ALEC 611: Advanced Methods of Distance Education

Course Syllabus, Fall 2013

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Course Description: The key to successful e-learning is to design materials that help learners construct meaning from the content and communicate this meaning while connecting with each other, the content, and the instructor. Instructional design and delivery strategies used for e-learning need to focus on how students learn and construct meaning from material presented and utilize a variety of technologies. In the course, we will emphasize the instructional design and delivery skills needed for e-learning. In this context, the technology is just a vehicle to deliver the content and should be easily modifiable if and when the technology changes.

Learning Outcomes:
- Describe the current teaching and learning context for e-learning
- Practice and demonstrate the competencies of e-learning professionals by creating an online instructional module
- Develop and compare instructional design models
- Develop criteria for selecting appropriate delivery technologies and instructional strategies in the e-learning environment
- Develop assessments to measure e-learning based upon instructional objectives
- Develop a management checklist for the e-learning environment
- Communicate using appropriate instructional strategies and media
- Participate in online discussions and virtual learning teams

Course Materials: Web-based resources can be accessed from course website via http://ecampus.tamu.edu

Software:
You will be creating and developing an online lesson for this course. If you already have web editing software, then you may use whatever you prefer to create your online lesson. Within eCampus you may also use the ePortfolio tool to create a webpage for your lesson. This can be shared and used for other classes to demonstrate your knowledge and skills.

Recommended Textbook:
**Assignments and Outcome Assessment:**

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Post Online Lesson by **November 24**

November 25 Final Lesson Review – Student Participation/Evaluation of On-line Lessons within your virtual learning team 12/1 20

Threaded Discussion (Modules 1-5) of at least 1 post weekly 20

**TOTAL** 200

**Course Grades:**

- **A:** 200-180, **B:** 179-160, **C:** 159-140, **D:** 139-120, **F:** below 120

**Proposed Schedule for the Course:**

Although the course is asynchronous, the literature on e-learning supports the notion that learners who specifically select a time and place to work on the course will be more successful. If you are traveling or have busy work commitments, you may want to finish modules before the specified schedule. The interaction with your virtual learning team will require that you meet the schedule deadline, but you can complete modules/lessons before the specified time scheduled.

**Assignment Descriptions:**

*Threaded Discussions (Modules 1-5)*

This is an extremely important component of the course to ensure student-student interaction, active participation, and to learn online facilitation/communication skills. You are encouraged to participate once weekly (serving as facilitator 1 time). Review the topics of each module and choose one lesson topic to facilitate. In the Discussion folder “Facilitators,” sign up to facilitate one module by **September 1**. At the beginning of each lesson week, facilitators will post discussion questions in the Discussion area based upon the readings and instructional materials.
Philosophy of Teaching (1-1)
Writing a philosophy of education is a time-honored component of graduate courses in teaching methods. The ultimate value of this exercise is often the reflective introspection required. Your philosophy should be short—certainly no more than a page, and possibly a single sentence. It should be something you believe can be used as a touchstone in educational decision-making. Most importantly, it should be your philosophy. You will be asked to review what you wrote throughout the semester.

Case Study Reaction Paper (1-2)
Choose one of the case studies provided in lesson 1-2 and reflect upon what went wrong in terms of competencies and behaviors on the part of each of the characters in the case. Use the questions at the end of the case study and information from your readings to guide you. This reaction paper should be approximately one page, single-spaced.

Learning Style/Instructional Preference Profile Reflection Paper (2-1)
Take one of the learning styles inventories linked off the course website. Once you complete the on-line test, be sure to print a copy so you will have your results. Does the description of your profile describe you? How does it differ? What “personality” or “learning preference” does it neglect that may be necessary to describe learning characteristics? How can this help learners and instructors? How does it match with your philosophy of teaching? This reflection need not be long -- a page or less in length is fine.

Instructional Design Concept Map (3-1)
There are also a variety of instructional design models. Although they use different terms, they basically have similar components. Using a constructivist approach, you can choose to view other models and then come up with your own model, OR create a concept map of what YOU think are the critical components of systematic instructional design (the BIG picture—not specifics) BEFORE you look at the works of others. I would like for you to use drawing tools (or hand-draw and scan) a concept map of the components of instructional design with relationships indicated by arrows or another form of “connections.” Be creative!

INSTRUCTIONAL LESSON PROJECT COMPONENTS

Lesson Topic Theme/Audience (3-1)
We will spend the remainder of the course walking through the online instructional design process. You will design and develop the equivalent of a 50-minute, face-to-face lesson to be delivered online. In this module, I would like for you to (1) choose your topic theme; and (2) decide who your adult audience will be, using the Instructional Lesson Template form provided in this lesson. We will continue to add to this form with each module as we move through the instructional design process. You will be assigned to a virtual team based upon topic.

Lesson Objectives and Content Outline (3-2)
Develop at least three instructional objectives for your lesson, and add to the Instructional Lesson Template form. Each objective should have four parts: Audience, Behavior, Condition,
and Degree (See description and examples in lesson 3-2). Consider the domains of learning in choosing your action verb for your objective: affective, behavioral (psychomotor), and cognitive. At least one objective should require “higher order” processes (at the upper part of the domain hierarchies).

