

TEACHING IN A WEB-BASED DISTANCE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Mudra Olena,
Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences
Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University
Chernivtsi, Ukraine
o.mudra@chnu.edu.ua

Introductions. Good online course design begins with a clear understanding of specific learning outcomes and ways of engaging students, while creating activities allow students to take some control of their learning. It also requires a little extra effort upfront to minimize two of the most common frustrations of online learning: 1) confusing course organization (how course elements are structured within the course) and 2) unclear navigation (what links or buttons are used to access these elements). The online learning environment offers great potential for individualized learning. One way to achieve is through adaptive hypermedia – using learner patterns to adapt course presentation, navigation, and content to suit individual students' needs and preferences.

Aim. Building online course takes a tremendous amount of time and effort. We've created a syllabus, selected a textbook, wrote learning objectives, recorded lectures, developed learning objects, designed course activities, and carefully planned out our assignments. But without proper planning and design, a large portion of our course may have to be redeveloped for the next offering. If planned and designed properly, however, an online course can be offered relatively intact from semester to semester. As with traditional courses, online courses will need a change here and a tweak there, but major reconstruction can be largely avoided. The article includes possible answers to potential problems.

Materials and methods. While teaching online, we are no longer dealing with students who are surrounded by other students who are thinking about the same thing at the same time in a protected, one-breaking hour environment dedicated to a subject. Now students are surrounded by all these interruptions that don't have anything to do with. We all have lots of things competing for our

attention. If we provide students with short segments that can be reinforced quickly, then the students know they can go online, grasp something from a 10- or 15-minute segment and move on so that they can fit learning into their everyday lives. Some trainers recommend a model that features a passive-learning segment (perhaps a brief narrated PowerPoint presentation) followed by a related active-learning exercise that reinforces the concept, such as a self-test, review questions, or short quiz [5]. By offering a small standalone chunk of learning in this manner, students become accustomed to the pattern of passive and active learning and are likely to log in more frequently because they don't need to commit a substantial amount of time in a single session. Students can process this concept while they are going about other activities of their day and later come back for another learning concept.

Results and discussion. Researchers have begun looking into ways to use adaptive hypermedia to individualize courses. They developed a course model, known as OctoPlus, which consists of the following eight instructional events, each representing a different instructional method and each linked to a separate Web page:

- Connect – engages students' prior knowledge of the content and helps the instructor gauge how much students know about the content. This can include a video or simulation.
- Reflect – has students externalize their thoughts on their experiences through a discussion board, e-mail, or response to a quiz like question.
- Share – enables students to share their experiences with the whole class, perhaps through a multiple-choice or short-answer question.
- Learn – presents the content.
- Practice – provides learners with exercises that reinforce the activities in the “learn” section.
- Personalize – asks students to reflect on what they have learned.
- Experiment – has students take the information they have learned and manipulate it to better understand how the concept works.

- Apply – has students apply the learning to new situations.

All we know about building effective instruction involves multiple tasks, but planning is one of the most critical. For online courses, planning is especially important because even under the best of circumstances, online learners often struggle with understanding what's expected of them; at a distance, they can get unbelievably frustrated (or worse) and stop trying. That's one of the best reasons for using a systematic approach to planning your instruction. Objectives are the cornerstone for planning effective instruction, and good assessments determine if the objectives have been met. You might consider these the "bookends" of planning effective instruction.

Instructional designers (people who typically have specialized training in using cognitive and other principles to design effective instruction) call the practice of systematically planning instruction "instructional design" [3, p.52]. There are numerous philosophies of instructional design but all have certain things in common, including following a list of tasks that ensure better end results:

1. Identify learning objectives
2. Design assessments
3. Design content and activities
4. Select media and delivery options
5. Develop the course materials
6. Implement the course
7. Evaluate and revise

If you have worked with instructional designers or read articles or books on instructional design, you may be familiar with the ADDIE model, one of the most common models for the systematic design of instruction. Following a systematic process such as ADDIE can help prevent some of the typical problems that happen when instruction isn't well planned, including instruction that doesn't seem to have a clear goal; deficient course content, activities, and assessments; and poor evaluations for the course and instructor [4].

