

Web-based Instructional Unit for Wiggio

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Introduction

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2011), 20.4 percent of all post-secondary students enrolled in higher education for the academic year 2007 through 2008, participated in at least one distance education course. This represented a portion of the total amount of learners in personal, social, academic, and business contexts.

Emerging Web 2.0 technologies can be effective tools which facilitate distributed learning and web based learning environments (WBLEs) with well-designed instructional strategies. The growth of WBLEs calls for instructors to consider effective, relevant, and motivating instructional strategies (Nam & Smith-Jackson, 2007, p.25).

The goal of this instructional unit is to strategically utilize web-based content, asynchronous, and synchronous delivery methods in an online learning environment for the purpose of sharing helpful skills with Wiggio as a virtual group management tool with other colleagues. Wiggio facilitates collaborative and electronic managing of files in a safe, efficient and timely manner. An effective way to become proficient with Web 2.0 tools is to experience them in a real-world scenario with friends, family, and colleagues. Social learning facilitates our zone of proximal development (ZPD) and constructs knowledge (Culatta, 2011).

Instructional Strategy of Web-Based Instructional Unit for Wiggio

Several key elements were considered when strategically designing this instruction: a) need and rationale; b) learning domain; c) learner analysis; d) instructional goal; e) instructional

design model; f) pre-instructional skills; g) motivational purpose; h) assessment; i) evaluation; j) follow-up activities; k) delivery methods; and l) implementation.

The strategy includes the emerging concept of a flipped classroom which involves delivering instruction asynchronously and using synchronous sessions to assist learners with related assignments (Toppo, 2011). According to Chien-Hung, Tzu-Chiang, and Yueh-Min (2007), self-directed learning allows the learner to have control of the process, achieve higher performance levels, and increase satisfaction (p.220). When the learner manages cognitive strategies in an intellectual activity, new information is applied through problem-solving (Dick, Carey, and Carey, 2009, p. 43). Using a constructivist strategy for a cognitive learning domain permits the adult learner to control the self-paced, online learning process.

Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction is utilized in a sequential planning process (Clark, 2011). In addition, M. David Merrill's First Principles of Instruction provides the basis for implementing the concept of participating, activating, demonstrating, applying, integrating and acquiring new knowledge (Merrill, 2007; Reiser & Dempsey, 2007). Web-based content will deliver asynchronous material and synchronous one-on-one sessions will be scheduled to provide support for the learner. A key element of the instruction is for the learner to learn by doing in a virtual community of practice (Reiser & Dempsey, 2007, p. 289). Learner-centered, interactive, and collaborative components are essential to a successful and satisfactory learning experience. The implementation section of the facilitator's guide provides details.

Web-Based Content Delivery Method

Weebly.com is a user friendly website builder and I have personally and successfully used this tool for several similar projects. Technology is to be used as a way to deliver and mediate web-based content (Bower, Hedberg, & Kuswara, 2010). Some key elements for

designing the website include: a) only content pertaining to Wiggio instruction; b) look and feel; c) design and layout; d) navigation; e) rich media; and f) interactive functions. Weebly meets the criteria listed. The web-based content also delivers the asynchronous instructional tools.

Asynchronous Delivery Method

Recent trends for e-learning indicate a shift from traditional learning models towards personal learning environments (PLE) which allows the learner control of the process (Berlanga, Peñalvo, & Sloep, 2010, p. 199). Since the flipped classroom model is utilized, the learner will complete the instructional modules asynchronously. Video tutorials will be produced in chunks which feature the various Wiggio collaborative functions. This will be helpful for the learner to refer back to when they need assistance recalling specific features of Wiggio. The asynchronous delivery method includes several learning objects: a) text; b) Wiggio promotional videos from YouTube.com; c) Jing instructional video tutorials; d) PDF instructions and checklists; e) online pre-assessment and post-assessment survey tools; and f) collaborative discussion board. The survey signifies when the learner has completed the asynchronous activities. The qualitative data gathered from the assessment survey identifies each learner's strengths and weaknesses, allows customization of a synchronous session based on specific needs, and sheds light on areas of the instruction that need improvement. At this point, a synchronous one-on-one session will be scheduled.

Synchronous Delivery Method

Skype is a free and easy to use videoconferencing tool. A customized synchronous session will be scheduled to focus on what the learner needs specifically and maximize the quality of time spent reviewing the Wiggio instructional unit, illustrating relevant functions with screen sharing, and assisting with questions or concerns via chat, voice, or video. While utilizing

technology to support distance interaction, we can encourage a distributed learning environment amongst colleagues. Online collaboration with colleagues is an essential element of the workplace (Dede, 1996, p.21).

Summary

Designing WBLEs which address corporate needs requires a thoughtful and critical process. A purposeful instructional strategy endeavors to engage the learner with interactive and relevant learning activities which strive for meaningful experiences. In a business context, several key elements such as time, money, brand building, collaboration, and a mutual vision of achievement play a key role for long-term success. Web-based content, asynchronous, and synchronous delivery methods are an appropriate and effective strategy.

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