Well written minor errors but it is very important to show support through author and year

DESIGN COMPONENTS FOR ADULTS E-LEARNING PROGRAMS

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Literature Review

Niki Deanda

Design Components for Adult e-Learning Programs

Introduction

The goal of this review is to discuss the emergence of a technology that has provided teachers with new methods to create and participate in the learning environment. In the past, the learning environment was traditionally identified by and limited to the use of schools, classrooms, and books. However, over time, new technology has emerged and broadened the opportunities for students and teachers to participate in the learning process. Drexler (2010) showed that these emerging technologies affected learning in numerous ways. ~~For example,~~ teachers designed, customized, and managed web content environments based on the needs of their students and the content of the material they were presenting. The addition of chat rooms, online testing, etc. made it possible for the virtual classroom to be just as effective as the more traditional learning environments. E-learning programs emerged as a viable and innovative use of technology by providing a broader spectrum of education opportunities for adults. Components considered for e-learning programs for adults included motivation, a learning theory and content type.

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Motivation and Engagement

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With the implementation of new technologies in e-learning came the realization that without proper motivation methods, students would not be able to effectively engage in an online classroom setting (Knowles, 2001; Merriam, 2001). One of the important issues discussed regarding the problems faced in developing programs that could motivate and engage students was the need for a user-friendly design that would enable students to feel comfortable using the e-learning tools. It became evident that the design interface would continue to be a major factor in the motivation of students. However, some developers did not take motivation of the students

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and certain other teaching elements into consideration when designing e-learning programs (Nehme, 2010). ~~(The American Psychological Association (APA), 1993;~~ Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000) stressed the importance of the idea that motivation must be nurtured for purposeful instruction and engagement. The use of more intuitive and user-friendly interface designs in e-learning programs as motivational factors became apparent with increased use of e-learning platforms. Consequently, the attention to detail and nature of the content used in the e-learning process became equally important. The evolution of the combination of interface and content produced an environment that was effective for both student and teacher. This process, Song (2000) categorized design factors.

In contrast, Pange~~, A.,~~ & Pange~~, J.~~ (2011) identified learning theories to address design issues. Similarly, both sources discussed the use of technology as a tool to transform learning and teaching. Software applications, one component of e-learning programs, were not without complications and reliability issues due to the fact they assumed were self-motivated. According to ~~Marina~~ Nehme (2010)~~,~~ information technology, used to solve issues, could be misused and additional problems created. Another factor, that needed to be taken to into consideration when understanding the role of motivation was some students were not accustomed to using e-learning tools. These students needed more guidance when making the transition to an e-learning setting. ~~(~~Aragon & Johnson (~~,~~ 2008); Serwatka~~,~~ (2005); Visser, Plomp, Amirault, & Kuiper~~,~~ (2002) attributed lack of motivation as a main factor associated with learner success in online courses. Experts agree that without addressing the above-mentioned issues, e-learning would not be a viable way for students to access, engage in, and be successful in a virtual classroom setting.

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Collaborative Learning Theory

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With a viable e-learning platform in place, adult students became motivated and confident in their ability to engage in an on line classroom setting. With those issues aside, a learning theory was needed to determine the direction in which the teacher and student could participate in the curriculum. Collaborative learning, one theory used, was defined as the ability to learn concepts together with more than one person of various levels of proficiency and included key concepts such as, positive interdependence, individual and group accountability, face-to-face interaction, teamwork skills, and group processing. Collaborative learning instructional strategy promoted learning and achievement across the curriculum (Gillies & Ashman, 2000). Traditionally, according to (Smith & MacGregor (, 1992) the term was used to describe the learning environment as a relationship among students, or students and teachers. The continued evolution of technology allowed another type of collaborative learning to surface. Howland and Moore (2002) suggested that developments in technology influenced the distribution of content, learning tasks, assignments in training and distance education. As technology further advanced, another approach called the Computer Based Collaborative Learning (CBCL) theory emerged, and was comprised of educational technology that focused on the use of Information and Communications Technology for individual learners or groups. The inclusion of technology was seen as an asset generating peer interaction while performing tasks (Mavrou, Lewis and Douglas, 2007).

