Incorporating Metacognitive Thinking in Information Literacy Instruction

First Year Instruction at Sac State’s University Library

Need for a sustainable program

WHY?

- Students were experiencing repeat instruction of IL concepts among their lower division courses.
- To prevent librarian burnout and accommodate more class sections.
- Wished a consistent lesson for first-year students across the English program to make it easier for multiple librarians to teach.

HOW?

- Common lesson plan that is unique to FY English courses & consistent across all sections.
- IL sessions distributed among librarians in the department rather than the majority of the instruction being done by 1-2 librarians.
- Library Instruction Coordinator hired to coordinate program and ensure communication with English department.

With a common lesson plan being taught to a large number of first-year students, there was an opportunity to incorporate more active and reflective teaching across the program.

METACOGNITION

What is it?

- A ‘metacognitive’ approach to instruction can help students learn to take control of their own learning by defining learning goals and monitoring their progress in achieving them (National Research Council, 2000).

Why use it?

- “A metacognitive approach to instruction can help students learn to take control of their own learning by defining learning goals and monitoring their progress in achieving them” (National Research Council, 2000).

How we incorporated it:

We needed to see students’ responses to know how effectively we were teaching, the effectiveness of the wording of the questions throughout the process based on students’ understanding of the language.

Our assumptions were challenged: students had trouble with either interpreting or implementing questions we thought would be easy; questions we considered more complex were answered in thoughtful and insightful ways.

We created a searching activity that prompted students to reflect on their search process and think about their strategies, identifying what is working and what they might change (adapted from Heather Beirne at Eastern Kentucky University via ACRL Sandbox).

Student responses validated our focus on research as inquiry. The focus on process in the metacognitive thinking exercise helped facilitate an understanding of the iterative and sometimes messy nature of research.

Even in a one-shot where task-based exercises feel more realistic, there is value in qualitative data where students articulate their thought process as they research. The data gathered helped us reflect on our teaching, analyze learning outcomes, set the stage for curriculum mapping, and improve our instruction.

WHAT WE LEARNED...

...going forward

- Being explicit about our pedagogical approach allows students to understand our goals and expectations. By emphasizing the value and objective of metacognitive thinking, students know that monitoring their learning and engaging in reflection is a goal in itself.
- Student responses validated our focus on research as inquiry. The exercise helped facilitate an understanding of the iterative and sometimes messy nature of research.
- Even in a one-shot where task-based exercises feel more realistic, there is value in qualitative data where students articulate their thought process as they research. The data helped us reflect on our teaching, analyze learning outcomes, set the stage for curriculum mapping, and improve our instruction.

RESOURCES & REFERENCES

csus.libguides.com/metacognition