### **Weaver University Higher Education | Ideates Solutions to an Instructional Problem**

### **A. LXD Foundations I | Context**

### **A1. Instructional Setting and Target Learners**

As a member of the LxD team, I am assigned to improve the instructional problems at Weaver University in WR001.  
   
My focus in the “Empathize” phase of Design Thinking was on two groups:

High-tech and diverse – Group D. This group consists of highly technical and diverse learners. They are active in e-learning, enjoy online options, and bring significant prior knowledge and work experience in their fields. These students are credentialing in the USA and are highly motivated, especially when given opportunities to share knowledge with peers.

Low-tech and diverse – Group H. This group is equally capable and motivated. They are pursuing education in their field of passion in a new country. These learners are dedicated but prefer low-tech approaches. They would rather read a book than engage with a mobile app. They often study in isolation, sometimes excessively, without guidance from more experienced peers.

### **A2. Instructional Problem**

* WR001 data shows less than 82% mastery in several key skills:
  + APA citation (70%)
  + Mini-research paper (74%)
  + Coherency (75%)
  + Style (78%)
* Discussion boards and peer activities are underutilized, even though peer collaboration (87%) is one of the stronger factors.
* **Problem:** Students are not mastering critical academic writing skills, partly due to weak engagement with collaborative tools that support writing and skill development.

### **A3. KSAs and Gap Analysis**

High-tech learners (Group D):

* Knowledge (Current): Strong subject knowledge; understand the importance of academic integrity and proper citations. One student explained, “I know the importance of including the work of other scholars… I am very focused on making sure I follow the rules for proper citations and references.”
* Skills (Current): Highly skilled with technology and comfortable navigating digital tools to support writing. Knows the importance and rules for APA citations and references.
* Abilities (Current): Can mentor or collaborate with peers but currently lack structured opportunities or audiences to share expertise.
* Desired State: High-tech learners need opportunities to apply their skills by mentoring peers and reinforcing best practices in APA and research writing.

Low-tech learners (Group H):

* Knowledge (Current): Developing subject knowledge; some view APA as a one-time requirement rather than an ongoing academic standard. One student reflected, “Am I going to have to do more with APA? I thought it was just for this class.”
* Skills (Current): Dedicated but inefficient; prefer printed or traditional study methods over digital tools, often avoiding platforms like discussion boards.
* Abilities (Current): Desire to follow rules but struggle without explicit instruction and guidance. As one student noted, “It’s even better if I can print everything… I don’t really like using [technology] for school.”
* Desired State: Low-tech learners need structured, guided practice in APA and research writing, supported by clear expectations and accessible tools.

Gap:

* Current state: Students demonstrate uneven understanding and inconsistent application of APA citation and research writing skills. Group D has expertise but no structured outlet to share; Group H lacks clarity and avoids digital supports that could help them improve.
* Desired state: Both groups actively engage in collaborative, structured learning opportunities that improve mastery of APA citation, coherency, and research paper development.

**A4. Problem Statement**

* Learners in WR001 need structured ways to strengthen academic writing skills (APA citation, coherency, research paper development) because current performance data shows less than 82% mastery.
* Students are not consistently engaging in collaborative practices (e.g., drafts, discussion boards, peer review) that support writing growth.
* Low-tech learners, in particular, may avoid online tools, limiting their access to peer and instructor feedback.
* Without intervention, students will continue to underperform in key writing skills essential for success in higher education.

**B. Goal**

Students will demonstrate improved mastery of key academic writing skills (APA citation, coherency, research paper development), which are essential for avoiding plagiarism, maintaining academic integrity, and success in WR001.

**C. Objectives**

* Low-tech and high-tech students need opportunities aligned to their specific skill gap areas as identified in quantitative data.
* Students need collaborative tools and peer engagement processes (e.g., revised discussion boards) that foster deeper writing skill development and engagement.
* Teachers need to act as constructivists, using quantitative data to guide instructional decisions that help students close identified gaps and get engaged with recommended tools and platforms.

**B. Ideate | Design Thinking Methods**

**B1. Experience with the Ideation Process**

I engaged in the ideation process by brainstorming while walking and reflecting on both cognitive and social–emotional aspects of student learning. This process exemplified divergent thinking because I allowed myself to generate a wide range of possible solutions, not limited to traditional instruction.  
   
I used “How Might We?” framing questions and connected ideas to theories such as Connectivism and Merrill’s Problem-Centered Approach. This helped me consider solutions that addressed both mastery of APA and writing skills, as well as the collaborative and motivational needs of students.

