

ED6228 – Designing Instructional Materials COURSE OUTLINE

Course information:

Term: Fall 2019
Dates: Sept. 4– Dec. 6, 2016

Instructor information:

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What's the course about?

This course is intended for instructional designers, teachers, trainers, and others who want to learn how to present and structure instructional information in worksheets, manuals, textbooks, and online lessons in order to promote learning. The course includes an overview of research-based theories and principles, and opportunities to apply those principles to the creation of effective instructional communications for a variety of learners, content areas, and contexts.

What are the course goals?

I want this course to offer you opportunities to:

- think, discuss, and read about how instructional materials and messages communicate
- apply research-based principles, as well as your own experience and intuition, to the *design and redesign* of a variety of effective instructional messages for both page and screen
- apply research-based principles, as well as your own experience and intuition, to the *critique and evaluation* of a variety of instructional messages for both page and screen
- use words and images effectively and appropriately in the design of instructional materials and messages
- apply your learning to the design of a significant instructional message *or* explore in depth an aspect of instructional materials/message design that is of particular interest to you

What textbooks will I need for the course?

The course text is available online, in our D2L Brightspace module, along with a number of supplementary, optional texts and resources. (Please note that you are NOT expected to complete the activities in the course text, unless directed to do so by one of the assignment questions.)

How is the course organized?

The course is structured as follows:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Session 1 | An introduction to the course & each other |
| Sessions 2-6 | The theories and areas of research that have influenced the design of instructional materials and messages over the years |
| Sessions 7-9 | The effective use of words and of images, and how they can be combined |
| Sessions 10-11 | The issues that confront the designer of online instruction |
| Session 12 | Strategies for evaluating instructional materials and messages |
| Session 13 | Sharing of final assignments and wrap-up |

What is the online learning process?

The course is divided into 12 sessions and a wrap-up, all conducted via the D2L Brightspace learning management system. **Sessions will begin on Monday and end on Sunday** (with the exception of the first session, which will begin on Wednesday). As each session begins, open the folder for that session and **read the session plan**, posted as a PDF file in each session folder. After completing the required reading(s) for the session, and watching my video mini-lecture, you'll be expected to participate in a variety of learning activities: individual, small-group, and whole-class. These learning activities are not graded assignments but tasks that will help you to meet the course objectives and prepare you to complete the assignments. I've provided a checklist for each session, to help you ensure you've completed all the learning activities.

Although learning activities are not assessed (except as part of your participation mark), it's important that you participate in all of them as they're designed to help you master the course content. For the individual activities, all you're asked to do is reflect—no need to submit anything. However, you are welcome to email me your informal thoughts (written or recorded) for my comments and feedback. I'll also create a discussion thread each session in which you can share your reflections with others. For the small-group activities, I'll set up private discussion areas, although you may prefer to use another communication method. Note that I can check in on small group discussions to make sure everything is on track, but if you decide to hold your small-group discussions outside of D2L Brightspace, it's your responsibility to check in with me if you have any questions! You're not expected to produce formal reports or documents from the learning activities, but I will often ask you to share your results informally with the whole class in what I call a "Final Post."

Regular and active participation is an essential, unmistakably important aspect of this online course. Participation means posting substantive contributions in threaded discussions, interacting during online discussions, and engaging in online activities and tasks. You should expect to spend about three hours a week in online discussions and learning activities, but please don't leave it all until the last day of the session! If you do, you will likely find yourself feeling lonely and frustrated rather than an integral part of the class. My expectation is that you will log on at least three times during a one-week session and post at least twice, but remember: *quality counts more than quantity!* A short, to-the-point post is preferred by all to a long rambling one (see the Posting Protocol on the next page; please also read the participation rubric, available on the second page of the participation self-assessment form in the Assignment Info, Examples, and Resources folder).

As for my involvement, I'll log in daily to check for email, questions, and group progress. I read most posts, but I'll usually only post comments in whole-class and group discussions if I feel you'd benefit from some direction or input from me. Groups tend to operate well, and members are very responsive to each other, but sometimes a group may be quiet, off topic, or a little unsure. I'll jump in if that's the case, and I'll usually post comments on things like final posts.

At the end of each session, I'll keep the discussions for that session open but will move it to the bottom of the discussion list, so the current session will always appear at the top.

What are the assignments and evaluation criteria?

1. Participation (25%)

Regular and active participation is an essential, unmistakably important aspect of this online course. Participation means completing assigned readings and contributing to discussions and learning activities.