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According to Martens Bastiaens and Kirschner (2007), many e-learning environments used the constructivist theory, where learners determined the sequence of learning to design tasks and courses. However, the constructivist theory led to difficulties in the design and development of tasks because the understanding and motivation of tasks were unpredictable. In contrast, the

collaborative theory created usable applications (Lipponen & Lallimo, 2004). The use of collaborative learning promoted learning as well as social interaction among students, instructors and tools (Gillies & Ashman 2000). Collaborative learning adapted individual differences to develop skills, which supported the theory that an increase of interest among the participants promoted critical thinkers (Totten, Sills, Digby & Russ, 1991). Collaborative learning created a user-friendly environment and established a positive relationship between students and teachers.

Collaborative learning encompassed principles that allowed for diverse learning styles and encouraged students to participate as one of the main features (Smith & MacGregor, 1992). Some of the challenges associated with this theory included, activities monitoring of activities by teachers and the absence of facial expressions to gauge level of understanding. While collaboratively learning demanded responsibility and persistence, it proved to be a successful format for e-learning.

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Content Analysis

Content analysis of the curriculum was another component needed for the development of adult e-learning programs. The use of rich media and text media content, designed to motivate and engage adult learners, based on a combination of technology emphasis and student proficiency. Caldine (2008) believed offering e-learning opportunities that were rich in media cultivated the creation of learning activities in which students achieved objectives with greater proficiency and effectiveness. However, the use of rich media did not necessary translate into a greater level of learning. A method was needed to identify characteristics of technologies and link those characteristics with learning appropriate activities. (Parker, ~~A.,~~ 1997) found that through the analysis of content, it became possible to identify areas that could be enhanced,

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expanded, or initiated through e-learning techniques. The challenge in the efforts to use the technology to deliver these learning activities depended on the skill, imagination, and experience with which they were designed and how students used them.

Paris & Paris (2001) discussed the use of self-regulated learning (SRL) and iclass to organize content that allowed students to make choices on the activity to be learned as it related to their interests and preferences. (Dalziel, 2003) described learning patterns as a way of bridging between theory, empirical evidence, and experiences, to counteract the content design flaws that were inherit in adult e-learning programs. (Caldine, 2008) used theoretical tools to match categories of learning activities in technologies in order to identify and organize content. Similarly, even though the names of classifications were different, the purpose was the same. Each discussed the challenge of selecting the appropriate technology for creating adult e-learning programs, to meet learning objectives, content development, student comfort levels with the computer, and budget restrictions. When organizing content, several additional factors were taken into consideration; including relevance to current situation, reusability, challenge of activities, future job prospects, and academic endeavors (Keller, 2008). The content also needed to consider cultural backgrounds, interests, and educational levels. The design of learning activities, whatever the technology, had to be directly related to the learning goals set for the curriculum.

Conclusion

The components of motivation and engagement, a collaborative learning theory, and content analysis were used to help students reach their potential, participate in the learning process in a new way, meet academic objectives, and interact differently with the environment to

make the e-learning process successful beyond traditional means. The challenge of adult e-learning programs, described as a way to use technology to deliver learning activities, enhance skill, and use imagination and design experience could not outweigh the actual need for effective learning practices and assessments. The development of adult e-learning programs were designed to address diversity in learning styles and culture, prior experiences and knowledge, reusable components and self-monitoring to foster motivation and engagement. The learning environment was constructed and designed for the target group and provided students with ease of use. This environment integrated interaction and collaboration among students and teachers, which helped, nurture motivation. Students were more likely to be motivated when content was relevant and incorporated into their professional and personal development what they learned. The goal of e-learning is not to transfer the learning to technology, but to use the technology to develop new ways of teaching and learning.

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References

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