Curriculum and Instructional Design: Critical Learning Path and Constructive Alignment

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Introduction

Beginning with the material most closely connected to learners and delivery of instruction, it is important to understand some basic ideas related to learning objects.   Several questions present the concepts needed to begin the process of specifying what is desired. To begin you should ask:

- What do you want to accomplish?
- How will this be accomplished?
- Why are you undertaking this CID?
- How would you determine what mastery looks like?
- How will you know it has been successful?

Critical Learning Path with Constructive Alignment for Learning

CLP at the lowest level of instructional design is an organization of the way content is to be taught connected to pedagogy, instructional methods, situational variables, and learning outcomes tied to assessments. This understanding envisions a detailed specified way for a learning object to be presented in a logical and effective order. Decisions about all of these contribute to and depend upon your own teaching style. The CLP informs the design in that is helps you identify key issues of learner needs, timing, ways of reinforcement of instructional objectives, and checks for learner mastery.

CAL is the idea that the content, Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), methods of instruction and delivery, as well as assessments must all connect and reinforce one another. The CAL provides a clear plan and a coherent path for learning aligned with the CLP. Additionally, the concepts being taught are reinforced for learners. Finally, it provides a picture of prior and future knowledge.

Goals and Objectives

Goal is the aim of the instruction often specified in terms of content and skills to be mastered or an essential question to be answered. The Objectives are how the goal will be attained and outline the subset of skills and content needed in order to attain the goal.

Often designers develop leading questions to shed light on what learners will attain to progress towards their mastery of the goal.

Rationale and Outcome

The Rationale is the purpose of why the goals and objectives are sought. It also considers the larger reasoning behind the need for the goal.

Often, the rationale provides a clear argument and justification for the scope, timing, and placement of the goals in relation to larger initiatives and learning. Also, it may provide overarching skills to be attained beyond the more specific content to be covered.

The Outcome(s) are those things that the learner is meant to attain or produce as a result of the learning experience. The first sets of items are planned actions and processes with a prospective of intention while outcomes are a delineation of desired products or end state to be arrived at by the designated groups of learners

as a result of the outlined activities.

Assessment and Evaluation

Finally, the assessments are those tools used to gain knowledge about the state of the learner and his or her progress towards the specified goals. The reason these are to be specified together is that it allows for a clear picture of success which can be evaluated. Success is assets by matching specified goals and objectives with demonstrated outcomes.

In order to gain an image of what is happening these various aspects of the learning process need to be specified and used to provide data on the process in order to judge effectiveness. However, unlike success, matching outcome to goal and objective may be too simple. Some goals may be too large to be attained in a single task. Some learners may not be able to meet all objectives fully.

Assessments and evaluations provide data to gain a clearer picture of effective instruction. First, examine the goals and objectives in light of the rationale. Then compare the data from assessments with the outcomes.

This is why having these aspects specified is essential to good curriculum making. The more you are able to know about these aspects the more effective the process will be.

Moreover, the process is iterative and refined over time. Incremental improvements and adjustments hone the instructional design. This allows the curriculum to be more effective and closely aligned with the goals of the educational process sought for learners.

CLP and CAL

All of these concepts are fairly simple but necessary to identify and agree upon during CID. Finally, designers can create and structure and connection in the learning materials.

At the level of design most removed from the interface with learners the terminology used might not always state curriculum as its outcome but at its heart is still the idea of a plan for learners that is specified with clear reasoning and methods to measure success.

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