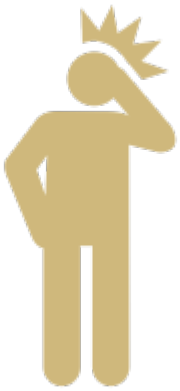
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What Is Instructional Design? [1]

August 26, 2021 by (not verified) [2]

So, a guy walks into a bar.



[3]

Maybe you're thinking, "why am I reading this right now?" Or perhaps, "only if masking and social distancing are in place." You could be remembering the last time you were in a bar or the last time you heard such a terrible joke. Or maybe you're thinking "ouch."
A guy walks into a bar: one silly input, infinite possible outputs, each as distinct and unique as the next. We can make informed guesses about how people will react or respond based on previous experiences (shout-out to all the ouch'ers out there), but each person brings a different lens, set of experiences, values, and beliefs to the table. This is the key question of the field of instructional design: when one input results in infinite outputs, how do we create opportunities and environments for learning that celebrate the unique experiences, values, and hopes of our students while also equipping them with specific knowledge and skills for success in their chosen work?

Instructional design is a fully-formed, stand-alone professional discipline focused on teaching and pedagogy. It is a proactive, collaborative approach to conceptualizing and creating learning materials, fostering learner community and inquiry, and empowering learners and teachers to make intentional decisions about what and how they learn.

Collaborating with an Instructional Designer

When instructional designers from our team partner with faculty in course design, we are there to share our unique expertise to inform and advance the design (or redesign) of your

course, creating something better together than would be possible alone. We are also advocates and proponents of academic freedom and commit to honoring the integrity of this important protection for university teaching and research. The framework we use for this collaborative process of design is called the Collaborative Mapping Model (CMM). For us, it's all about asking questions, getting to know you and your students, and creating a visual map together that represents the overarching design of your course.

We'll look together at the pedagogical elements of your course: is your goal to start with theory and move toward practice? Do you have a design that focuses on student inquiry and contextual learning? Are the elements of your course supporting that vision? Is your design inclusive of the needs of diverse learners? We'll advise you on things like how to create positive learning experiences for large sections, strategies for teaching in accelerated learning formats, and intentionally integrating technologies that supplement or advance the student learning experience.

We'll also encourage a focus on student-centered practices, such as transparency in your approach to communication, creating an open and welcoming environment, and reducing barriers for students to find and connect with the resources they need to be successful. We'll consider together ways that you can ensure students have the agency and empowerment they need to make the learning and activities in your course relevant to their own goals, professional aspirations, and schedule requirements. And ultimately, we will do everything we can to amplify your unique perspective as an expert researcher and educator.

As instructional designers, we are most of all your partners and colleagues. We strive for the well-being and betterment of our students—and we can't wait to work with you soon!

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