

## **Access Copy: Examining Reiterative Reflection in the Library Instruction Classroom: A Qualitative View**

*Presented by Sara Maurice Whitver and Karleigh Knorr Riesen for LOEX 2020 (online) May 7, 2020*

Good Afternoon!

We are so excited to be here, and we are so excited that you have taken time out of your day to come and hear us talk about our research study Examining Reiterative Reflection in the Library Instruction Classroom. We know that our days are hectic and unpredictable and not at all normal, and each of you had to join us on purpose, and we are thrilled that you are here.

### **Introductions:**

**Sara:** I am Sara Maurice Whitver: I am the Coordinator of Library Instruction and the liaison to the English Department at The University of Alabama Libraries. I have been at UA since 2012. My email address is [smwhitver@ua.edu](mailto:smwhitver@ua.edu) and my twitter handle is @smwhitver. I'd be thrilled to hear from you after our talk.

**Karleigh:** I'm Karleigh Knorr Riesen, the Social Sciences Research and Instruction Librarian at the University of Alabama Libraries. I have been at UA since 2017. My email address is [kariesen@ua.edu](mailto:kariesen@ua.edu) Please feel free to reach out with any questions!

### **Outline for the session: (Karleigh)**

We want to give you a brief outline of what our presentation will look like. First, we'll talk through our study background, what we mean when we talk about reflective pedagogy, and what this looks like in our library instruction classroom. We'll check-in to see if there are any questions, and then we'll talk about how we've analyzed our data and what our next steps look like. We are not presenting a final analysis of our findings, or any definitive results. Instead, we are allowing you to examine our in-progress study, sharing data that we are still sorting through, and giving you some of our initial observations.

For the sake of time during our talk today, we have to shorthand some of our framework. We'd like to invite you to read our essay "Reiterative Reflection in the Library Instruction Classroom" for a deeper understanding of our theoretical foundation

for this study. We want to focus on the data we've collected and on our methodology. For your convenience, we have added our preprint to our Google Drive folder.

### **Housekeeping (Sara):**

Accessibility is incredibly important to us. We have put together a public folder in Google Drive with our slide deck, an access copy of our talk today, and a bibliography for anyone who is interested. This folder can be found at [bit.ly/LibReflect](https://bit.ly/LibReflect). We have added this URL to all of our slides, so if you decide later that you would like to check it out, you won't have to go searching. Do remember that bitly URLs are case sensitive, so make sure you use a capital "L" and a capital "R."

We also hope you will use a single hashtag if you are tweeting about our session. We'd love to be able to engage with you. We have added #LibReflect to all of our slides.

### **How did we start? (Karleigh)**

We wanted to start this talk today with the original question that brought us together, both as practitioners and as researchers. This is the question that began our journey almost 4 years ago:

*How do we empower students to learn something in our classroom and help them transfer that knowledge to other parts of their life?*

This question remains a driving force behind the work that we do. We are constantly trying to find ways to make our instruction more effective. When we met, we were both beginning to investigate what reflection might look like in our classrooms. We both started playing around with our ideas, and meeting to talk to each other about what we were experiencing and discovering, and we decided to try to make it more formal. We wrote out a proof of concept for a project and submitted an IRB proposal and started digging. We did a lot of research and a lot of reading before we started collecting data, and we've tried to be really intentional about moving forward. Talks like this one today are part of that intentionality-- a time to stop and reflect on the project, talk to peers, and assess how it's going. We have one more year of data collection before we have to decide where to go next.

## **What is Reflective Pedagogy? (Sara)**

We are basing our definition of Reflective Pedagogy on that of Kathleen Blake Yancey. Yancey says:

“As they learn, they witness their own learning: they show us how they learn. Reflection makes possible a new kind of learning as well as a new kind of teaching. The portraits of learning that emerge here point to a new kind of classroom: one that is coherently theorized, interactive, oriented to agency.”

