



Instructional Systems Design Creates Effective Performance

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Q: From your experience, what would you say are the most significant shifts in how performance-based instruction is designed today compared to when you started your career? What key factors drove those changes?

A: I think that design is still being skipped and confused with development of content. Sometimes storyboards are constructed prior to that – but that's a step in Development in my approach. Design, like Analysis and Development, used to be done, when employing proven practices, in a backward chain manner. Mager preached/wrote about that in the 1960s. And, design too often isn't informed by a Performance, Gap, and Knowledge/Skill analysis, it's too often a brainstorming effort. But again, that's not new. It's always been a part of the poor practices of too many in the profession.

Q: In your view, what are the most valuable new metrics or methods for evaluating instructional effectiveness that have emerged in recent years? How have they impacted your own work?

A: Unfortunately, I see the reverse all too often. The field has neglected the performance metrics back on the job – the Learning Results – and instead focused on Learning Activities such as completion, engagement, and so on. This

is due to shallow or non-existent Analysis data regarding the application of the Learning Content – which is too often due to starting with an Enabling knowledge, skill, behavior, or competency and not starting with the terminal performance. Clients and L&D leadership too often have an educational mindset, versus a training mindset – and the training mindset and approach narrows the target audiences too much – so effectiveness is sacrificed for a perception of improved efficiency – with one-size-fits-all approaches to instructional content.

Q: Could you share some examples of how you integrated data-driven decision making into your instructional design process today? How has this evolved over your career?

A: It's pretty much been the same since day one, back on August 6, 1979, when I was shown the Performance Analysis data that I was told resulted from a derivative of a derivative of the Geary Rummler approach to Performance Based Instructional Analysis. I was told we needed to help people learn how to perform tasks to produce outputs and meet the requirements for both. I've stayed true to that Performance Orientation throughout my career. And it's made all of the difference in my success as an internal consultant and as an external consultant.

Q: What role do you see for immersive technologies like VR and AR in enterprise learning moving forward? How much potential do you think they have compared to traditional methods?

A: They are much more expensive than providing Guidance/Job Aids – but there are use cases when they are the way to go – whenever the Learning addresses situations that are unsafe, physically and/or psychologically, or just near impossible to show/demonstrate. As a profession, they are a shiny object that are used unnecessarily, leading to unnecessary costs and extended project timelines. They should, however, be experimented with in controlled efforts so that when such a need arises, the L&D staff isn't starting off at the bottom of the learning & performance curves.

Q: Where do you see the biggest opportunities for improving learning accessibility and engagement specifically through mobile platforms?

A: The default in Instructional Systems Design should always be Performance Guides or Job Aids unless the Performance Context (where and how the individual does the task) demands a memorized performance response. Mobile devices simply enable the dreams of my original mentors, who always emphasized trying

to avoid memorization when it wasn't really required and to focus on providing guidance when needed.

Q: In your view, which trends in gamification hold the most promise for increasing learning motivation and effectiveness at an enterprise level? How are you leveraging gamification for your clients?

A: I've always used authentic simulation exercises, which, if recognized as reflecting the performance output and task requirements from back on the job (not all new hires can recognize what is authentic and what is not), has always increased motivation, transfer, and impact. I've written books, many articles and produced several videos on my prior experiences using Performance-Based Simulations.

Q: How do you see the core responsibilities and required skillsets for Performance Analysts and Instructional Architects evolving in the coming years with advancing technology? What is exciting or concerning about this evolution?

A: The only thing that's really changed from my perspective in Enterprise L&D since 1979 is the digital technology tools that enable us to conduct, administrate,

and deploy our work, better, faster, and cheaper. Soon AI will enhance that even more. But, I am wary of AI being used to crank out more content faster and cheaper, when more content is the last thing busy performers/learners need.