Memo in Support of Instructional Systems Design

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IST 524: Instructional Technology

Dr. Sarah Evanick

September 3, 2022

To: Hospital Director of Education

From: Amanda Philbrick

Date: September 3, 2022

Re: Support of Instructional Systems Design

Dear Ms. Karafilis,

I am impressed by the hospital education department's worthy efforts to optimize the education of new hires. The value your team places on effective training is evident.

I write to propose the conscientious implementation of the Instructional Systems Design (ISD) model in upcoming projects. ISD provides a framework around which instructional design (ID) theories may be applied (Clark, 2014a). Essentially synonymous with the ADDIE model, and variations of this approach like the Dick & Carey model, ISD is the systematic application of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation to a performance problem (Clark, 2015b; University of Colorado Boulder Libraries, 2022). It is a goal-directed, feedback mechanism-driven, iterative process (Dick and Carey's Model, 2001).

ISD model detractors argue that it is too rigid, hindering flexibility (Gordan & Zemke, 2000). While examples of poor application exist, the naysayers fail to appreciate that the ADDIE model has necessarily evolved over time to become "iterative, dynamic, and user friendly" (Clark, 2015b, para. 1). ISD is simply a tool, providing a framework around which work can commence. Its straightforward structure allows instructional designers of any experience level to tackle challenges by applying the ID practices of their choice to the umbrella frame of ISD (Clark, 2014a; University of Colorado Boulder Libraries, 2022). While Gordan and Zemke (2000) have denigrated the overwhelming array of instructional design models from which to

choose, it is this very variety which empowers instructional designers to apply the creativity

Gordan and Zemke claim is stunted by the system. Of note, it is implicit within the adapted

ADDIE framework that revision will take place throughout the process; analysis is not only

summative, but formative (Clark, 2015a; Axmann et al., 2003). Creativity and agility are

supported by ISD if its adherents implement the tool flexibly.

ISD's purpose is to solve performance problems. An essential component of Dick and

Carey's ISD model is that the process is goal oriented. Every element works together toward a

unified purpose (Dick and Carey Model, 2001). In their article "Attack on ISD," Gordan and

Zemke (2000) argue that when ISD is used as directed, the produced solutions are bad, charging

that ISD fails to work backwards from a desired result. This perspective willfully ignores the

stated purpose of ISD. It fails to consider its cornerstone, Robert Mager's concept of a learning

objective, which delineates the performance goal for all members – the purpose is always

identified (Clark, 2014b). Every project we undertake should be guided by a clearly defined

objective.

ISD skeptics have asserted that instructional design ought to rely upon frequent feedback

from all involved parties, most importantly the learner (Sims & Jones, 2002). This is, without a

doubt, a worthy objective – eliciting frequent input from our new hires is essential to optimizing

outcomes. It is specious, however, to claim that this goal conflicts with the ISD model. ISD is an

interdependent process with built-in feedback mechanisms – all components communicate with

one another (Dick and Carey's Model, 2001). I propose that our team consciously create

opportunities for consistent learner feedback – not in rejection of, but rather in accordance with

ISD tenets.

As Piskurich eloquently conveys "the essential element to understand is that creating an education program without instructional design principles is inviting failure" (Axmann et al., 2003, p.2). ISD supports flexible implementation of ID principles by a cohesive team of instructors and learners. This systematic model supplies the bedrock for an effective, creative process. It is in our best interest to take advantage of this time-tested tool (Clark, 2015b).

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to our collaboration in the future.

Sincerely,

Amanda Philbrick

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