When we say “Reflective Pedagogy,” we are talking about using reflection as a methodology of teaching and learning. Framing our session content very intentionally so that students are presented with the possibility of remembering and connecting. Intentionally, specifically, directly.

We began the design of our pedagogy with the modes that Yancey describes. Four stances that students can take; four ways for students to look at their own skills and needs and actions.

## **Yancey’s Modes of Reflection (Sara)**

- Look backward to recall previous knowledge
- Look inward to review the current situation
- Look forward to determine how to use knowledge in a new way
- Look outward to connect to a larger context

The stances were a framework for us to work within. They provided a way for us to pose questions and sequence elements within each session to create a context. These modes, these stances. Here are some examples of the ways we frame reflective prompts for students:

Think about what you did before? What were the steps you took? This suggests to students that they can reflect by looking backwards.

What have you just learned? How do you plan to use it? This suggests to students that they can reflect by looking forward.

What do you still need? This kind of question prompts students to look inward.

How do you imagine using this in the future? This kind of question prompts students to look outward.

Of the four modes, we have both come to the conclusion that helping students look outward is most difficult. Maybe it's the hardest because it's the most awkward stance for any of us to take

### **Reflective Pedagogy in the Library Instruction Classroom (Karleigh)**

Taczak and Robertson (2016) have been instrumental in helping us develop a framework for reiterative reflection for transfer learning in the library instruction classroom. They developed a structure for curriculum that intentionally empowers students to transfer their learning from one context to another.

Sara and I used this structure when designing our library instruction: This structure includes four components:

- Introduction of key terms or concepts
- Readings supporting the writing assignments, including reading in writing theory and readings in reflection
- Structured reflection writing through activities and assignments
- A reiterative assignment in which students develop a theory of writing throughout the entire semester and which culminates in a final “theory of writing” assignment

As we talk through the way our curriculum works, you will see that we have really tried to implement these ideas into the library instruction environment.

### **Examples (Sara)**

- We include written reflection prompts at the beginning of each session
  - *Remembering Your Past Experience -- What kind of library experience did you have in high school? Did you work with a librarian (either in a group setting or one-on-one)? What kinds of papers did you write in high school and what kinds of sources did you use?*
- We introduce two key terms in each session that connect to the session's learning outcomes, and use those terms in our reflection prompts
  - *Library: A place where students actively engage in knowledge*

- We include a short quote within our sessions that explicitly introduce students to the idea of reflection or course themes so that they have the opportunity to engage more intentionally in the activity
  - *“Schools are supposed to be stopovers in life, not ends in themselves. The information, skills, understandings they offer are knowledge to go, not just to use on site.” (Perkins and Salomon, 2012)*
- We incorporate reflection prompts that intentionally ask students to connect what they are learning from one session to the next.
  - *End of class reflection: What information did you gather about your topic? What is the biggest takeaway from this library workday? What do you still need to know before you can complete your assignment?*

### **Our study (Karleigh)**

In our study, we are analyzing students' engagement with reflection activities as evidenced by written responses on worksheets and other learning-related materials produced during library instruction sessions for EN 102 classes. We have been using structured reflection activities throughout library instruction sessions in order to observe how these activities impact student engagement with information literacy.

In other words, we are assessing how students understand their own learning and how students engage conceptually with literacy in the library instruction classroom rather than attempting to measure student learning using static standards.

### **Research Study Questions: (Karleigh)**

We are specifically asking four questions:

- Does reflection initiate/facilitate transfer learning in a single session?
- Does reflection facilitate a scaffolded structure for multiple sessions?
- Do responses demonstrate that students can envision the application of skills, strategies, and concepts outside of the immediate classroom context?
- What do student responses tell us as librarian-teachers about teacher/student communication in the course-embedded library instruction classroom?

### **Our Process: (Sara)**

- We reach out to instructors before the sessions to discuss the study and as their permission to conduct the study in their class.
- We email the class ahead of the first library session to invite students to participate and distribute information and an informed consent form prior to coming to the library for library instruction sessions. This invitation emphasizes that student's participation is voluntary and will have no impact on their grade.

