ID + PD: Training Instructional Designers to Foster and Facilitate Learning Communities in Digital Spaces

Authors : Belkis L. Cabrera

Abstract : Contemporary technological innovations have reshaped possibility, interaction, communication, engagement, education, and training. Indeed, today, a high-quality technology enhanced learning experience can be transformative as much for the learner as for the educator-trainer. As innovative technologies continue to facilitate, support, foster, and enhance collaboration, problem-solving, creativity, adaptiveness, multidisciplinarity, and communication, the field of instructional design (ID) also continues to develop and expand. Shifting its focus from media to the systematic design of instruction, or rather from the gadgets and devices themselves to the theories, models, and impact of implementing educational technology, the evolution of ID marks a restructuring of the teaching, learning, and training paradigms. However, with all of its promise, this latter component of ID remains underdeveloped. The majority of ID models are crafted and guided by learning theories and, therefore, most models are constructed around student and educator roles rather than trainer roles. Thus, when these models or systems are employed for training purposes, they usually have to be re-fitted, tweaked, and stretched to meet the training needs. This paper is concerned with the training or professional development (PD) facet of instructional design and how ID models built on teacher-to-teacher interaction and dialogue can support the creation of professional learning communities (PLCs) or communities of practice (CoPs), which can augment learning and PD experiences for all. Just as technology is changing the face of education, so too can it change the face of PD within the educational realm. This paper not only provides a new ID model but using innovative technologies such as Padlet and Thinkbinder, this paper presents a concrete example of how a traditional body-to-body, brick, and mortar learning community can be transferred and transformed into the online context.

Keywords : communities of practice, e-learning, educational reform, instructional design, professional development, professional learning communities, technology, training

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