Designing assessments should optimally occur right after identifying learning objectives. That's because assessments should measure if the objectives were met. If the learning objectives are well written, appropriate methods of assessment are generally quite clear. A well-written objective and matching assessment provide pretty clear cues about what content and activities are needed [2]. It makes the instruction not only more effective, but also easier to design. Better instruction and less work.

To make online course better to work with, we could divide each into the following sections:

- Course content and related materials – includes the syllabus, calendar pop ups, reading schedule, meeting schedule, chat group assignments, and case studies.
- Communication tools – includes links to e-mail, discussion boards, and chat rooms.
- Study tools – includes study sheets that help students prepare for exams and other tools that had been designed to help students study.
- Assignments – list all the assignments with links to assignment requirements, instructions, and any forms needed to do the assignment.
- Handouts and forms –include all handouts and forms related to the course.
- Class notes – provide course content in several formats, including lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, and outlines.
- Grades
- Textbook website
- Quizzes and exams

Many course management systems have a selective-release feature, which enables the instructor to control access to parts of a course until a student has reached a certain level of competency. Achievement on online course can be determined by comparing the pre- and post-assessments or by the students submitting a checklist of tasks completed.

Course design is crucial to student success. It should reflect the intended learning outcomes and provide enough guidance for students to easily navigate the course without being overly rigid [1].

To help students we could create activities that allow them to take some control of their learning. This could include having student's activities:

- add content to the course website,
- take turns creating course lectures,
- submit Web links related to the course material and explain their relevance,
- add questions to a test bank,
- take pre- and post-module assessments to determine whether they have mastered the learning in that module,
- moderate online discussions,
- fill in the blank slides to an incomplete PowerPoint presentation or lecture outline in preparation for a lecture,
- monitor several blogs and use material from those blogs to generate discussion, and
- create their own blogs on a topic related to the course. Simply feeding them the information does not really facilitate their abilities to learn those skills. That's not teaching. That's not empowering our students.

When students are given the opportunity to participate in the instruction, they gain confidence with themselves.

In addition, students can add different perspectives to the course. A lot of times the students see the content from a perspective that an instructor would not, and may offer new insights into the content that the instructor did not consider. We can learn a great deal from many of our students. It's important that we show value in their perspectives and by allowing them the opportunity to contribute to that body of knowledge; it demonstrates to students that we are interested in what they are thinking about. Despite the fact that many students, particularly millennial, are used to interacting via technology, they are generally not very well prepared for online education that puts the learner in control of much of their learning. It's a bad

assumption to consider that because students are millennial learners that they have an understanding of how to manipulate technology to learn. Social technologies are different than educational technologies. Sure, they can multitask, but when it comes to understanding some of the ways in which the expectations of learning and contributing we still have to address those basic skills – research ethics, how to present information, and how to use technology appropriately.

We need to make certain that students understand the different tools in the online environment and what is expected of them in online discussions and completing assignments.

Conclusions. To conclude everything it is better to say that a good course design can help students embrace the new way of learning. Most institutions have online resources, such as a technology help desk, different learning platforms and an online library, to help students. And it is only up to the course designer to help make these resources easy to access and work with.

Resources:

1. Designing An Online Course. – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <https://teaching.uwo.ca/curriculum/coursedesign/online-course-design.html>
2. Eoghan Quigley. ADDIE: 5 Steps To Effective Training. – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <https://www.learnupon.com/blog/addie-5-steps/>
3. Vai Marjorie. Essentials of Online Course Design / Vai M., K.Sosulski// A Standards-Based Guide. – Routledge, 2016. – 252 p.
4. Online Course Design. – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <https://teaching.uwo.ca/curriculum/coursedesign/online-course-design.html>
5. 5 Tips for Engaging Online Course Design. – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <https://kpcrossacademy.org/engaging-online-course-design/>