### **How We Collect Data (Karleigh)**

We are collecting data through worksheets and an end of semester survey. We have a worksheet for each session. These worksheets guide students through various reflective questions and allow students to engage with the content of our library instruction.

This slide is an example of some of our worksheets. We have been using electronic worksheets for our sessions and have found that students are more engaged with the written responses when using an electronic worksheet rather than a hand written one. However, we always bring copies of print worksheets to each class so students have the option to opt out of an electronic one.

### **How we Anonymize Students (Karleigh)**

We assign unique identifiers to each student who has agreed to participate in the study. We redact their names from all materials and use the following naming convention to match student work from session to session.

### **Anonymized Data Artifacts (Karleigh)**

Here are some examples of what this redaction looks like on our worksheets and on the follow-up reflection survey. These anonymous identifiers help us keep course and section materials organized and also helps us to see how each student progresses through each library session.

### **Participation & Response Rate (Sara)**

Fall 2019:

2 classes, 11 participants

Spring 2020:

5 classes, 44 participants

### **Checking-in: Any Questions so far? (Sara)**

Allow for 5 minutes, or perhaps 2 questions, from participants before moving towards talking about analyzing our data.

## **Analyzing Our Data (Sara)**

### **Coding Nodes**

We knew we would be coding for Yancey's four reflective stances: Forward, Backward, Inward and Outward. But we also knew from the beginning that we would discover themes across answers and across stances, and this felt exciting to us. We both support qualitative coding in our liaison areas, but this is our first formal coding project. We've really made an effort to keep our coding simple and focused. It is our individual experience in other smaller projects that coding can be more than a rabbit hole-- it can be a rabbit warren, and researchers can get lost in the data if they are not focused.

Here are the nodes that we have ended up with. In addition to the four reflective stances, these are the themes we have identified across our data:

#### Themes

- Transfer to a different Context
- Efficacy & Process
- Connect to Specific Topics
- Keyword Development

**Coding and Analysis:** We are performing our coding in Nvivo, which makes it easy for us to query sections of the data. The semester has literally just ended for us, and we have only had time to organize and redact student identification information, and make a quick coding pass before this talk; we really haven't played with our queries yet. But our initial brief pass over the data has yielded some really exciting observations:

### **Example Responses: (Karleigh)**

We have included a few example responses from our worksheets to share with you and for you to see how we have been coding these responses.

#### **Example Response #1: Remembering Your Past Experience (Karleigh)**

This first example is responding to a question asking students to reflect on any previous library experience.

"I was always a reader when I had time to be one, so I visited the library pretty often in high school on my own. Other than that library experience, I didn't have any except for when my AP Lang teacher had us go there for class for our

research papers. Even then we didn't really use the library. We just sat at the tables and used chrome books. We didn't write that many papers that involved research, but when we did the topics were chosen and somewhat broad. Two sources had to be from this online academic library but the teachers didn't really care about the rest"

### **Response #1 Coded: (Karleigh)**

We found two separate sections within that responds that demonstrate this student engaging with the reflective stance of looking back to recall previous knowledge. First, they are detailing their experience within a library and how the library was a space to work in. Next, they are reflecting on the types of research they have engaged with so far as well as the types of sources needed.

This question provides students the opportunity to think about their prior library, research, and writing experience, and potentially draw connections to their current context. Often, we ask students to share with the class. This question allows us to explicitly make connections from any prior experience to the current situation. In this example, I may talk about the many ways students can use the library's space, including the computers, the study rooms, the quiet floors and so on. I'll also explain what a librarian does and how we are here to help. I may also talk through what scholarly sources are to make another connection to the resources that are required on their current assignment as well as resources that will be required in future writing assignments throughout their college experience.

### **Example Response #2: End of Class Reflection (Karleigh)**

The second example is an end of class reflection.

