

Chapter 25

Supporting Community Engagement Through Real-World Instructional Learning

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ABSTRACT

The ability to attain knowledge for implementation within real-world environments is a shift in understanding within many instructional environments. Shifting from competency-based understandings wherein a knowledge base is attained as well as implemented towards a capability-based understanding that emphasizes the conceptual framework of information shift towards higher order knowledge creation within novel situations and environments is essential. Lifelong learning within nuanced understandings of new situations and new experiences is essential. Normally, these novel situations and experiences occur within a real-world community environment wherein the learner is critically analyzing new information and opinions from innumerable engaged people within the community. This style of learning is vital to understand within a competency-based learning environment, as well. Therefore, real-world instructional learning embeds the supporting community engagement at distinctly appropriate and impactful points throughout the instructional process, resulting in outstanding conceptual frameworks with the continuous understanding around cognitive engagement.

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INTRODUCTION

The instructional process is an intriguing dance between knowledge and intentional usage, between an instructional environment and the real world implementation of that information. The shift in learner engagement while working with the new knowledge, the information, is a curiously arduous task that defines mere knowledge acquisition and its forward-leaning real world implementation. A question posted by Wenger is simply stated yet powerful in impression and influence: “So, what if we adopted a different perspective, one that placed learning in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world?” (Wenger, 1998, p. 3; Wenger, 2009, p. 210). What if a different question was brought forward, rethinking the instructional world in which traditionalists thrive but subject matter is tied to the four walls of the learning experience instead of embracing the learner’s lived experiences as participants in a deeper understanding of the subject matter under study. The question, is how might one successfully move between the classroom learning experience and the real world implementation of the learned information in successful ways? Herein is the focus of this discussion, towards framing an understanding of the learning process that slowly embeds within an assessment of learned knowledge and viable usefulness within a real-world environment. Analyzing the viability of the usefulness of the learned information within a real-world environment necessitates a reflective approach that allows for additional learning progression and framing one’s knowledge acquisition a bit more succinctly.

The final question revolves around the competency of the learner, towards using this information in a real-world environment. Throughout this process, the instructional facilitator’s efforts are viable, as is the viability of engagement by the learner. Yet perhaps unrecognized throughout the majority of the learning and development process is the community in which the learner embeds the new information; the community engagement. Overlooking this imperative may be viewed as a foolish endeavor, as the community engagement may be defined as defined by the learner’s world as a *collegial community*. Each learner’s collegial community environment, friends and family, co-workers and supervisors, as well as the co-learners and instructional facilitators directly impacts the learner in an everyday manner, regularly support and impact the learner’s knowledge acquisition and understanding, self-efficacy and even evaluative engagement. Embedding each learner’s collegial community throughout the learning process is an imperative, worthy of long-term self-efficacy and informational impact.

BACKGROUND

A background understanding of the learning and knowledge acquisition process is a viable consideration. This is important not only towards better understanding the frames of theoretical and modeling reference upon which the concept of supporting community engagement within real world instructional learning efforts are based; thus, but also towards highlighting the undergirding instructional thoughts, advantages and impediments that facilitate the learner’s knowledge acquisition and real-world impact, including implementation towards performance improvement and talent development. The primary aspects under consideration are Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, Bloom’s cognitive taxonomies that includes Anderson and Krathwohl’s revised cognitive taxonomies, learning theories framed as pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy, Vygotsky’s conceptual frameworks of understanding, Wittgenstein’s social discourse, as well as Wenger-Trayner’s learning in landscapes of practice.

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