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# Mapping library values and student learning outcomes: alignment with university pedagogical goals and practices

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## Abstract

The teaching efforts at Marriott Library are distributed widely across a variety of groups and a range of subject matter. Teaching styles and pedagogical foci are varied and diverse among the librarians in the building. To increase collaboration and raise teaching standards, Graduate and Undergraduate Services (GUS) formulated Guidelines for teaching librarians by using the University of Utah's Quality Course Framework (QCF) and Marriott Library's own Four Core Student Library Learning Outcomes and mapping them to the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. To facilitate communication and usability, the Guidelines contain an alignment matrix for librarians to follow through the teaching process. The matrix is also intended to open up new opportunities for conversation and collaboration between librarians and academic staff to better serve student needs.

The purpose of this report is to document and reflect upon the collaborative work done by teaching librarians at the University of Utah to create the Teaching Guidelines. The process of this work involved the synthesis and alignment of several models of pedagogical structure as well as the overarching interests and goals of a variety of stakeholders and participants in the teaching environment at the University. The product of these efforts includes clear Teaching Guidelines, alignment with the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy, and an alignment matrix designed to provide a clear map of the teaching philosophies and strategies employed at the library.

This report presents the process of creating and implementing the Guidelines and outlines the background of the process, including those institutional, situational, and environmental circumstances which shaped the general course of its development. The report includes an analysis of the pedagogical characteristics of the Guidelines. The report also presents an example of the Guidelines as used in action when developing the library-related content for an undergraduate-level community learning course known as 'Learning, Engagement, Achievement and Progress' (LEAP).

## Keywords

Academic libraries; information literacy; instructional design; learning communities; learning outcomes; pedagogy; undergraduate students; US

## 1. Introduction

Recent research indicates that not only are librarians paying more attention to the science of learning and teaching but that these efforts are beneficial to the goals and outcomes of research education as well (Brecher Cook & Klipfel, 2015). In addition, researchers note that the role of librarians as teachers continues to grow and expand as higher education responds to an ever-changing world (Bewick & Corral, 2010). This growing emphasis on pedagogy as it applies to teaching information literacy (IL) is key to overcoming the hurdles many librarians face, including limited time with students and not serving as the instructor of record (Otto, 2014). By developing a critical approach to IL pedagogy that starts with the assumption of limited access to students and curriculum, librarians can find ways to establish their presence in the classroom and create partnerships with both students and instructors. This change in approach to teaching can extend outward to include other fundamental campus partnerships (Gilman & Kunkel, 2010).

Because many librarians come to the profession with little to no training in formal pedagogy, it is imperative that teaching librarians within academic libraries develop training and support for learning how to teach. Additionally, since most universities have centres for teaching and learning, librarians can partner with that in-house expertise in order to apply their own criteria and standards more effectively.

At the J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah, teaching librarians span across departments and units. However, there has always been a core teaching department within the library that is now titled Graduate and Undergraduate Services (GUS). Although the scope of the department is diverse and growing, teaching continues to occupy a central focus. Thus, in an effort to define and align library teaching efforts, GUS created Teaching Guidelines that were formally adopted by the Marriott Library Council in the Summer of 2017. These Guidelines were developed by using the University of Utah Quality Course Framework (QCF) and Marriott Library's own Four Core Student Library Learning Outcomes and mapping them to the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education.

The following report details the creation of the Marriott Library Teaching Guidelines and provides a case study example of how one embedded librarian used the Teaching Guidelines and the expertise at the University of Utah's Centre for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) to discover the potential of altering their own pedagogical paradigm in a first-year learning course.

## 2. Background: alignment of learning outcomes at the University of Utah

At Marriott Library, there are three primary sources for informing and directing classroom learning outcomes: the QCF, the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy, and the internal Student Library Learning Outcomes. Each of these three frameworks arrive at similar outcome sets using different language which is structured in distinct configurations. Librarians worked to unify these three parts into a functional whole by means of an alignment grid.

