articles, blog posts and written lectures, but it is not until I have interacted with other students and/or instructors that the information began to take on a deeper meaning. I think that when using more "static" learning materials, as an instructor, it is important to provide some discussion or analysis of key points in order to help students make sense of the information presented.

Training sessions I have attended at work have tended to be either classroom-based or self-paced tutorials. Both have been effective learning experiences for me. In the classroom, lecture is often enhanced by hands-on practice; for example, I attended a training session in a computer lab on using our library's music databases, and the librarians provided verbal instruction while also projecting their computer screen for everyone to see and giving us exercises to complete on our own workstations. The self-paced tutorials have generally been designed to teach us some new piece of software, such as the new GUI for the OPAC or the staff ILS. These are very effective, as they are consistent with the material being taught. When instructing in the use of computer software, it makes sense to create online tutorials that utilize the same features that the student is learning to use.

Overall, I'd have to say that for me, written materials are a good starting point for learning something new, but learning is enhanced when materials are presented in additional formats (such as video) and especially when there is an opportunity to interact with other learners and experts through live discussion or online discussion forums. It is also helpful when the instructor provides analysis of the key points. I like to have something concrete to refer back to, such as a printed handout of bullet points or a Web page. When learning something to be put into long-term practice, it really helps to have the opportunity to engage with others who are practicing the same thing. As an instructor, I would aim to provide this balance of static learning objects, analysis, and interaction in order to help students learn effectively.

Discussion Post 5

Prompt:

Reflect on your own teaching and learning experiences as well as on the required readings and share your experiences and thoughts on the following if applicable:

1. Have you ever TAKEN a course(s) or workshop(s) that was taught in or by a library? What kind of library was it? (e.g., public, academic, special (e.g., museum, corporate, hospital etc.))

2. Describe the library and your experiences. Specifically, why did you participate in the course/workshop? Was it useful to you? What was the best part of the experience for you?

3. Have you ever TAUGHT a course(s) or workshop(s) in a library context? What kind of library was it? (e.g., public, academic, special (e.g., museum, corporate, hospital etc.))

4. If you have not yet taught in a library context, what kind of library would you like to be working and teaching in in future and why?

5. If you answered yes to #3, Describe the library and your experiences. Specifically, why did you teach the course/workshop? What was the best part of the experience for you? What would you do differently if you were teaching in that context again?

6. From your experiences and readings, what do you think are the main ways in which instructional design for teaching (and learning) will be different or challenging in each of these three general kinds of libraries? Specifically, how will your instructional design step 1. needs assessment and instructional goals be different? How will your instructional design step 3. entry behavior and learner characteristics be different?

Response:

1. The only course I can recall having taken in a library was as a middle school student in the school library. We used to visit the school library every week, and the librarian provided instruction on how to conduct research, the Dewey Decimal System, and bibliographic citation.
2. I participated in this instruction because it was required, but I also enjoyed learning and loved spending time in the library. Looking back, this instruction was very useful to me, as it increased my information literacy and my ability to retrieve relevant information. I became familiar with the way knowledge is organized in libraries and with the type of information required to produce a quality citation. All of these were skills that I continued to draw on and develop as I progressed through high school, college, and now graduate school. The best part of the experience for me was that it made me comfortable with using library resources.
3. I have never taught a course or workshop in a library context.
4. In the future, I would like to work and teach in a public, special, or academic library—or in the online environment. I am not particularly set on a particular type of library, but I would love to have a job that allows me to work with technology. I would love to work in virtual services.
5. N/A
6. I think that the type of library definitely comes into play in designing instruction. In a school or academic library, the instructional goals of library units are tied into the instructional goals of the institution as a whole, whereas in a public library they can be more variable depending on the intended audience. In a special library, the instructional goals will be very much tied to the successful performance of job duties. Entry behavior and learner characteristics will definitely vary according to the audience. In a school or academic library, it will be very dependent upon age and also upon socioeconomic background. In a public library, learners will be extremely diverse, so individual courses may need to be targeted toward different audiences. In a special library, there may be employees of varying job classifications and skill levels using the library, so it will be important to take those differences into account when designing instruction.

Discussion Post 6

Prompt:

We're returning to a more structured discussion in this weeks' topics. So many of the self-reflection discussion questions were relevant to this particular topic already.

There are many readings for this topic. Please share which article was the most interesting and potentially useful to you and report why it was interesting and useful to you. Remember to type the title and URL so everyone can go and look on it. If someone else has already chosen the article you chose then please look for your second best *OR* expand on what they've reported.

You MAY report on an article that is not in our required readings, but that you've found elsewhere and found more interesting and useful than any of these articles. In this way, I am updating my bibliography for the Spring semester so I think you for any of these you share.

Response:

Moore, J. (2011, March 10). Going the distance: Why online learning is gaining ground. *The Independent*. Retrieved from http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/higher/going-the-distance-why-online-learning-is-gaining-ground-2237534.html.

I enjoyed several of this week's readings, and I also did a little searching for additional articles on the topic of online learning. One article in particular, Jessica Moore's "Going the Distance: Why Online Learning is Gaining Ground," seemed to capture some aspects of online learning which were significant factors for me when I was deciding which program to choose for pursuing my MLIS: cost, the efficiency of my personal time investment in school, and the flexibility to study from practically anywhere. This article is written for a general audience and provides a very general overview of some of the factors which are causing online education to surge in popularity. Besides the factors that mirrored my own experience, some others mentioned in the article include the increasing ability to use mobile devices for online learning and the ability to interact with students that are geographically dispersed.

Before I began applying to graduate programs, I decided that I wanted to do my degree in an online, asynchronous program, as I wanted to continue working at my job and have the flexibility to complete my coursework in my free time. I also wanted to avoid taking out any additional student loans, as I am still paying off my undergraduate loans. I live in the Seattle area, and the University of Washington iSchool, which offers both online and classroom-based degree programs, is a very popular choice for MLIS programs in this area. However, even as a Washington resident, the cost to attend UW's online program was more than twice that of SJSU. For that reason, I chose SJSU, and I have been very happy with the SLIS program. I love that I can do my coursework according to my own schedule and that I do not have to spend time driving to campus or sitting in class discussions where one student dominates while many others never have a chance to speak. Online learning appeals to my learning style. I can also keep up on coursework while traveling, which I did when I attended the ALA conference in New Orleans last month. Moore's article quotes Resource Development International's Marketing Coordinator Carrie-Anne Rice as saying, "People can study with us anywhere in the world." I know that has been the experience of many SLIS students.