

Chapter 10

Using Instructional Design Goals to Appropriately Classify Instructional Design Models

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ABSTRACT

This chapter probes an assertion by Gustafson and Branch (2007) that it is easier to classify instructional models when guided by the needs that call for them. If this is so, identifying appropriate instructional design models for various instructional situations can be greatly simplified. Gustafson and Branch (1997) note that each of the numerous instructional models targets one or more of three types of instructional situations: the Classroom, Product, and Systems situations. In evaluating the assertion, the chapter examines pertinent questions that look at some assumptions guiding the choice of instructional models, the three design situations identified, and some characteristics that separate the various design instances. In the end, it becomes obvious that the instructional design professional will do a better job of classifying instructional models based on a thorough understanding of instructional situations and guided by characteristics of the situation.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates a statement made by Gustafson and Branch (2007) in their discussions of the ADDIE (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate) instructional design model, which notes that instructional “models may be classified according to the primary type of instruction they are designed to produce” (p. 15). This statement is probed in light of its correspondence or lack thereof to the design of instructions. The outcome of this probe holds implications for both students and instructional design and technology professionals. The fact that different models of instructional design can be classified in accordance with the primary type of instruction they produce holds real significance for both students and instructional design and technology professionals (Cronje, 2013). In building their argument for this statement, Gustafson and Branch (1997) examine different instructional design models under three

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-9279-2.ch010

types of instructional design situations, namely the classroom, the product, and the systems. This chapter looks at the pertinent questions whose answers can lead us through this discussion and culminate in a conclusion that is relevant to the thesis of Gustafson and Branch (1997). This chapter will also examine assumptions and characteristics that set apart the different instructional situations: namely classroom, product, and systems. The discussion of the assumptions and characteristics leads to the examination of some design models identified by Gustafson and Branch (1997) as fitting examples for the classroom, product, and systems situations respectively.

ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE CHOICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN MODELS

The statement by Gustafson and Branch (2007) that, instructional design models “may be classified according to the primary type of instruction they are designed to produce” (p. 15) should be of interest to both students and practitioners of instructional design alike. This statement’s accuracy or lack thereof holds implications for the work instructional designers produce, if they are to create designs that meet the needs of design situations or provide solutions to the problems that necessitate these decisions in the first place (Zierer & Seel, 2012). Before designing an instructional plan, an instructional designer must answer these questions:

1. What assumptions underlie the choice of an instructional design model?
2. What are the principal instructional design situations?
3. What are some outstanding characteristics that distinguish the different design situations from each other?

In response to the first question, Gustafson and Branch (1997) identify a number of assumptions they believe can help set the stage for several instructional design decisions. The most prominent of these assumptions is that the choice of an instructional design model must be preceded by the designation of an instructional design situation. In other words, prior to choosing an instructional design model, an instructional designer must first determine whether he is designing for a classroom situation, a product situation, or a systems situation. Otherwise, the designer runs the risk of choosing the wrong design model, which is likely to end in failure. To properly designate a situation, a number of conditions must be satisfied (Gustafson & Branch, 1997). Gustafson and Branch believe that the classroom design situation designation rests on the following assumptions:

1. That the impending design will be used in an educational setting and in some cases, in business and industry situations that utilize classroom instruction.
2. That there is a specified number of times the class will meet face-to-face or in other synchronized formats, with the length of each class meeting having been predetermined prior to laying the blueprint of the design or laid during its course.
3. That there will be a teacher or another subject-matter expert (SME) who will play a key role in deciding the course content, the planning strategies, and the ways needed resources will be selected for use in delivering the design, as well as the choice of technology through which the designed instruction will be transmitted.

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