### 2.1 The Quality Course Framework

Library instruction at the University of Utah is increasingly designed and developed using the QCF, a model for online and face-to-face instruction. The QCF model was built upon the work of Dr. L. Dee Fink (2013), an expert in higher education course design and academic staff development. Fink contends that, 'Faculty knowledge about course design is the most significant bottleneck to better teaching and learning in higher education' (p.24). The QCF was

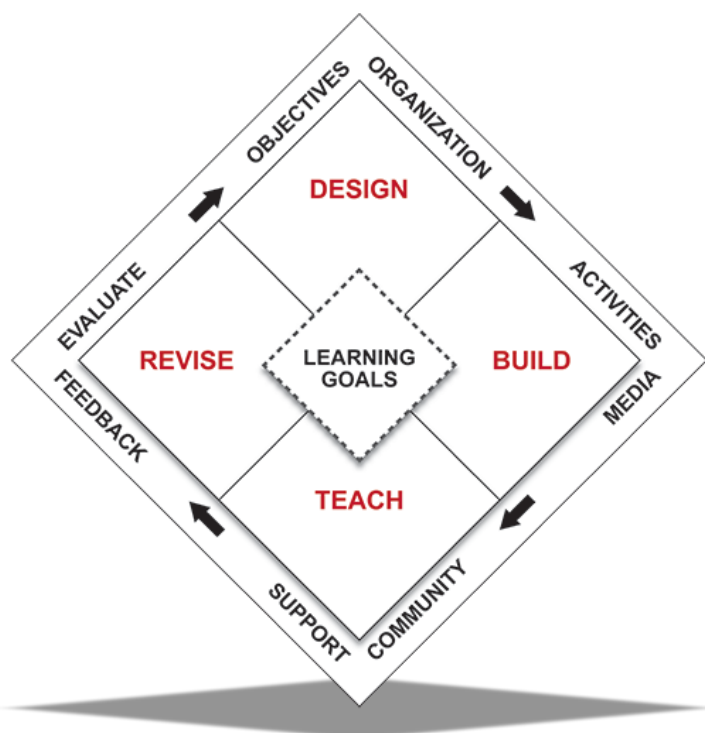
intended to be one tool for empowering teachers and teaching librarians to create well-considered and effective course designs.

The QCF is, at its core, an iterative plan for course planning and realisation. As reduced to simple terms, it proposes that course creation is an activity of planning and design followed by the actual work of curricular development (course content). After a course has passed through the processes of planning and approval, the course is then taught in the proverbial wild of a classroom setting. Incumbent upon a user of the QCF is the inclusion and use of assessment/evaluation instruments, which then lead to revision and a cyclical reapproach to the initial course design and subsequent actualisation.

Embedded in each component of that four-phased approach of 'Design, Build, Teach, and Revise' are six essential elements:

- (1) course and lesson outcomes are stated as measurable objectives;
- (2) an organisational structure facilitates usability and learning;
- (3) learning activities engage students in a complete learning process;
- (4) course content is provided in appropriate media formats;
- (5) a sense of a learning community is facilitated through specifically planned communication and student support; and
- (6) assessment, feedback and/or evaluation strategies measure student learning outcomes, as well as overall course/instruction quality.

These elements and the four steps can be represented in this image:



**Figure 1:** Quality Course Framework

Source: The University of Utah Centre for Teaching & Learning Excellence

This tool is used throughout the University in a variety of ways. In some colleges, the QCF has been used as a model for instructor training, especially for new teaching staff. As a general framework, the QCF provides a 'backwards design' philosophy that encourages teachers to be

responsive to student feedback while maintaining an awareness of the ever-evolving process of course development. In this sense, the QCF can be both a foundation for a young instructor's first class or a means of asking veteran staff members to reflect upon the need for change within a class that has been in the catalogue for some time.

## **2.2 The ACRL Framework**

At the Marriott library, we also work to model our teaching in compliance with the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. This Framework is another invaluable structure for teaching in the context of library instruction. The Framework is comprised of six threshold concepts:

- (1) Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
  - (2) Information Creation as a Process
  - (3) Information Has Value
  - (4) Research as Inquiry
  - (5) Scholarship as Conversation
  - (6) Searching as Strategic Exploration
- (ACRL, 2016).

As a flagship institution and member of ACRL, Marriott Library is committed to incorporating this Framework into our library teaching. For example, incoming candidates for teaching librarian positions are required to demonstrate engagement with the Framework in their applications.

## **2.3 Student Library Learning Outcomes**

Working in 2014–2015, a departmental task force developed a logic model which collated a number of individual librarians' teaching techniques and then proposed a unified set of internal outcomes; these became known as the Student Library Learning Outcomes. These outcomes were to reflect both the library's strategic goals and the experience of librarians in the classroom.

In brief, these outcomes pursued a specific goal: to put library instruction back on the radar of the library and campus community.

## **3. Developing the Marriott Library Teaching Guidelines**

GUS librarians saw the opportunity to map these tools together. A core team formed to take the structure of these three elements to inform and guide the Marriott Library program outcomes, which became the Marriott Library Teaching Guidelines. These Guidelines manifested in two tools, one which clearly connects the ACRL frames to a concise version of our Library Program Outcomes (which had been manifest in the aforementioned Student Library Learning Outcomes), and one which frames the QCF in terms of instruction librarian values derived from the Library Program Outcomes.

