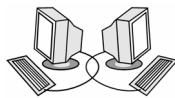


Chapter VI

Systematic Instructional Design

with

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Making Connections

In Part II, we explored adult learning principles, learner differences, and engaging learners to promote self-directed learning. Now, in Part III, we will examine systematic instructional design, including the student- or learner-centered approaches that promote lifelong learning. Although many trainers and instructors serve as both the content specialist and instructional designer, some institutions use a team approach with various people providing expertise. This chapter provides an overview of learner-centered instruction and instructional design models to help you or a team of developers conceptualize instructional planning. What are the components of instructional design? What is meant by teacher-centered versus learner-centered paradigms of instruction? How can we design instruction that will promote active learning and the use of critical and creative thinking skills?

Introduction

One of the most important considerations in the delivery of a program at a distance is the attention given to instructional design. “Instructional designs serve as mediators between the realms of learning theory and instructional practice, providing a means of developing interventions through which changes in learned capabilities can occur” (Wagner, 1994, pp. 20–21). Many instructional design models exist in the literature, but most models have common concepts. The Dick and Carey (1990) model is often used to design instruction with the process including developing broad instructional goals based on the needs of the audience, determining instructional objectives, developing means to determine if the objectives have been met, selecting strategies to implement the objectives, selecting media and methods for instruction, and providing formative and summative evaluation in an ongoing process.

Furthermore, instructional designers must also integrate learner-centered and self-directed approaches for distance learning. Learner-centered instruction considers a myriad of characteristics, processes, interactions, and delivery methods that result in effective teaching and learning. For example, asynchronous delivery strategies allow learners to complete work in their own time and location rather than be in the classroom at a specified time.

Related to learner-centered instructional design is the notion of self-directed learning. “As a person matures, his or her self-concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward one of a self-directing human being” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 272). Adults prefer self-directed or self-designed activities more than relying on one medium for learning, and they also prefer control of the learning pace (Zemke & Zemke, 1984). Self-directed learning does not mean isolation. It may involve several resources, professionals, lectures, seminars, and face-to-face interactions. According to Grow (1991), adult learners progress from dependency to self-direction. “Some features of self-direction are distinctly situational: few learners are equally motivated toward all subjects. Some features appear to be deep, familial, perhaps even genetic traits of individual personalities—such as persistence” (p. 128).

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