

How Do Our Students Learn? A Cognitive Psychological Model for Information Literacy Instruction

Putting Principles into Practice

Principle 1: Create a Problem Context

Strategy: Organize your session around an intellectual problem for the students to solve in the session. This will likely be something that they specifically need to accomplish in the course of successfully completing their assignment.

Strategy: Be explicit about your learning outcomes.

Strategy: Use the specific language of the assignment.

Principle 2: Limit Learning Outcomes

Strategy: Choose just one or two learning outcomes for a session.

Principle 3: Build a Narrative

Strategy: Model how you might approach the assignment in a narrative form.

Strategy: Create a “real-world” scenario that demonstrates how IL skills work in practice.

Principle 4: Focus on “Deep Structure”

Strategy: Think about *why* it’s important to learn these specific IL skills. Why does this skill, ultimately, matter?

Principle 5: Active Learning is Practice of Deep Structure

Strategy: Have students perform active learning exercises that help them practice deep structure via concrete examples.

Strategy: Expose students to many different concrete examples of abstract concepts (e.g., show multiple examples of scholarly articles that have surface-level differences, but are all “scholarly”).

Strategy: Build time into your session for students to apply what they’ve learned.