

Case Study 1

An organization is investigating the option to add a full-time instructional design department to improve training practices and materials. There are two distinct points of view within the organization. One group thinks this is a waste of time because nothing new has really happened in training approaches in years, and all of the rush to online and blended learning is just hype and doesn't really add anything new to the process. The other group thinks that instructional design is the wave of the future and is practiced in some form by all of the top companies. They are anxious to begin an online asynchronous program for employees to use for many different types of instruction. As an independent third party brought in to clarify the options, what would you say to this organization concerning the state of the practice of instructional systems design? (Hodell, 2021)

I. Vennie's Response to Case Study #1

Some perceive the term "instructional design" as just buzzwords thrown around without having a legitimate foundation. However, instructional design is not a new theory, but a form of training that "has been around in one form or another since the first learning events took place in our distant past" (Hodell, 2021). Instructional design has been and continues to be an ongoing task. Hodell perceives instructional design as a "never-ending cycle of knowledge flow" that involves studying ways in "how to make learning exceptionally efficient and powerful." The goal of an instructional design department is to explore and improve learning and training techniques to meet the training needs of a company. Enhancing techniques regularly to improve a learning environment provides employees with ongoing skills while establishing proficiency in contributing to the successful flow of a business.

Businesses must understand that ongoing training for employees is necessary. Policies, applications, and processes change, and it is imperative employees are aware of these changes and can comprehend them. According to Indeed.com, exposing employees to "relevant and consistent training can help companies improve performance and increase results in the workplace" (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). With an instructional design department, a systematic approach can be applied when creating learning content (Cheung, 2016) that would involve communicating with stakeholders while applying the

ADDIE method. This would involve analyzing training needs and designing and developing courses to be implemented and delivered while evaluating the success of these courses (Hodell, 2021). Addressing the belief that “nothing new has really happened in training approaches in years” would require an understanding of what is involved in instructional design to retract these opinions.

Establishing an instructional design department means training caters to the business as opposed to sending employees out to generic training courses where one size fits all. We are familiar with employees attending all-day classroom sessions. Employees are out of the office possibly days at a time, only to sometimes return feeling overwhelmed because of the amount of information presented; while only some of the information may have addressed their needs specifically. An effective instructional design department would recognize the exact training needs and methods necessary for employees to excel. A multitude of training methods are available to instructional designers. Have you ever googled instructions on a particular topic and found yourself reviewing YouTube videos with step-by-step instructions only to conveniently return to the same content later to review? All of us have benefited from some form of instructional design. Skyepack.com touches on several ideas that can be used in an instructional design environment. As you review the list think about the variety of techniques you've encountered either in your personal life or work environment.

1. Personalized Learning – personalized experiences based on a student's performance and interest
2. Videos
3. Mobile Learning – yes, using your cell phone to review learning content
4. Virtual Reality
5. Microlearning – training material in bite-sized learning increments
6. Interactive Learning – fun activities for participants like drag and drop activities, puzzles, word finds, and more
7. Social Learning – interacting and conversing with others regarding a training topic
8. Gamification

9. Measurement and Analysis – analyzing learning methods that work, improving upon those that do not “with insights needed to make positive change”

(Skyepack, 2020).

Addressing the notion that some feel instructional design is ineffective, it is important to understand why some may feel this way. Steve Glaveski agrees that training can be ineffective because the “purpose, timing and content is not always in tune” with employees and/or the business. (Glaveski, 2019). It is also possible that the design could be wrong and just doesn’t work with the learner (Hode, 2021). These variables must be explored and corrected for instructional design courses to be successful. Regardless of the learning or training method employed, Glaveski states it is imperative that all content created focuses on and measures business outcomes. Regarding the participant, instructional design is about providing flexibility and “focusing [on] the student as the main actor responsible for the process and pace of learning” (González-Mosqueda, Martínez-Tapia, González-Ceballos, & Bernal-Valázquez, 2015). Having an in-house staffed instructional design department helps to facilitate the required training needs necessary to drive a company. With instructional design, as discussed, many possibilities can be employed to create a successful training environment, ensuring “users are not overwhelmed by the training experience” (Gangwal, 2016). By being in tune with the company and its employees, an instructional design department can provide training content that develops employees in a way that continuously impacts the company productively and positively.

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