Sample in-Class Activities

Below are a variety of in-class activities from several different courses, including LIS 401 Foundations of Library and Information Science, LIS 408 User Instruction, and LIS 451 Academic Libraries. In general, I present students with the activities exactly as they are written here. Most are group activities, although some start with an individual activity.

Analyzing Survey Data

Attached is a breakdown of data showing the responses of reference librarians in academic libraries, who were asked to choose the competencies that they believe to be most important for reference librarians practicing right now. The competencies were broken down into three lists: general skills, technical skills, and interpersonal skills, and the librarians could choose as many skills as they wanted from each list. Each participant also provided some basic demographic data, including their age range, number of years in the profession, gender, and the Carnegie classification of their institution.

Take a look at the survey data provided, and consider the following questions:
- Looking at the data provided, what other information would you like to have?
- What questions would you "ask" the data?
    - Which variables would you like to test for relationships?
    - What kinds of hypotheses would you posit for these variables?
- What, if anything, does this data tell you?
- What inferences or conclusions could you draw from this data?
    - Imagine a potential audience for this study- what actions or decisions might they make based on the data?

Theory into Practice
Mapping Exercise

Learning Goals
- Experiment with an ethnographic methodology
- Use limited set of results conduct brief assessment of space
- Analyze how this method could be used for space planning

Curriculum:
Students have drawn a map of the main floor of Beatley library from memory. First, students will compare their own map with a neighbor's. The instructor will then display an accurate map on the screen. As students analyze their own and their peer's maps against the standard, consider the following questions

- How alike are different student maps?
- What areas/resources/services are present or absent on each map compared to the standard?
- What, if anything, could we extrapolate from comparing the hand-drawn maps to the standard?
- What could we do with this information?

Theory into Practice
Explaining concepts

Goal:
Prepare a two minute spoken explanation of a library concept using an illustrative analogy/activity to connect new information to previous knowledge to increase learning in patrons in a particular audience.

Learning Outcomes:
- Define a given concept with illustrative examples
- Choose language that is appropriate to a particular audience
- Practice speaking in front of a group

Curriculum:
Each student will develop a brief explanation of a given term or phrase, with a particular audience in mind. Students can choose one term/phrase of their own or from the list below and then decide on their audience (children, academic, lawyers etc). They must decide how they will explain the concept in an instruction session and choose an analogy, activity or illustrative example that helps the audience to understand what is being taught. Students will have to keep their entire presentation to under 2 minutes.

Search engines
Internet
World Wide Web
Database
Electronic journals
Peer reviewed
Online catalog
Subject headings
Plagiarism
Bibliography
Monograph
Search string
E-reserves
Call numbers
Limiting search results
Indexed searching
Boolean searching
Truncation
Wildcards
Interlibrary loan
Primary sources
RSS feeds

Theory into Practice
Values Exercise

Learning Outcomes:
- Identify core professional/personal values
- Examine library policies through the lens of ethical standards and values

Curriculum (within the module):
Poll:
Review the following list of values. Which do you think are most important for us to adhere to? Choose up to 5 values that you believe are foundational to the field.
1. Protection of materials
2. Access to materials
3. Protecting privacy and confidentiality of users
4. Protecting privacy and confidentiality of donors
5. Equitable services
6. Intellectual freedom
7. Protecting children
8. Supporting democracy
9. Teaching/Instruction
10. Representing all points of view
11. Providing materials of high quality
12. Providing resources that are accurate and authoritative
13. Customer service
14. Fiscal responsibility
15. Risk-taking
16. Protecting intellectual property/copyright
17. Advocating for the underserved/underrepresented
18. Diversity
19. Speed
20. Improving society
21. Good of society
22. Convenience
23. Truth
24. Authenticity
25. Creativity

Looking at each of your top 5 values, answer the following questions (checkpoint questions—for reflection):

YES	NO	Would you want your organization to continue to stand for this core value 100 years into the future, no matter what changes occur in the outside world?
YES	NO	Would you want your organization to hold this core value, even if at some point in time it became a competitive disadvantage—even if in some instances the environment penalized the organization for living this core value?

YES	NO	Do you believe that those who do not share this core value—those who breach it consistently—simply do not belong in your organization?
YES	NO	Can you envision any situation in which this core value could/should be breached?
YES	NO	Would you personally continue to hold this core value even if you were not rewarded for holding it?
YES	NO	Would you change jobs before giving up this core value?
YES	NO	Would you hold the same core values for your organization as a user, or would you value something different from a user's perspective?

Theory into Practice
Social epistemology, external memory, and LIS

Learning outcomes:
1. Explore the kinds of graphic records created by a society
2. Consider how graphic records are selected for preservation and made accessible
3. Analyze various approaches to collection, organization, and use of records in light of LIS paradigms

As a class, we have brainstormed a list of some of the possible records that could be created by our LIS 401 "society."

As a group consider how an information professional might interact with these records:
- If you could keep everything the class created, would you? Why or why not?
- Imagine you could only keep half of the records, which would you choose to keep and why? Which would you discard, and why?
- Do you think Shera, White, and Bates would have different opinions from each other (and from your group) about how to interact with these records? How so?

If you have time, consider:
- Take the list of the half set of records you would keep— who might be interested in this information, and why? What could they learn from it?
- What do you think would be the most effective way to organize the information?
- If you could keep everything, but only digitize and share half, which would you choose to digitize, and why?

Theory into Practice

Description and Access

Learning Outcomes
1. Examine the role of description in facilitating access
2. Analyze how keywords and synonyms impact search

Curriculum
Think of as many synonyms as you can for the word marijuana and jot them down.
- These words all "mean" marijuana—how are they alike and different?
- When might people use one word over the other?

Choose a few synonyms and do separate searches for each of them as a keyword in the following places:
- Google
- PubMed
- General Reference Center
- The Library Discovery Layer [main search box on the library home page]

And consider the following questions:
- Do you get the same or different results when you search with different keywords?
- If the results differ, how do they differ?
- Look at the subject headings associated with the results—do you see similarities or differences across the databases?