Near the beginning of the course, I'll ask you to download a participation self-assessment form (you'll find it in the Assignment Info, Examples, & Resources folder). You'll use this form to keep tabs on your own participation. For each session except the first and last ones, you should award yourself two points for participation, *only if you complete all of the learning activities in the session plan before the next session begins.* (If you completed most of the learning activities, then award yourself one point.) This may not seem like much but does add up over the weeks! At the end of the course, you can also award yourself one to three more points depending on the overall quality of your participation (**see the posting protocol, below, and the participation rubric**, in the same document as the participation self-assessment form). If sickness or technical issues ever delay or prevent your completion of the learning activities for a particular session, please let me know and indicate this on your participation self-assessment form; I may adjust your participation mark accordingly.

Posting Protocol

So that we can make the most of our interactions, please make sure that your posts are:

- *directly related to the discussion topic* (if you do post on a new topic, make sure you change the thread and the subject line to reflect the change)
- *made throughout the session*, not in a last-minute scramble (if you leave all your participation to the last day of the session, you'll likely find yourself feeling lonely and frustrated rather than an integral part of the class)
- *in response to what others have posted*, if you're not starting a new topic. (At the beginning of each session, and periodically later in the week, I'll post questions. If others have responded to the question before you, then please respond to them, not to me—in other words, let's engage in a class dialogue, not a one-to-one conversation.)
- *substantive* (substantive posts refer to the reading, expand upon points made in other posts, and somehow deepen the discussion; while positive, "I agree" is not a substantive post!)
- *as concise as possible* ("substantive" is not a synonym for lengthy! Please, if you find a helpful resource for others, paste a link to it in your message rather than the entire text)
- *clearly written and error-free*
- *respectful* of others' ideas and contributions
- and above all *thoughtful* (one thoughtful post a week is preferable—for you and for your classmates—to five hasty, ill-thought-out contributions)

2. Assignments 1 and 2 (25% each) – DUE Oct. 13 & Nov. 10

There are two assignments, which you'll find in the Assignment Info, Examples, & Resources folder. Each assignment consists of five questions, asking you to **critique**, **redesign**, or **design** an instructional message:

- A **critique** is an assessment of how well an instructional message works, considering it from the perspective of one or more of the theories we cover in the course. Every critique should include a copy of or link to the IM being critiqued.
- A **redesign** is a recreation of an instructional message, to make it more effective, applying one or more of the theories we cover in the course. A redesign may entail minor changes or an entire reworking. (If you only describe the changes you would make, then it's a critique, not a redesign.) Every redesign should be accompanied by a copy of or link to the IM being redesigned, the redesigned version, and a brief (one-page maximum) reflection paper in which you describe the intended learner, the learning outcome(s), and give the rationale for your redesign decisions. Please submit reflections as Word docs.
- A **design** is a completely new instructional message. The design should be *entirely yours*, both words and images (though you can use clip art where necessary, making sure to identify sources). For designs, feel free to experiment with different media (e.g., videos or Smartboard presentations). Every design should be accompanied by a brief (one-page maximum) reflection paper in which you describe the intended learner, the learning outcome(s), and give the rationale for your design decisions. Please submit reflections as Word docs.

The assignments will be evaluated on the basis of how effectively and appropriately you apply the theories and principles we study in class. Note that you will *not* be assessed on your artistic abilities! The images in your instructional message designs and redesigns may not be exactly what you want, but be sure to indicate, with as much fidelity as possible, using clip art and verbal description if necessary, your intentions.

You'll find sample completed critiques, redesigns, and designs in the Assignment Info, Examples, & Resources folder in D2L, as well as some "Guidelines and Tips for Completing Assignments." You'll also find a folder of instructional materials, which you can use to critique or redesign. However, I encourage you to work with instructional materials that you encounter or use in your life—for example, from your classroom, PD, hobbies, volunteer work, etc. Whatever materials you choose to work with, please make sure that you choose something manageable (e.g., one page or screen rather than a whole workbook or online program). If you have trouble finding instructional materials to work with, please let me know or ask your group members for help.

I recommend that you look at the assignments early and chip away at the questions week by week as you read and discuss the relevant material. So, for example, since the first question in Assignment 1 is about realism theory and behavioural psychology, you could complete this question during or immediately following Session 2, when we cover realism theory, or Session 3, when we cover behaviourism. Feel free to share drafts with members of your group for feedback and suggestions.

3. Final Assignment (25%) – due Dec. 7

Choose *one* of the following options. (Note: If you feel that an assignment other than those I have suggested would better help you to meet your learning goals for this course, then please feel free to discuss it with me.)

a) Research paper

Choose a topic related to the design of instructional materials and messages that is of particular interest to you. Some examples (but don't let these limit you):

- writing effective user manuals
- questioning styles and strategies for instructional materials
- designing instructional materials for a particular group of learners (e.g., adult learners, preschoolers)
- multicultural issues in designing instructional materials and messages
- the use of humour in instructional materials and messages
- the use of graphic organizers in instructional materials and messages
- designing effective PowerPoint presentations
- the effective use of design elements such as animation and sound effects

Research your topic and write a paper of about 2500 words (8-10 double-spaced pages). The paper should include a synopsis of research on the topic and principles and guidelines derived from the research, as well as your own reflections on its implications for your practice. It may also specify directions for further research and include sample instructional materials to illustrate specific points.

