Instructional Design Trends Investigation

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Instructional design is an ever-changing and evolving profession, especially with the rapid advancements in technology. There is integration of technologies in the traditional classroom from preschool through doctorate level education. The shift to online learning extends from elementary education through post-secondary education arena into graduate school as well as into business training and development. The online learning trend and recent technological advancements have prompted instructional designers to find innovative way to modify traditional designs to ensure that they are preparing students for what is to come in the future. Instructional designers have to look past the present and into the future and predict what may be up and coming.

**Expected Trends in Next 10 Years**

There are so many technologies that have emerged over the last 10 to 15 years already integrated into the educational systems and instructional designs. It can be overwhelming to think of what the future may hold over the next 10 years in instructional design concerning trends in modalities. Some trends expected in the future based on today’s technologies, popularity, growth of the technologies, and future predictions are learning through social networking, learning through virtual world software, mobile devices, and used of tablets.

## Social Learning

With people joining Facebook and Twitter in high volume the chances of learning through social media increases every day, and this trend will continue to be stronger in the coming years. Teachers should embrace networking and learn how to use it to improve education. Social networking is already integrated inmobile devices and computers; this will serve to improve online collaboration, sharing, anddiscussion withpeople all over the world.

## Virtual Worlds

## 3D Virtual World software is replacing 2D PowerPoint-based presentations. Virtual Worlds give the users the ability to carry out activities that could be impossible in real life, mainly because of cost, schedule, and location; and it can be adapted to meet the different learners needs. 3D virtual worlds can serve also as multi-learner simulations and instead of one person participating, multiple people can participate and work together while learning the facts. The health care industry has implemented these types of programs to train medical professionals in surgical procedures. Forensics and criminal science is using these technologies to learn more about crime scene reconstruction.

## Mobile

New designs for Smartphones and improved communications show that there is a new era for mobile learning. Users have to contend with the boundaries of a smaller screen and less memory capacity but mobile learning can reach people of all ages and occupations, especially people in developing countries and rural communities that may not have access to computers or Internet but have cellular services. This type of advancement, which as seen at University of Phoenix, is in the beginning stages could reach many people who would otherwise not be able to access these learning opportunities.

## Tablets

The iPad, Kindle Fire, Samsung and other similar tablet devices seem to be the perfect for information at our fingertips and take classroom education into the new digital era. They offer Wi-Fi connectivity and some offer cell phone plan 3G and 4G plans to have Internet access anywhere they go. These devices serve as electronic readers for E-Books and magazines; as well as placeholders for educational and social apps. They are also more convenient than a laptop, are slimmer, lighter, have instant start-up and have more computing power than a mobile device.

**Academic and Professional Learning in 10 Years**

Because of the rapid changes in technology over the last two decades technology will drastically affect academic and professional learning well in the next 10 years. The millennial generation also known as generation Y is anyone who was born after 1980. The millennial generation has grown up around technology and uses technology in almost every portion on their lives (Anderson, 2011). Millennials also quickly adapt to technology and embrace technology (Anderson, 2011). Academic and professional learning will need to meet the needs of this generation and make sure that technology aligns with education and with professional learning.

The majority of academics and professional learning will move toward online learning and incorporate webcams and video chat as means of communication for the instructor and students in the online classroom. There will also be instant messaging incorporated into the classroom so that students can communicate with each other and to the instructor and get their questions answered right away just as if they were in a traditional classroom setting. Interactive media technology and real life simulations will also be incorporated into the online courses so that students can still get the hands on experience that they need without having to attend a traditional classroom environment.

We live in a society where people live very busy lives, have families, and have to work more than 40 hours a week to pay their bills or to meet the requirement of their jobs. Society will continue in this direction in the next 10 years. Academic and professional learning will need to keep up with the ever-changing technology and ensure educational the needs of society are met continue to encourage lifelong learning.

**What and Who Influences Course Content**

Many factors influence the content of courses. According to Weiss, Pasley, Smith, Banilower, and Heck (2003), “Factors may include curriculum standards/frameworks; accountability systems; teachers’ familiarity with specific content and pedagogy; their perceptions of the needs of the students; and views of the principal, parents, and other key stakeholders.” The United States Department of Education, state board of education, local board of education, corporate managers, instructional designers, and individuals in a target audience influence curriculum standards/framework. The primary influence for course content is the target audience, and sponsors of the course.

Instructional designers’ distribute surveys, tests, and interview members of a target audience. The aggregated data designers collect is used to determine a formative and summative evaluation. Formative and summative evaluations identify learning outcomes and the need to make changes to content for future learners. Location for courses plays a major role in influencing course content because of the way students will view the content. However, before content is written, consideration for teaching methods is made. Technology is the most effective tool to introduce course content. Content is written for members of a target audience to see where members are in the learning progress, and where they must be after taking the course.

**Who is Involved in Development and Design**

Demographic trends indicated that older adults live longer and maintain active lifestyles. The majority are educated and many enjoy the stimulation that ongoing learning opportunities present (Anstey, Plessis, & Schlumpp, 2011). The world of learning in adult setting is changing fast. It is not just about training and formal education. Knowles has acknowledged that the principles he outlined did not apply solely to adult education (Conlan, Grabowski, & Smith, 2003). They maintain that the development of the theory simply illustrates that the designer should involve learners in as many aspects of their education as possible and in the creation of a climate in which they can most fruitfully learn. As stated in class notes, new research needs to be conducted, and this research should be action research. Usually classroom teachers plan and conduct their own research. It has been mentioned that instructional designers should design their own action research by organizing a team comprised of teachers as researchers.

**How These Changes Affect Instructional Design**

These changes toward instructional design will affect it in a positive way. Being able to help distribute tests, surveys, and helping students have a better understanding of the course material provided is a helpful way to see firsthand how the instructional design is working. Instructional designers are there to find better ways to make sure the learner understands what is being taught. In addition, it provides the educators will opportunities to improve in areas of the information provided. The educators also can have a better understanding of each of the student's learning skills and knowledge in his or her class. They can obtain that information and find ways to incorporate in a different way to ensure their student's success in his or her class. The positive effect that instructional design has, it can better the process of receiving a good education for the learner, knowledge of the material being taught and even help students better interact among one another. Interaction is a very important aspect concerning students’ educational process. This gives them the opportunity to start discussions with one another and even the educator. It provides a better understanding of the material and why other learners feel a certain way about a topic at hand. They could discuss certain topics and share their viewpoints about it. This shows the educator that instructional designers have a big impact of the course material created. It gives them a sense for wanting to make sure their students’ educational experience is successful. Therefore, instructional design through changes affects the Learners and educators positively.

**Conclusion**

The upcoming trends to instructional design and the impending changes are yet to be seen. Based on what we know, the changes are positive, will increase the number of people who can access educational opportunities and will expand the options that instructional designers have when creating their plans. With the constant evolution of technology comes the constant evolution of education, learning, and instructional design. With those advancements comes more opportunities for learning worldwide, and something to indeed look forward to.

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