Research Assignment Design Workshop – Planning Worksheet

This worksheet will help guide you through developing your research assignment. It includes questions to consider when designing and/or revising your research assignment. If needed use a separate piece of paper.

For a basic explanation of the concept of information literacy, please see “Information Literacy in a Nutshell,” located on the white sheet. For more on designing research assignments visit http://wheaton.libguides.com/assignmentdesign.

1. **Course-related learning objectives:** What should students learn through completion of this assignment? (When articulating these goals, consider how the assignment’s learning objectives reflect the overall course objectives.)

   *Learning objective examples:*
   - Articulate specific literary techniques used in Shakespeare’s Macbeth and their role in the representation of a prevalent theme evident within the play (e.g., betrayal, truth, integrity, female/male gender roles).
   - Develop an original and argumentative thesis statement on a topic of importance to the mental health care profession.

2. **Information literacy (IL) components and skills:** On the students’ assignment handout, underline or any portions of the assignment that reflect the use of research and information literacy skills. After doing this, respond to the following:

   - What components of the assignment involve information literacy (IL) skills?
   - What specific abilities and/or knowledge relevant to IL will students need in order to complete the assignment? (e.g., identify a research topic, determine a research question, design an effective research strategy, locate scholarly articles on a given topic)

3. **Learning objectives:** In light of your responses to #1 and #2, what are your IL learning objectives for this assignment? (Note: The level of specificity provided in the learning objectives will depend largely upon the nature of the assignment. Assignments for higher-level courses may involve less directed guidance and therefore more general learning objectives than do assignments for students with minimal knowledge of the research process.)

   *Examples:*
   - Apply effective search strategies in the database Academic Search Premier in order to locate relevant sources on a specific topic relevant to U.S. environmental policy.
   - Evaluate the credibility and relevance of websites in order to determine their usefulness for writing an informative paper about a controversial issue.
   - Analyze and synthesize information gathered from various relevant sources in order to relate your argument to other discussions and publications on the research topic.
4. **Communication of learning objectives:** How are the IL objectives communicated in the assignment? (e.g., explicitly written learning goals, specific details in assignment directions)

5. **Student process:** What process will students need to go through in order to complete the assignment successfully? What information from the assignment will help guide students through the process? Are there places in the assignment directions in which additional guidance is needed? (e.g., description of steps to take, suggested resources or tools)

6. **Pedagogy:** What activities or instructional materials will facilitate the learning? (e.g., discussion of feasible research topics, introduction to specific research tools, workshop on evaluating credibility and relevance of sources)

7. **Demonstration of learning:** What will the student produce as a result of their learning process? How will the students demonstrate their learning? (The assignment may involve one or multiple demonstrations of learning.) (e.g., worksheet on defining a research topic, annotated bibliography, article/book review, research proposal, information webpage, research paper, lab report, graphs/tables/figures)

8. **Assessment criteria:** How will I know students have done this well? What details of the assignment communicate to students how it will be evaluated? (Note: Depending on the complexity and structuring of an assignment, it may involve a single or multiple stages of assessment. Identify criteria for any/all stages of assessment of the assignment.) (e.g., For a research paper, assessment criteria might include: types and numbers of sources included, analysis/synthesis/evaluation of information sources, development of a thesis which is supported by information sources, clearly articulated distinctions between the student’s ideas and those presented in information sources, and accurate use of citation practices and styles.)
9. **Feasibility:** How feasible is the assignment as currently designed in terms of: class time, time provided to complete the assignment, instructor grading time, availability of resources (including information sources), and any other logistics? If there are potential logistically problems with the current assignment design, how might those be addressed? (e.g., *If an annotated bibliography is part of a larger research paper, and you will not reasonably be able to give all students feedback in a timely manner, consider other options for guiding student learning, such as peer review and peer workshops.*)

10. **Questions/Comments:** Identify any questions, concerns or comments which have arisen as you have considered the above questions.