**B2. Artifact of Ideation**

Since most of my brainstorming took place during a walk, I captured my thinking in a sticky-notes style table. This table reflects the range of ideas I considered and how I framed them through lower levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Sticky notes brainstorming

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Make a mock research paper(s) that help frame what needs to be done. | Work in pairs to encourage active communication and memories. | Create authentic opportunities for less experienced cohorts to work with more experienced cohorts. |
| Be sure Teacher is guiding and setting up event that help achieve Goals to improve standards | Try to include more “why” in the discussion like intellectual property rights. | Help students understand the value of citations or be sure that learning value is graded and instructed in a way that they feel knowledge is transferred to future work. |

Framing questions using lower Bloom’s Taxonomy, Cognitive Approach to problem

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| How Might We? | Idea #1 - Understand | Idea #2 - Apply | Idea #3 - Evaluate |
| Learn rules for APA? | Develop short outline on APA rules | Create references in Mock paper and validate rules and references with AI | Set up workshop or peer events where you review others references |
| Learn in-text citations? | Develop citation examples for review. | Create mock research paper using proper APA and citations. | Add citations to the APA workshop |
| Avoid Plagiarism? | Talk about content licensing and rules (ie creative commons, trademark, etc) | Develop before and after examples plagiarism versus APA and citation. | Discuss landmark cases of plagiarism and consequences. |
| Improve Collaborative tools? | Teacher circulates information on communities. | Teacher sponsors and mandates attendance at some required events in communities on avoiding plagiarism | The teacher nominates experienced students to lead cohort events and to capture assessment or analytics on attendees |
| Increase coherency in research papers? | A mock research paper(s) template is created with intention of citing sources and following APA guidelines. This is posted to e-learning or app. | Students with a cohort are tasked to work together in live share workshop session to properly craft APA references and citations. | Leaders of cohort engage with live share session of pair cohorts. They monitor, support, and then evaluate mastery. |

**B3. Three Distinct Ideas to Address the Instructional Problem**

The instructional problem is that learners in WR001 are not mastering critical academic writing skills (APA citation, coherency, and research paper development) because they are not consistently engaging in collaborative practices that support growth. From my ideation process, I generated three distinct ideas:

1. **APA Citation Workshops**
   * **Description:** Peer-led workshops where students bring drafts and practice inserting APA in-text citations and references.
   * **Addresses the problem by:** Providing structured opportunities for practice with immediate feedback.
2. **Plagiarism Case Studies**
   1. **Description:** Group activities that examine real-world plagiarism cases, discuss consequences, and practice rewriting with proper citations.
   2. **Addresses the problem by** Building conceptual understanding of academic integrity and the importance of correct citation.
3. **Mock Research Paper Live Share**
   1. **Description:** Structured sessions pairing new learners with cohort experts to review and properly cite paper using a rubric.
   2. **Addresses the problem by:** Increasing peer interaction and engagement in collaborative learning.

**C. Prototype One-Hour E-Learning Module**

**C1. Learning Objective**

Learners will apply correct APA citation techniques to revise a research paper that contains plagiarism errors, demonstrating mastery of academic integrity skills required for WR001.

**C2. Module Description**

The proposed one-hour e-learning module is the **“APA Citation Workshop.”** This session addresses a fundamental mastery challenge—avoiding plagiarism—by integrating two complementary strategies: direct instruction in APA citation and a **Plagiarism Case Study** to capture learner attention and increase relevance.

The workshop follows **Merrill’s First Principles of Instruction**:

* **Activation**
  + Present a research paper containing plagiarism.
  + Discuss the academic and professional consequences of plagiarism.
  + Equip learners with guidelines for correction.
* **Demonstration**
  + Instructor models correcting one example as a class activity.
  + Advanced cohorts perform a live demonstration of revisions.
  + A pre-recorded video is available for replay and reinforcement.
* **Application**
  + Learners revise the remaining plagiarism errors in the research paper.
  + Provide a rubric detailing common citation fault.
  + Small peer groups (1:8–10 ratio) give immediate feedback.
* **Integration**
  + Learners demonstrate mastery by earning a completion certificate.
  + The module concludes by assigning the next scaffolded task: drafting a **Mock Research Paper**.

**C3. Learner Experience**

Learners will progress through the **lower levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy**:

* **“Remember**:” The instructional video and presentation help learners recall citation rules.
* **“Understand”:** Activation and demonstration phases build conceptual knowledge.
* **“Apply”**: Learners immediately practice correcting citations using the rubric.
* **“Analyze”**: Learners evaluate the research paper, identify errors, and justify corrections.

This hybrid design combines **Merrill’s problem-centered approach** with **Fink’s Human Dimension**, using real failure cases to promote deeper, personally meaningful learning.

**C4. Supporting Learning Theories**

* **Fink’s Taxonomy (Human Dimension)**: By analyzing plagiarism in a real case, learners connect emotionally and socially to the problem, recognizing its impact on academic identity.
* **Connectivism**: Advanced cohorts guide sessions, creating peer-to-peer learning opportunities and strengthening student connections to the wider learning community.

**C5. Assessment**

Learning will be assessed through:

* Performance on the rubric (accuracy of corrections).
* Recorded results (e.g., completion time, number of corrections).
* Peer and instructor feedback on accuracy and clarity.

**C6. Meeting Target Learner Needs**

The module is designed for both high-tech and low-tech learners:

* **Low-tech learners**: Receive explicit, guided practice in a structured environment before being asked to produce their own paper.
* **High-tech learners**: Serve as mentors or cohort leaders, reinforcing their expertise while contributing to peer learning.

By the end of the module, all learners will:

* Demonstrate confidence in “applying” APA citation.
* Qualify for the next level of learning, the **Mock Research Paper** assignment.

**D. Acknowledgment of Sources**

No sources used outside of WGU-provided materials.