

Chapter 7

Effective, Efficient, and Attractive Instructional Design for Online Learning

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ABSTRACT

The worldwide school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic have caused a rapid transition from traditional to emergency remote teaching. On the other hand, during this emergency, remote teaching, deliberate planning, and design of distance learning processes had to be overlooked to provide a quick solution for the disruption of face-to-face education globally. The aim of this chapter is to shed light on what could be done to make online courses effective, efficient, and attractive by embodying the elements that can be included in the instructional design of online courses for future online distance education practices that might be applied during emergency remote teaching. The elements that will be discussed in the chapter will be elaborated in relation to general principles of instructional design, teaching methods and techniques, instructional technologies, teaching materials and media, learner-teacher-content interaction, and feedback.

INTRODUCTION

Open and distance learning is basically expressed as a system in which teacher and student are in different environments (Keegan, 1996). At all learning levels distance learning includes organization of teaching and learning methods used, classroom and school management, planning, guidance, and organization (Holmberg, 1989). Accordingly, Simonson, Smaldino et al. (2012) define distance learning as a learning process in which learners are distant from each other and from learning resources in the context of time and space, and their interactions with learning materials and with other learners are realized through distance communication system. According to Moore and Kearsley (2005), open and distance learning

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is a process where the learning event and the teaching event take place in different time and places, and which requires deliberate planning and scheduling

Due to Covid-19 pandemic, deliberate planning and design of distance learning processes had to be overlooked to provide a quick solution for the disruption of face-to-face education globally. The world-wide school closures caused a rapid transition from traditional to online distance education. By means of learning management systems (LMS), video lectures, online libraries, TV broadcasts, open educational resources, videoconferencing platforms, guidelines and online channels, countries all around the world tried to maintain the education process (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). All these attempts are quite different from planned online distance education practices and they should be regarded as Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT). According to Bozkurt and Sharma (2020), online distance education comprises elaborative planning of the learning process in which choices, agency, responsibility, and flexibility are created and which includes detailed course design that fosters learning ecology, whereas ERT could not go beyond providing a quick solution to compensate for interrupted education by means of information communication technologies (ICT). Therefore, there are concerns about the effectiveness of the ERT applications.

ERT created challenges for both teachers and learners. Some of these challenges can be listed as being inexperienced in online teaching and learning, not enough technological feasibility, not enough techno-pedagogical competencies, low digital competence that causes learners to lag in online learning (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). More importantly, ERT applications seems to fail to create effective, productive, and engaging learning experiences at the expected level as they are not based on elaborate planning on instructional design, but rather a quick transfer of course contents to incorporate tools in an online environment (Green et al., 2020).

The aim of this section is to shed light on what could be done to make online courses effective, efficient, and attractive by embodying the elements that can be included in the instructional design of online courses. The elements that will be discussed in the chapter will be elaborated in relation to distance learning pedagogy. These elements will be discussed under the headings of general principles of instructional design, teaching methods and techniques, instructional technologies, teaching materials and media, learner-teacher-content interaction, and feedback.

FROM DISTANCE EDUCATION TO EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING

Due to the threat of COVID-19, instructions at all levels have moved online as internet-based conveyance provides flexibility of teaching and learning without time and place constraints. Even though online instruction was an expected phenomenon in the near future, this transition due to the pandemic was so instantaneous and done on the spur-of-the-moment. The lack of planning brought about by this sudden transition can seal the perception of online learning as a poor option. In fact, possibilities that a properly planned and prepared online teaching offers are overshadowed by this sudden transition. Although concepts such as online learning, distance learning, distributed learning, ubiquitous learning, blended learning, and mobile learning have been carefully defined by educational technology and distance education experts over the years, these terminologies have become indiscriminately used by people other than field experts due to this sudden transition. Brown (2005) portrays some of these concepts in Figure 1. Brow (2005) highlights the significance of learner-centered approach in successful teaching and learning environments where flexibility in modes of delivery, interaction, learning materials, evaluation and

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