By combining the various parts into two alignment matrixes, the library was able to draw lines between values and actionable outcomes. The first set of these Guidelines was created as a tool for use with the University's 'Learning, Engagement, Achievement and Progress' (LEAP) program, although they can, and have been, adapted to other teaching environments. LEAP, a first-year learning community, comprises a significant portion of the library teaching mission.

The current iteration of the Guidelines is shown in the following alignment grids:

ACRL Frames	Library Program Outcomes
Authority Is Constructed and Contextual  Information Has Value  Searching as Strategic Exploration	<b>Demonstrate effective information seeking skills for locating, selecting, retrieving and evaluating information by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilizing a variety of sources &amp; tools (print &amp; electronic)</li> <li>Discerning between scholarly and non-scholarly sources; as well as primary and secondary resources</li> <li>Compiling, categorizing and managing citations during the information seeking process</li> <li>Employing ethical and legal standards when using sources and information</li> <li>Critically evaluating information sources and resources -</li> </ul>
Scholarship as conversation  Searching as Strategic Exploration	<b>Engage in the research process and construct knowledge by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining a research topic/questions</li> <li>Articulating information needs and research purpose</li> <li>Implementing effective search strategies</li> <li>Developing an awareness of disciplinary signature pedagogies and research traditions</li> </ul>
Research as Inquiry  Information Creation as a Process	<b>Synthesize and communicate information and sources in a variety of formats both written and oral by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compiling and organizing information for presentation planning</li> <li>Using a variety of textual, visual and media for presentation</li> <li>Presenting information/research in an effective manner</li> </ul>
Dispositions are embedded in all of the six frames	<b>Exhibit dispositions of a researcher and confidence to apply research knowledge to new problems and situations by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing transferable skills for comfortably using technology to find and use information</li> <li>Demonstrating confidence and patience when doing research (problem solving attitude)</li> <li>Valuing the concepts of student directed learning and life long learning</li> </ul>

**Figure 2:** ACRL frames aligned with library program outcomes

Source: Marriott Library Teaching Guidelines

As Instruction Librarians We Value:	Faculty Partnerships and Collaboration	Effective Instructional Practices	Supportive and Shared Learning Environments	Professional Responsibility
<b>Phase 1: DESIGN Instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact the professor before the scheduled class (in person, email or on the phone) to identify class needs, goals, and outcomes for the session(s)</li> <li>Plan the session length and content based on professor and student needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design a coherent lesson plan that includes: outcomes, assessments, and teaching and learning activities in written or online format</li> <li>Align lesson plan to the course syllabus. Ask for a syllabus in order to see what is included in the readings and what the projects will be. This will help shape and integrate your library instruction presentation.</li> <li>Align lesson plan to the ACRL framework and/or AACU LEAP outcomes (review the Framework for Information Literacy prior to developing an instructional plan)</li> <li>Align lesson plan outcomes to the GUS Information Literacy Outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compile a variety of resources (tutorials, handouts, examples) to incorporate into lesson planning to support student learning</li> <li>Use relevant or real world examples if possible to help engage students in the session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use professional experience and teaching expertise to select appropriate content for library sessions</li> </ul>

**Figure 3a:** QCF aligned with instruction librarian values

As Instruction Librarians We Value:	Faculty Partnerships and Collaboration	Effective Instructional Practices	Supportive and Shared Learning Environments	Professional Responsibility
<b>Phase 2: BUILD Learning Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with faculty on the development of the session to include teaching and learning activities and assessments, as well as relevant materials, databases, handouts, and activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop strategies to integrate students' prior experience/knowledge or questions into lesson</li> <li>Gather relevant library resources and examples needed for the lesson plan</li> <li>Create handouts or take-aways to help students navigate the lesson and use after the session</li> <li>Develop tutorials or other materials if needed for inclusion in the instruction or materials</li> <li>Design formative feedback opportunities to gather student feedback about the value of the library instruction session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create library guides or Canvas pages to supplement lesson that are easy to navigate</li> <li>Build opportunities for support into the Canvas course, library guide and session (like tutorials or step-by-steps) to encourage learning beyond the session</li> <li>Incorporate the best type of media for presenting materials related to the lesson plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a plan for implementing the lesson</li> <li>Create professional looking materials</li> <li>Provide contact information for post-instruction follow-up and consultations</li> </ul>

