Chapter 2
The Distance Education Phenomena:
From Initial Interactive Activities to a Full Onslaught of Multimedia Instructional Support

Caroline M. Crawford
University of Houston – Clear Lake, USA

ABSTRACT

The Instructional Design field has been significantly impacted by the distance education phenomena. With the strengthening of the distance education presence, more focus has been framed around concerns related to interactive activities that built upon the importance of communications and building relationships between the course information, the learners, the instructional facilitator, and the larger community wherein the information may be more fully framed. The vast and ever-expanding distance education phenomena is moving beyond the traditional "comfort zone" of procedural Instructional Design expectations, towards a more holistic and innovative thoughtful multimedia-supported design and development process wherein the Instructional Designers must be able to engage more fully in the socio-engagement of the learner within a multimedia-supported global community of learners. This chapter describes the developments of distance education from the perspective of instructional designers.

INTRODUCTION

As a field, Instructional Design has been deeply impacted by the Digital Age shifts in instructional environments. What was once a primarily face-to-face instructional endeavor with outlier instructional services that were referred to as correspondence courses, which were paper-based instructional products or video-based products made available through reel-to-reel film or video cassette products that implemented the postal service for purposes of instructional delivery. Until the mid-1990s, there was no other way through which to obtain instruction at a distance. However, with the dawning of the Digital

Age, the Internet and World Wide Web access slowly became a reality, as the governmental entities released first generation command-driven Internet access to the academic community; within merely a few years' time, more attractive and user friendly "what you see is what you get" (WYSIWYG) Internet interfaces became more common due to the introduction of a World Wide Web browser that would allow access to simplistic sharing of knowledge through World Wide Web pages. Although this was a very basic interface, it was an opportunity to shift from the academic knowledge silos that previously existed, towards the availability of useful knowledge to anyone, anywhere and anytime. This was a significant breakthrough within the field of Instructional Design as well as within the teaching and learning process, as the concept of freedom of information and sharing of knowledge and ideas at the speed of creativity became a reality.

Within merely a few years, academics were delving into the potential usage of the World Wide Web as an instructional support, closely followed by course learning management systems that could house course knowledge within a password-protected environment. Herein is where this story begins, as the ability to design, develop and implement an instructional environment within a totally online environment introduced new possibilities within the field of Instructional Design. Previously, paper-based information and difficult-to-obtain film and video cassette representations of information were primary ways through which to represent information within instructional environments, with the concept of a transparency projector being the most recent revolution within the instructional environment. With the introduction of the World Wide Web and course learning management systems (LMSs), Instructional Designers had to rethink everything that they'd previously known about designing instruction. This new instructional environment was unlike anything previously known nor experienced, so Instructional Design as a field would have to rethink aspects related to the instructional design process. The basic instructional design process, known as the generic ADDIE model of analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation (Clark, 1995; Grafinger, 1988; Gustafson & Branch, 2002; Molenda, 2003; Molenda, Pershing & Reigeluth, 1996; Rossett, 1987), would not change significantly but developing an understanding as regards self-regulation, self-efficacy, motivation, cognitive load, supporting conceptual frameworks of understanding (Bandura,1973, 1977, 1986, 1992, 1994, 1995; Cerpa, Chandler & Sweller, 1996; Chandler & Sweller, 1991, 1992, 1996; Cooper & Sweller, 1987; Jeung, Chandler & Sweller, 1997; Keller, 1979, 1983, 1987a, 1987b, 1988, 1999a, 1999b ; Sweller, 1988, 1991, 1994; Sweller, Chandler, Tierner & Cooper, 1990; Sweller & Levine, 1982; Sweller, Van Merrienboer & Paas, 1998; Tindall-Ford, Chandler & Sweller, 1997; Vygotsky, 1933/1966, 1934, 1934/1987, 1935, 1962, 1978, 1981) and rethinking different forms of social discourse (Wittgenstein, 1960) would be integrally important to more fully understand within this new digital learning environment.

A decade after this first groundswell experience, Instructional Design would again experience an opportunity to rethink everything known about the ways through which to design instruction for learners, as mobile technology embraced the concept of anywhere and anytime learning, as well as the push towards massive open online courses (MOOCs) that embraced the importance associated with freedom of knowledge and freedom to access learning opportunities for anyone, anywhere and at any time, by subject matter experts who were previously housed within the safety of academic silos and the rare display of instructional opportunities were only available to those who passed through innumerable gateways of procedural access. With the introduction of the global populace within the bounds of previously sacred academic fonts of knowledge, the knowledge veil is more truly lifted so as to offer knowledge and instruction to all. Yet behind all of these amazing occurrences and experiences, the field of Instructional Design is experiencing continual shifts in and expansions of understanding as regards instructional design

Related Content

Empirical Analysis of Socio-economic Factors Effecting Nutritional Status of Children (1-5) of Age
Naima Saeed, Shumaila Kamal Khan, Hafiz Muhammad Raheedand Muhammad Zahid Hussain (2018). *International Journal of Civic Engagement and Social Change (pp. 1-18).*
www.irma-international.org/article/empirical-analysis-of-socio-economic-factors-effecting-nutritional-status-of-children-1-5-of-age/224019

The Use of Cultural Factors in Storytelling in Digital Advertising: The Case of Turkey
Gülay Öztürk (2019). *Handbook of Research on Examining Cultural Policies Through Digital Communication (pp. 55-72).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-use-of-cultural-factors-in-storytelling-in-digital-advertising/216233

Mottos and Ethical Statements of Internet-Based Organizations: Implications for Corporate Social Responsibility
Jo Ann Oravec (2014). *International Journal of Civic Engagement and Social Change (pp. 37-53).*
www.irma-international.org/article/mottos-and-ethical-statements-of-internet-based-organizations/120713

Coronavirus and DNA ADN: The R1b Haplogroup
Ángel Gómez Moreno (2022). *Handbook of Research on Historical Pandemic Analysis and the Social Implications of COVID-19 (pp. 62-79).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/coronavirus-and-dna-adn/287710

Personality Traits and Fans' Motives for Attention to Fictional Narratives
Laramie D. Taylorand Teresa Gil-Lopez (2020). *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Media Fandom (pp. 20-36).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/personality-traits-and-fans-motives-for-attention-to-fictional-narratives/253713