"I gathered good sources that are specific and relevant to my topic. I learned that there are good tools to help narrow my search instead of just aimlessly researching in Google and getting broad or not helpful articles. I got good sources that I actually want to use and find interesting. Before I complete the assignment I want to keep browsing articles so I can make sure I'm getting the best information possible to help me write my annotated bibliography. I feel a lot more confident and feel that I'm at a better place to get started."

### **Response #2 Coded: (Karleigh)**

We coded two nodes within this response.

Looking Outward: In this response, the student is summarizing various search strategies in one sentence: there is a difference between Google and a database, there are tools within database, such as limiters, that help narrow a search, and databases and the tools within them allow this student to be strategic when searching, rather than “aimlessly research.” They are looking outward and connecting what they learned in this class to the larger research context.

Efficacy & Process: What stands out to me in this answer is the student is expressing an understanding that research is a process. In this class we spent a lot of time walking through various ways to begin the research process. It’s great to see this student express self-confidence in the research process and in their ability to begin a research paper.

## **Findings From Year One of Our Study (Sara)**

### **Response by Node**

In the far right column, you can see the number of references we’ve coded for each node. There is a pretty even consistency among the nodes with two obvious outliers, Efficacy and Process at 71 references, and Looking Outward at 6.

We are planning to examine our prompts and recode to look for that final node which at the moment has 0. Our initial pass over the data was very brief, and all of these nodes will change as we look more closely at our data.

### **Wordcloud**

I really like wordclouds because they allow us to view the data in a way that appeals to us in a way that columns of numbers and words doesn’t. To produce this wordcloud, we executed a word frequency query for the top 50 most frequently used words in the Efficacy node. I can see a few stop words that we need to include when we run the query again, and my initial observation is that students are using the language that we’ve been using in our classroom materials. One note, we use EBSCO Discovery Service, and our local instance is named Scout. All of our students refer to EDS as “Scout” which is what you are seeing referred to in this wordcloud.

### **Tree Map**

The Tree Map is another output that Nvivo gives us. This Tree Map was produced with a word frequency query of the Looking Backwards node. The words are weighted from most frequently used on the left to the least frequently used on the right. Once again these are the top 50 words. All of them are used frequently. As I look them over, one of my initial observations is that students are using the word Junior, and that makes sense

to me because I know that in Alabama's high school curriculum, a lot of students write a research paper in their Junior year.

### **Sampling of Responses**

Once we have coded our files, this is the coding report that we are able to access. These are all of the responses that have been sorted into the Looking Backwards node. We can read each of the coded passages, which are labeled and organized, and hyperlinked back to the original files in case we need to return to the larger artifact (perhaps we need more context for the coded response).

### **Plans for Year Two (Karleigh)**

1. Plan out more structured time at the end of sessions for students to complete the final reflective prompt

Sara and I are really intentional with how we structure the beginning of our classes. We get students set up with their worksheet, we introduce keywords, and try to build in context around class themes and so on. We also try and speak with every student in the class as they conduct research and complete their worksheets. But, the end of class can appear so suddenly and often times students haven't begun to complete the reflective question so they either don't answer it or write something down quickly. Some students are also in a hurry to complete the entire worksheet so we haven't had the chance to introduce them to the final question.

We would like to be more intentional with the structure of the end of class and to build in time to have a conversation at the end of class to get students to look up from the computers, summarize what we just learned, and provide time for students to pause, think about what they learned, and do some reflective writing.

2. Create more intentional questions that better facilitate Yancey's modes of reflection

We'd like to go through all of our worksheets and examine how we are asking students to engage with Yancey's modes of reflection. We've also noticed that students use the same language we have in our questions. We would like to be more strategic with the wording of our questions in order to give students a better opportunity to engage with the reflective stances.

3. Explore possibilities for asynchronous online instruction, especially if we are not able to provide in-person library instruction next fall

We already have a flipped classroom component that we haven't been using but what more can we do to engage students in the online learning environment?