Figure 3b: QCF aligned with instruction librarian values

As Instruction Librarians We Value:	Faculty Partnerships and Collaboration	Effective Instructional Practices	Supportive and Shared Learning Environments	Professional Responsibility
<b>Phase 3: TEACH F2F or Online</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage the course instructor in the information literacy session(s) if possible by asking questions, etc.</li> <li>Request to be embedded into the Canvas course to provide better connection and access to students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline what the session will cover (on board or in canvas)—learning targets/outcomes and content</li> <li>Prepare and show command of the material</li> <li>Use engaged teaching strategies to engage students in the session</li> <li>Use questioning and discussion techniques (one example is think/share/pair) to break up lecture components</li> <li>Use appropriate pacing (including waiting more than 3 seconds for students to respond to questions)</li> <li>Finish the session by reviewing what was covered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a rapport with students</li> <li>Create a respectful, supportive and shared learning environment</li> <li>Check to see if students are lost or off task</li> <li>Is aware of student questions or raised hands</li> <li>Encourage student-student discussion and sharing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be on time for the instructional session to get set up and greet students</li> <li>"Optional" recommendation to keep a teaching journal and track what we do with assessment and making changes to our teaching</li> <li>Appear interested in and excited about the material</li> <li>Adhere to standards of ethical conduct in the classroom</li> <li>Grade the assessment if asked to do that by the instructor. Create a safe and comfortable learning environment in each session that is respectful and inclusive for all students</li> </ul>

Figure 3c: QCF aligned with instruction librarian values

As Instruction Librarians We Value:	Faculty Partnerships and Collaboration	Effective Instructional Practices	Supportive and Shared Learning Environments	Professional Responsibility
<b>Phase 4: REVISE Instruction: Close the Assessment and Evaluation Loop</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After the session, share reflections, observations, and ideas about the session(s) with the instructor as well as your plans for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on how the teaching session went. What to improve? What to omit?</li> <li>Review formative feedback if collected from students for improving instruction</li> <li>Ask for feedback from the instructor once an assignment is completed by the students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather data about the student research experience and attitudes about doing research</li> <li>Track follow-up incidences, subject guide stats or canvas analytics to measure how students utilize resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for professional growth and development in the area of teaching</li> <li>Design and implement assessment strategies to monitor the teaching and learning experience</li> <li>Maintain accurate records of teaching, improvement strategies and assessment data</li> <li>Record instructional sessions in Desk Stats</li> <li>Request feedback from peers about teaching</li> </ul>

Figure 3d: QCF aligned with instruction librarian values

Source: Marriott Library Teaching Guidelines

The Guidelines matrix represents both opportunities and challenges. It is a tool for teaching librarians and for leading conversations about teaching, but using the alignment can be difficult with a variety of librarian teaching styles and priorities. Further complexities arise in an environment with decentralised library teaching services. As this alignment can be seen as threatening or over burdensome for teaching librarians, implementation and 'buy in' can be difficult to achieve.

In order to address these challenges, GUS looked to move forward strategically with the Guidelines. The first effort was structured with the example of LEAP as a test case. In addition, through a series of discussions in Library Council, the Guidelines were formally adopted by librarian staff as the official set of best practices for teaching at Marriott Library. Following test cases such as the one detailed below, it is expected that another iteration of this toolset will be developed to reflect new developments.

Below, we provide a case study of one teaching librarian's experience incorporating the Teaching Guidelines.

#### **4. Case study: using the Teaching Guidelines within an embedded model**

This case study details a semester wherein one teaching librarian experimented with implementing the Teaching Guidelines for a first-year learning communities undergraduate course called LEAP.

In the mid 1990s, the LEAP learning community cohort program was introduced at the University of Utah as 'Learning, Engagement, Achievement and Progress'. Students in the program would spend an entire year together in their intended major (Engineering, for example) with different curricula each quarter (and later semesters) which would satisfy some general education requirements like social sciences and humanities. The program was designed to foster a sense of community on a large commuter campus that had few opportunities to build relationships with other students.

In addition to the year-long course, the current hallmarks of each LEAP cohort are: a supportive in-class Peer Advisor (a LEAP student from a previous year who has applied for the paid position of class mentor), an embedded librarian who teaches up to five library sessions per semester based on a curriculum co-developed with the LEAP instructor, and a university and community professional guest speaker program tied to students' professional aspirations.

