Leveraging Resources Across Units and Universities to Address Academic Literacies and Research Skills in Ontario Graduate Students

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Leveraging Resources Across Units and Universities to Address Academic Literacies and Research Skills in Ontario Graduate Students

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CURRICULUM DESIGN & PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Student2Scholar (S2S) Academic Literacies and Research Skills is an e-learning resource designed to help students develop a systematic and scholarly approach to their research. In nine core modules, and one pre-module, students engage with self-directed, personalized activities and assignments that make explicit the strategies and meta-cognitive skills requisite for active, ethical engagement in communities of research. S2S is freely accessible for other publicly assisted universities under a CC-by-NC-SA 4.0 International license.

S2S Module Titles
- Collecting Citations and Creating Bibilographies (Pre-Module)
- Thinking Like a Researcher
- Defining Your Research
- Introductory Search Techniques for Research
- Advanced Search Techniques for Research
- Exploring Grey Literature
- Understanding Design and Authority in Research
- Publishing and Research Impact
- Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Scholar
- Joining the Scholarly Conversation

The 9 (+1) S2S modules span across four broad phases of research: 1) Inquiry and Exploration; 2) Collecting Citations and Creating Bibliographies; 3) Understanding Design and Authority; and 4) Publishing and Research Impact.

PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The core pedagogical (conceptual/theoretical) framework of the modules reflect current research and general learning while ensuring high quality, interactive experiences for online graduate students. Although all team members brought their own frames of theory and practice to their individual work, the project’s overall design and development draws upon the following theory- and research-based concepts:

- Models of User Experience and Interface Design for Learning, as described in research-based resources such as Kell80 Educate and Schoenholz-Read’s Handbook of online learning 2nd ed. (2009), and Shneiderman’s Designing the user interface (2009);
- Heutagogy, which embraces learner-centred design and self-directed learning (Blaske, 2012);
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which promotes equitable, barrier-free access to learning (Rose & Meyer, 2002; CAST, 2011); and

PROJECT DESIGN & THEORETICAL APPROACH

In order to understand and distill how the S2S project was resourced and ultimately realized, a socio-cultural theory of learning and conceptual framework was applied retroactively to S2S project design and development.

While Collaborative Knowledge Networks (Gloor, 2005, Communities of Inquiry (Pierce, 2015, Dewey, 1938), and Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1999) were each considered, Koehler and Mishra’s Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge framework (TPACK), which builds upon Shulman’s Pedagogical Content Knowledge model (1986), proved to be the best fit for the way that considers knowledge domains as “resources” for implementing technology-based projects.

The TPACK Framework (2006) suggests that “at the heart of good teaching with technology there are three core components: content, pedagogy, and technology; plus the relationship among and between them” (Koehler & Mishra, 2005, p. 62). Koehler and Mishra propose that the most effective teaching and learning initiatives – those that integrate technology successfully – seldom derive from individuals who work in isolation or exclusively within any single domain, but are instead the result of collaborative efforts by educators who recognize and leverage the knowledge of the collective; members of the teaching and learning community whose experience, knowledge, and skills lie across the domains.

Resource Allocation Across the Knowledge Domains: TPACK applied to S2S

The core ALRS organizing group was populated by members from multiple units across three Ontario universities. Where there was limited expertise in any one knowledge domain, or at a point where any two domains intersect, external contracts were sought as additional support to meet project objectives. Initially, sub-teams designed the curriculum, with three modules assigned to each CK, PK, and TK expertise was distributed across the sub-teams. Those with TPK expertise also provided additional resources and contributed to team management.

When new project items arose, project resources were redistributed and deployed into new sub-teams, allowing talent to be strategically positioned across the project.

REFERENCES

[Brown, J. S. (2008). “Holistic” design approach, ensure that researchers and practitioners alike derive effective teaching and learning initiatives – and between them” (Koehler & Mishra, 2006, p. 15). Acknowledge the “myth of the lone creative genius with the reality of the enthusiastic interdisciplinary collaborator” (Brown, 2008, p. 3).]