A Brief Overview of Instructional Design

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What is Instructional Design?

Have you ever had a home built? Do you think the builders just come into the project with a general idea in mind for how they will put your house together? If they did, they would be out of work rather quickly and you would have a really crummy house. All legitimate home builders start off with a basic blueprint. It tells them how many bedrooms to include, how big the garage should be, where to put the bathrooms, etc. The blueprint lets them know what they need to do, and when and how they need to do it. This is also the basic purpose of Instructional Design. It is a blueprint that helps you create effective training in the most efficient manner and it guides you through every phase of the training creation process.

There are hundreds of instructional design models out there and most are based on the ADDIE paradigm. For those of you unfamiliar with the term, ADDIE stands for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation. It was developed in the 40s by the military as a guideline for creating training to prepare for World War II. The principles apply to any kind of training from any industry. Eventually, designers in the corporate world began to realize its effectiveness and began adopting it to create their own training. This is when the hundreds of Instructional Design models began to take shape.

Why Should You Use Instructional Design?

The topic of Instructional Design always leads to the following question: why should I worry about it?

Instructional Design assists you in asking the correct questions, which enables you to make the right decisions when creating your content. Not only does it tell you how to arrange content but it also explains what the intent of the training is. Some people view Instructional Design as a science and some people view it as an art form. Regardless of how you look at it, Instructional Design is a necessity for creating effective training.

Think back to a time when you attended a course that you were excited to take and then ended up leaving disappointed. Why were you left with that feeling of disappointment? Was the class not relevant to you? Did the facilitator tend to stray off topic? Were there no manuals or workbooks to follow along with? Whatever made your

classroom experience unpleasant most likely had to do with poor Instructional Design. The facilitator did not have a good blueprint to follow or maybe didn't have a blueprint at all. Just imagine how many corporate dollars are wasted on classes like this every day! So if someone asks "why use Instructional Design" tell them because it saves our company money.

Who is Involved in the Instructional Design Process?

There are several people who should be involved in an effective Instructional Design process. Here is a list of the usual suspects:

- Designer – an individual who arranges and develops the training content. Sometimes the designer is also the trainer and other times the roles are separate. This person's title will likely by Instructional Designer or, in the case of elearning, Elearning Developer.
- Subject Matter Expert (SME) – an individual who is an expert on the subject matter that needs to be taught. These people are usually veterans of the business with many years of experience. The designer will team with the SME to solidify content and come up with course outlines. Remember, even though SMEs are experts in the subject matter, they are not experts in training. They usually need guidance in creating full blown courses.
- Facilitator – an individual who delivers the training to a classroom. In certain cases, the facilitator is also the SME. Other times, the facilitator is simply a mouthpiece who follows the blueprint provided by the SMEs and designers. Remember, facilitators do not need to be experts on the content being taught.

What are the Advantages of Instructional Design?

The main advantage of Instructional Design should be obvious at this point: it helps guide the learner in the most effective manner. As we mentioned earlier, solid Instructional Design is also very cost effective. It is expensive to conduct full blown training programs. The cost of corporate training can reach into the billions for any given year. Solid Instructional Design can ensure that corporate dollars are not squandered on ineffective training. Additionally, if the training is truly effective it will result in greater

employee productivity which will also increase profits.

In addition to helping the employees who take courses, effective Instructional Design can also help developers. With a solid Instructional Design process in place, developers can set up reusable learning objects (i.e. introduction pages, objectives templates, style guides, document templates, etc.) that will help streamline the creation process.

Another advantage of Instructional Design is consistency among training. With the addition of reusable learning objects, all training programs become structurally consistent and seamless. This means that no matter how many developers are working on courses, it should be completely invisible to the end user. This consistency also breeds trust. Learners will begin to trust your training programs as soon as they realize who they are coming from. It's akin to building your brand as a corporation. Instructional Design lets you build a brand for your developers.

What are some of the More Popular Instructional Design Models?

Here is a list of several models that are used in corporate American today.

- **ARCS Model** by John Keller – Includes four steps for promoting learning: Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction (ARCS). Immediately grab the learner's attention with a story, question, activity (**Attention**). Explain to the learner how the course content relates to their current situation (**Relevance**). Develop the learner's confidence in the material through practices and simulations (**Confidence**). Make the learner feel that their newly learned skills will be useful to them in the real world (**Satisfaction**).

- **Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction** by Robert Gagne – This nine step model for learning includes: 1.Gain attention 2. Inform learner of objectives 3. Stimulate recall of prior learning 4. Present stimulus material 5. Provide learner guidance 6. Elicit performance 7. Provide feedback 8. Assess performance 9. Enhance retention transfer

- **Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory** by David Kolb – A four stage learning cycle: Concrete experience (or "DO"), Reflective observation (or

"OBSERVE"), Abstract conceptualization (or "THINK") and Active experimentation (or "PLAN")

- **Kemp Design Model** by Jerold Kemp - defines different elements of instructional design, and emphasizes continuous implementation and evaluation through the instructional design process: 1. Examine learner characteristics that should receive attention during planning. 2. Identify subject content, and analyze task components related to stated goals and purposes. 3. State instructional objectives for the learner. 4. Sequence content within each instructional unit for logical learning. 5. Design instructional strategies so that each learner can master the objectives. 6. Plan the instructional message and delivery. 7. Develop evaluation instruments to assess objectives. 8. Select resources to support instruction and learning activities.

Each of these models provides a solid foundation for any training curriculum.

Additional Books

I hope you enjoyed this report. Please feel free to share it with anyone involved in the training field. If you would like more information on instructional design and instructional design for elearning, please take a look at my books that are available in the Kindle Bookstore:

[How to Create an E-learning Course](#)
[45 Elearning Tips and Tricks](#)
[26 Things I Wish Someone Would Have Told Me About Elearning](#)

To your success,
John Araiza