Finally, find a way to share your research findings with the rest of the class during our final session (Dec. 2-6).

Research assignments will be assessed on the basis of the scope of the research (using peer-reviewed books and journal articles rather than websites); the accuracy with which it is presented; the depth of your reflections on the topic; and the clarity, organization, and mechanics of the paper (see also the Grading Criteria, in the Assignment Info, Examples, & Resources folder in D2L).

b) Project

This assignment asks you to apply what you have learned to the development of a significant unit of instructional content, which may be a handbook, an online lesson, a workbook, a user manual, etc. (something that is, in scope and length, approximately the equivalent of 10 pages). The topics are virtually endless. For example, working with the University's Centre for Effective Teaching and Learning, you might develop a handbook for people interested in using instructional technology in their teaching, or you might develop an online lesson on how to tie fishing lures, or you might develop a workbook on how and when to use the French subjunctive...

Projects will be assessed on the basis of the application of instructional message design principles in ways that are effective and appropriate to the specific learners, content area, and context of instruction and use (see also the Grading Criteria, in the Assignment Info, Examples, & Resources folder in D2L).

Note that I'm not asking you to submit a reflection paper with your final project. However, if you feel that there is something I should know about your design (e.g., that you took the photos yourself) or your design decisions, you should include a brief accompanying paper with this information.

Academic Integrity Statement

The University of New Brunswick places a high value on academic integrity and has a policy on plagiarism, cheating and other academic offences. According to this policy, plagiarism includes:

- quoting verbatim or almost verbatim from a source (such as copyrighted material, notes, letters, business entries, computer materials, etc.) without acknowledgment;
- adopting someone else's line of thought, argument, arrangement, or supporting evidence (such as, for example, statistics, bibliographies, etc.) without indicating such dependence;
- submitting someone else's work, in whatever form (film, workbook, artwork, computer materials, etc.) without acknowledgment;
- knowingly representing as one's own work any idea of another; or
- contravention of written instructions of the instructor dealing with plagiarism.

A complete description of university procedures for dealing with plagiarism and resulting academic penalties can be found online at <https://www.unb.ca/gradstudies/current/resources/regulations-and-guidelines/regulations/academic-offenses.html>.

Course Plan

| Session | Dates | Topics, Readings, and Due Dates |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| 1 | Sept. 4-8 | <u>Topics:</u> Introduction to the Course and Each Other |
| 2 | Sept. 9-15 | <u>Topics:</u> Introduction to Instructional Message Design and Realism Theory <u>For this session, read:</u> Course Text pp. 1-10 |
| 3 | Sept. 16-22 | <u>Topics:</u> Behavioural Psychology and Cognitive Psychology <u>For this session, read:</u> Course Text pp. 11-18 |
| 4 | Sept. 23-29 | <u>Topics:</u> Gestalt and Perception Research <u>For this session, read:</u> Course Text pp. 19-28 |
| 5 | Sept. 30 - Oct. 6 | <u>Topics:</u> Communication Theory and Constructivism <u>For this session, read:</u> Course Text pp. 29-36 |
| 6 | Oct. 7-13 | <u>Topics:</u> Visual Literacy and Aesthetics <u>For this session, read:</u> Course Text pp. 37-45 DUE OCT. 13: Assignment 1 |
| *** October 14 Thanksgiving Day | | |
| 7 | Oct. 15-20 | <u>Topic:</u> Words <u>For this session, read:</u> Course Text pp. 46-67 |
| 8 | Oct. 21-27 | <u>Topic:</u> Images <u>For this session, read:</u> Course Text pp. 68-94 |
| 9 | Oct. 28 - Nov. 3 | <u>Topic:</u> Words and Images Together <u>For this session, read:</u> Course Text pp. 95-112 |
| 10 | Nov. 4-10 | <u>Topic:</u> From the Page to the Screen <u>For this session, read:</u> Course Text pp. 113-124 DUE NOV. 10: Assignment 2 |
| *** November 11 -17 Reading Week | | |
| 11 | Nov. 18-24 | <u>Topic:</u> From the Page to the Screen, cont. |
| 12 | Nov. 25 - Dec. 1 | <u>Topic:</u> Evaluating Instructional Materials <u>For this session, read:</u> Course Text pp. 125-129 |
| 13 | Dec. 2-6 | <u>Topics:</u> Final Assignment Sharing and Wrap-up DUE DEC. 7: Final Project and Participation Self-Assessment |