Boise State University Organizational Performance and Workplace Learning Department
OPWL537 – Instructional Design (4 credits)

This is a synopsis of the course syllabus intended to provide an overview of the course. Please note that details of the course may change from semester to semester and that the syllabus used during a given semester takes precedence over this summary.

**General course description**

This course is about instructional design (ID), which Dick (1995) describes as “a process for determining what to teach and how to teach it” (p.13). In many ways, an instructional designer is like an engineer (Smith & Ragan, 1999, p. 2). Both plan their work based upon scientific principles – the engineer on the laws of physics, and the instructional designer on basic principles of instruction and learning. Both work to design solutions that are functional, efficient, and attractive or appealing to the end-user. Both have established problem-solving procedures that they use to guide their design decisions. Both work to meet the needs of their clients and other stakeholders.

The course has two purposes:

- To help you learn some of these “engineering” principles and procedures so you can design functional and appealing instructional solutions that produce valued behavior change in the workplace.
- To introduce you to some of the current issues and controversies in the field.

This course is a beginning point, rather than an end point. ID covers a lot of territory, and it would be easy to spend an entire semester on each part of the ID process.

**Course goals**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Conduct a performance analysis in which you make a data-driven determination that a particular situation is a reasonable candidate for a training program.
2. Conduct a learner analysis that includes data-driven conclusions about the target audience and instructional implications directly related to those conclusions.
3. Develop a task analysis that accurately and completely describes performance of important job tasks that the training will address.
4. Write a set of job-focused objectives using Mager’s 3-part method.
5. Create an authentic performance assessment.
6. Use Merrill’s “first principles of instruction” to develop an instructional plan that is clear, coherent, and “user-friendly.”
7. Conduct an ID review of an instructional plan.
8. Explain the what, why, and how of each of these pieces of the ID process.
9. Maintain a consistent thread of alignment connecting all of these pieces of the ID process while working on a specific project.
10. Communicate effectively in written reports and online discussions, correctly using ID terminology.
11. Contribute to the effective operation of a virtual project team.
Assignments

Instructional design project (team assignment). This assignment relates to course goals 1 through 11. The ID project asks you to work as a member of a team to develop a plan for a short performance-based training program on a topic that your team chooses. The project consists of a set of assignments associated with pieces of the ID process.

1. Project description
2. Performance analysis
3. Learner analysis
4. Task analysis
5. Objectives
6. Performance assessment
7. Instructional plan worksheet
8. Instructional plan
9. ID review as part of a formative evaluation

Project status reviews (team assignment). This assignment relates to course goals 10 and 11. This kind of status review is a common practice in ID. It’s an opportunity for the ID team to reflect on work that they have completed, check progress against the established project schedule, and plan for work to be completed.

Participation in class and team discussions (individual assignment). This assignment relates to course goals 1 through 10. You’ll earn points based on a combination of the quality, quantity, and timeliness of your participation.

- Quality – The expectation is that you’ll contribute in substantive ways.
- Quantity – The expectation is that you’ll make multiple contributions.
- Timeliness – The expectation is that you’ll participate throughout each discussion.

Final exam (individual assignment). This assignment relates to course goals 1 through 10. The exam will assess your mastery of course content. This is an open-book, open-notes, individual assignment.

Prerequisites

OPWL 536
OPWL 535