The program has grown over the past twenty years. A typical population for LEAP enrolment for an autumn semester is approximately 800 LEAP students out of approximately 3,000 first year undergraduates at the University of Utah. In autumn 2017, there were 28 sections of LEAP with titles like 'Social and Ethical Engineering LEAP', 'Social and Behavioural Science LEAP', 'Humanities LEAP', 'Health Professions LEAP', and so on. Instructors often teach multiple sections and partner librarians work similarly. In autumn 2017 there were ten LEAP academic staff teaching on the program. There were also 11 librarians embedded and teaching IL and library research classes. While it is worth noting that many of the LEAP sections are voluntary, some disciplines like the College of Engineering list LEAP as a requirement of its students. Because of this, a majority of sections (ten) in autumn 2017 were related to engineering. Each section has a range of student numbers from 35 (the maximum) to 12 (the minimum), but classes typically lean towards being at full capacity. Each LEAP semester is worth three credits and while there are exceptions, most LEAP cohorts last for two semesters.

In this case study example, a LEAP embedded librarian had been a member of the team who devised the Teaching Guidelines and had been a teaching librarian for LEAP for the previous



ten years. Much of this librarian's LEAP curriculum and pedagogy had been shaped with classroom experience and indirect assessments; primarily through pre- and post-class discussions with the LEAP academic staff member on how they thought the class went. When the librarian began to introduce the more rigorous and systematic process to their LEAP academic, via the Teaching Guidelines document, the initial reaction was hesitant. The LEAP academic felt that the class schedule was already quite busy enough without adding what felt like additional work. In addition, after intentionally reading through the Guidelines, the LEAP academic felt that they were already aligned with the procedures and stated, *'We teach, we talk about it, and then we change the class – that has worked for years!'*

Co-teaching over a period of 12 years had helped the librarian and the academic develop the social capital that fostered instant assessment communications and the ability to shape the curriculum on the fly to meet student needs. It was felt by the librarian that relationships like this are hard earned and difficult to come by, and can be rewarding and productive. However, there is anecdotal evidence that academic staff and librarians comfortably paired together for years can overlook incidences where the curriculum shows signs of stagnation. In hindsight, the librarian noted that careful and intentional introduction to the Guidelines encourages new development while preserving the respect inherent in co-teaching relationships such as these.

The librarian was interested and encouraged to enrol in a 'Faculty Boot Camp' course through the University CTLE. The course had a curriculum of instruction design, assessment and education theory. The librarian found that the curriculum and the evidence-based pedagogy, albeit brief and truncated, framed the Teaching Guidelines in a more structured way. The outcome of the boot camp experience was a validation of their existing practice of teaching and modifying with indirect assessment, as well as their discussions with the LEAP academic, and it also provided a stronger framework for introducing the more formal Teaching Guidelines. While the boot camp was not mandatory, as a result of attendance the librarian felt much better prepared to discuss the Guidelines with the LEAP academic and to offer curriculum examples and teaching methods for implementation in LEAP. The librarian and LEAP academic immediately discovered significant opportunities that could positively address student course feedback and suggestions from the previous semester.

Going one step further, the librarian promoted the adoption of the Guidelines at a LEAP academic staff meeting. The discussion included copies of the Teaching Guidelines and the anecdotal experiences of the librarian and their LEAP academic who had begun to implement the Guidelines in their classes. While adoption of the Guidelines is dependent on the librarian and academic staff partnerships, having time to present in an academic staff meeting helped garner positive statements of support from the current director of the LEAP program. This positive reception by the director will ease adoption of the Guidelines for other librarian/academic partners in the future.

In summary, the Teaching Guidelines, however specific or general, are a positive framework with which to break new ground and assess existing work with increased efficiency. When introducing a set of guidelines, the librarian in this case study highly recommends that this be accompanied by contextual training topics such as teaching assessment, instruction design and other relevant introductions.

## **5. Conclusion**

As we have demonstrated, considered and strategic alignment can be invaluable for actualising a teaching librarian's mission. By providing a consistent delivery of learning objects which are specifically designed to realise professional, institutional, and departmental goals, proper alignment allows for solid practice as well as iterative assessment. Furthermore, an alignment matrix creates a controlled vocabulary for communicating the values of a library teaching

enterprise to stakeholders at all levels – from student to administrator – in a transparent and concise manner.

While there is little doubt about the value of solid instruction design practices, the question of the adoption of teaching guidelines by embedded library teaching staff is a point to address with some care. Librarians with long years of experience may not be resistant to the adoption of guidelines, but they may be slow to incorporate them into their daily practice. We discovered that this can be mitigated with instructional interventions by utilising the resources of teaching and learning units on campus. As librarian expertise becomes increasingly relevant on campus, it is imperative that librarians embrace their roles as teachers (Butera, Gomes & Kakar, 2014). Development of an infrastructure of library-designed teaching pedagogy that aligns with a university teaching framework positions librarians to accomplish this goal.

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