Chapter 17
Modelling for Value Systems in a Diverse Online Program in the Caribbean

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ABSTRACT

The authors present a conceptual framework to guide the participation of students in an online instructional design program. The online program has socio-cultural influencing factors that confound the already diverse nature of the offering. The framework intends to encourage a value system for students that can be used to guide their knowledge and performance as they pursue the tenets of the field of instructional design. Elmore's mode of leadership, Bourdieu's theory of habitus and Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory are used to create a foundation for the framework whilst acknowledging the complexities of the diverse environment. The framework supports and acknowledges the knowledge expected of novice instructional designers through the use of guides whilst acknowledging the systemic and systematic individualistic change processes that will occur.

INTRODUCTION

Instructional design is a relatively new field, with its historical roots drawing from a number of other fields which include cognitive science and behavioral psychology (Reiser, 2001, 2001). This field, has expanded with the onset of the use of the technology in educational practices, and then furthermore with the eLearning movement (Kidd, 2009). As eLearning and online learning became somewhat of a

founding principle for which instructional design could be guided, the research in the field also expanded to accommodate factors that were not typically present in traditional instruction (Moore & Kearsley, 2011; Reiser, 2001). One factor that provides an ongoing discussion is the differences that contribute to the uniqueness of each available online learning context is culture. This factor allows for online learning experiences that are derived from belief systems in an effort to create what is subjectively deemed a successful learning outcome. The subjectivity of the value of the product is important, not only to those who offer the online learning experience, but most importantly to those who are the recipients of such outcomes.

Interpreting Value and Culture [Together]

The word *value* as a verb describes worth or importance to which the descriptor is assigned. As a noun, *value* provides a standard or an associated behaviour or judgement. As both definitions apply to the online learning environment, the learner is seen as a key recipient and evaluator of the experience. The experience in an online learning environment speaks to a specific design that incorporates [tangible] artefacts, interactions towards functionality and knowledge, and tools that manage the relationship between the artefacts and the interactions. The online learning design space is, and can be, a complex area, especially as it is still being measured for reliability and validity in delivery (Clark, 1983; Collins, 2000; Noble, 1998; Squires & Preece, 1996). The design of the environment, like any other learning space, will be the foundation of nuanced efforts as they address the appropriateness of the delivery as per the learners and instructors point of view. These efforts are informed and confounded by belief systems, prior experiences, abilities to access technologies, current knowledge, technological infrastructure, overt skills, and many other factors. Understanding how these factors contribute to the delivery of an online course in a program is pertinent as the tenure provided for each course, can allow for the misconception that the experience is short-lived. This misconception drives the belief that these factors are not truly reflective of the elements of some cultural systems.

Online courses are initiated for a specific time, during which, the design of the course which sits on a technological infrastructure becomes alive - with varying actors. The actors, in this case, learners and instructors, each bring different ways of thinking, preferences in technology use, and even indoctrinated perceptions of what and how education should be delivered. These factors, when deconstructed for each instance of an online course, create a cultural ecosystem which must move beyond the physicalities of the environment towards the determined pedagogical aspects for the course. The value system that is introduced during this short period is drawn from previous individual experiences, associative discussions (sometimes called gossip), feelings, general understandings and more, all of which must become tangible displayed in the design to the learners and instructor. The contextual nature of this system draws on the individual dispositions, the group dynamics, the social context in which the system is situated, and the technology [tool] used to create the system. This combination contributes to a value system which draws on the behaviours, ways of thinking, perceptions, and reactions - all towards general decision making for each contributor (Bourdieu, 2011; Harvard X, 2017; Hofstede, 2001). Understanding the process of valuing the experience towards the intent of learning in an online course and acknowledging that the online course has a specific value, which is interpreted by those participating in the course, will introduce qualities and dimensions to the online course design and vice versa. Most online course design introduce a network of interactive factors that can address the intersection of nationalistic beliefs and individual

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