

Massive Open Online Course Review: Instructional Design Foundations and Applications

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According to London and Skinner (1999), continuous education or life-long learning refers to the ongoing process of self-directed learning where individuals seek to challenge themselves to grow their knowledge base for personal or professional goals. Today, where things are constantly shifting, ongoing education has become an increasingly critical component to further one's professional growth. Continuous learning aids one to develop their skills and progress inside the workforce and keep a competitive edge in the field. For many lifelong learners, the use of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) aids in facilitating one's educational development goal.

Massive Open Online Courses and Prior Experiences

MOOCs have emerged as one of the most effective ways for individuals to continue their education. MOOC was designed to offer a vast, worldwide audience free or low-cost instructional materials without regard to class size and is accessible to those with an internet connection. MOOCs use the internet to deliver content relevant to users seeking additional educational opportunities and these courses usually include lectures, reading materials, peer-to-peer feedback, discussion boards, and interactive quizzes. Prior to understanding MOOCs, I was not familiar with this platform of learning as my educational background was primarily geared towards the traditional brick-and-mortar educational system minus the typical Army Learning Management System (ALMS) and the Joint Knowledge Online (JKO) platforms. The ALMS and JKO platforms provide mandatory training for courses such as Operational Security, Equal Opportunity, and Cyber Awareness. At first, I did not consider the ALMS and JKO as MOOC platforms, as they are typically not geared towards personnel not affiliated with the Department of Defense. However, I can understand how these platforms may be considered MOOCs, as

military personnel can access the site from anywhere in the world to complete these required courses, gain a certificate, and enhance their professional development. After browsing multiple platforms, such as Coursera, EdX, and Khan Academy, I decided to pursue a course on which I have a small quantity of knowledge based on my background as a facilitator and ultimately decided to pursue Coursera's Instructional Design Foundations and Applications course offered by the University of Illinois.

Introduction

As I am currently enrolled in an instructional design program, I wanted to see how this MOOC differs in both content and delivery compared to my university courses. My goal by taking this course is to gain more knowledge on how to successfully identify learning objectives and create a learning environment that will meet learners' needs. The Instructional Design Foundations and Applications MOOC offered by the University of Illinois introduce individuals to the fundamentals of instructional design and offers an innovative approach to understanding instructional design principles and develop creative teaching solutions to performance issues in an educational setting environment. It offers an in-depth look at the theories, models, and instructional design strategies that will enable the learner to feel accomplished in instructional design basics and gain essential learning experiences.

The course audience is tailored towards educators, trainers, and professionals interested in learning to create effective instructional products to enhance their learner's learning experience. The course also focuses on the analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (ADDIE) process where the engaged learners will be able to identify learning objectives and answer the three fundamental questions of the ADDIE process, "Where are we

going, how will we get there, and how will we know when we have arrived?" (Smith & Ragan, 2005, p. 8).

Evaluation

Before enrolling in the course, I looked at the reviews, and it was given an overall score of 4.0 stars. Armed with this knowledge, I went into the course with an open mind and refrained from reading the reviews until after its completion. The course is broken into five modules, each building upon the previous. The first module begins with a welcome video, which was short but effective, and the syllabus, which laid out the expectations for the learners, and readings that would benefit one to understand the instructional design concept. This module continued with understanding the essential terminologies in instructional design, the history of design, and the roles of instructional design across contexts and career paths for instructional designers. After four videos, module one ended with a quiz, a peer-graded assignment, and a discussion board where you will post your response to the question and respond to postings from others within the course. This module provided significant knowledge on instructional design concepts, and the videos provided adequate information for new learners in this field.

Module two focused on instructional design learning, learning theories, instructional theories, the ADDIE process, instructional design models, and talent development. Some guiding questions engaged the learner in thinking about the overall concept of instructional design. This informative module provided learners with a beginning concept to understand instructional design. During module three, the learner will continue to explore more instructional design content, where the needs assessment, gap analysis, diversity and inclusion, learner characteristics, cognitive styles, and instructional strategies are answered. For this module, I liked the essential knowledge presented and how understanding each concept aids the

instructional designer when creating a curriculum for their organization. Like module one, modules two and three ended with a quiz, a peer-graded assignment, and a discussion board.

Module four focused on task analysis, information processing steps, and analysis and learning objectives. During this module, the learner will understand the process of a learning task and why one must conduct a task analysis. During this module, I was intrigued by the lessons on writing learning objectives. This lesson is essential to creating a product as it leads the instructional designer to have a measurable outcome and determine if the learner can meet the course's objectives. Lastly, module five concluded the course by describing its purpose, essential concepts, the process of task analysis, the diverse types of learning outcomes, and how to write relevant learning objectives for instructional design based on the task analysis. This module affected me as a learner as it provided me with some concepts I was unaware of and allowed me to close this knowledge gap.

The application method of the ADDIE process offered students a structured and systematic approach to developing their learning experiences. Understanding the foundations of the ADDIE process will equip the learners to create educational programs that will meet the needs of its diverse learners. The course laid a solid groundwork for decision-making in instructional design and notably addressed learning theories, delving into constructivism, cognitivism, and behaviorism. While the course provides excellent information on instructional design's foundational theories and background, there is still room for improvement through its videos and some of the formative assessments. Although the course provides the concepts behind instructional design, there is not much interaction for the assessments unless the learner purchases an upgraded plan. This means that although the program is low-cost, there is still a financial obligation for completion.

Recommendation

After completing the course, I recommend this course to learners who do not possess an educational background as a facilitator or teaching professional, as the course will be deemed slow-paced and lacks more advanced principles and concepts needed for furthering one's education in instructional design. Ultimately, the course can be completed for learners with diverse backgrounds as there is a framework for learners to understand the principles within the course curriculum. I recommend that the formative assessments are free, and one should only pay for the summative assessment to obtain the certificate. Doing so will allow personnel to complete the course and impact their professional development more meaningfully.

Summary

After taking the Instructional Design Foundations and Applications course, it was an eye-opening experience to see how other universities facilitate their program. This course track broke down the instructional design process into reasonable steps, thus making it more straightforward for the learners. The course's coverage of learning theories such as behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism provided a solid foundation for understanding how individuals learn and how to design curricula to meet those with diverse needs. I do believe that there is some work to do for those who already have some knowledge in this field to make the course engaging, however, while the course provides critical competencies for instructional design, it will feel like a fundamental approach to those who already have some instructional design educational background.

References

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