At this point, you should also be developing your content. Provide a bulleted outline of your lesson content on your Instructional Lesson Template form. You should have at least one objective for each main heading in your content outline. Refer to the Readings and Resources listed in lesson 3-2 to guide you.

Lesson “Asynchronous” Icebreaker OR Opener (3-3)
One important aspect of any lesson is gaining attention and stimulating motivation. Based on the objectives you developed, design or modify an icebreaker or opener for your lesson. Submit a detailed description of your lesson icebreaker or opener through Course Assignments.

Icebreaker or Opener Exercise (3-3)
Now that you’ve designed the icebreaker or opener, I would like for you to share it with your group so you’ll have a chance to facilitate it asynchronously. I will give you a group assignment based upon topic interest. You will use the group area for this exercise. This will give you other icebreakers and opener examples to add to your “toolkit!” This requires participation in the exercise the week of October 7.

Lesson Interactivity Strategies (3-4)
Instructional designers should consider a variety of interactive strategies in the design of online learning environments. Using your Instructional Lesson Template form, add your ideas for providing interactivity in your lesson. For each of your instructional objectives, brainstorm several ideas for your lesson for each type of the following interactions: Learner-Interface (interacting with the “technology,” i.e. designing a welcome page orientation with tutorials on how to use online collaboration tools), Learner-Learner (i.e. using virtual learning teams with designated facilitators to pose questions about module content), Learner-Instructor (i.e. using video clips of “lectures” or chat for virtual office hours, and Learner-Content (i.e. completing a learning style inventory and writing a reflection paper).

Lesson Assessment Instruments (3-5)
Instructional designers need to consider specific and measurable learner outcomes (assessment) to determine if their objectives have been accomplished. Using your Instructional Lesson Template form, design and develop the assessment instruments you will use to determine if your lesson, and the online delivery of your lesson, accomplished what you intended to accomplish (your objectives). Your assessments must match each of your instructional objectives. For example, you may determine that some of your objectives might best be measured by giving your audience an online test or quiz. Or some of your objectives might best be measured by having your audience produce a project based upon criteria on an assessment rubric. Consider your ability to collect this information from online learners.
Lesson Delivery Strategies (4-1)
Building upon your instructional lesson, consider the vast variety of instructional media available to bridge communication and facilitate instruction. In your Instructional Lesson Template form, add a list of delivery strategies and support materials you will include with your lesson, such as PDF handouts or readings (print), PowerPoint slides (graphics), Multimedia (audio/video), Resource links posted on a Webpage, etc. At this point, your lesson plan should be complete.

Now it is time to create your online lesson and post your instructional materials so that it can be accessed by me and your virtual team. **Send me an email on how you plan to host your website by November 10 if you are not using ePortfolio.**

Lesson Graphic Design (4-2)
What we learn and remember is enhanced by the use of visuals – from basic PowerPoint graphics to more advanced animations and multimedia. We will keep it simple for this course. Create at least two of your support materials from your Instructional Lesson Delivery Strategies. For example, you may choose to create any of the following: PDF handouts, PowerPoint slides with graphics, PowerPoint slides with audio, and links to Internet resources.

**Note:** Creating multimedia is considered an advanced skill, requiring specialized camera and software equipment, and therefore is not required for this class assignment. However, if you are competent in this area and want to develop multimedia for your lesson, you may do so. Understand that multimedia files can only be viewed if uploaded to a server that hosts multimedia.

Online Lesson (4-3)
You will create an online lesson. Refer to the Evaluation Rubric for the instructional elements that should be included. Your virtual learning team will participate in the lesson, so all necessary components should be available online. **Post instructions on accessing the lesson and any introductory materials to me and your virtual team no later than November 24.**

Management Checklist (5-1)
A distance education professional must also understand the basics of administrative issues. For this assignment you will 1) create a list of the support needs of the faculty and students (library resources, telecommunications infrastructure, software requirements, staff time, services, etc.) and 2) create a list of copyright restrictions/concerns/justifications for use of your materials and resources.
Lesson Evaluation (5-2)
You will create a lesson evaluation for feedback on the design and delivery of your online lesson (this is different from the lesson assessment instruments). Each group member will complete each lesson evaluation after reviewing the instructional materials and send back to the team member via the Email tool. **Copy me on the message.** You have from **November 25-December 1** to complete all the lessons/evaluations.

**Statement of Equal Opportunity in Educational Programs**
The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Edward W. Romero, Ph.D.; Director of Diversity and Inclusion; Texas A&M AgriLife, 2147 TAMU; College Station, TX 77843-2147. Call 979-845-2423. Requests for accommodation of a disability should be directed to Mr. Steve Schulze, Chief Human Resources Officer and Director of Special Projects, Texas A&M AgriLife Human Resources.

**Provisions for Students With Disabilities**
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides a reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Support Services for Students with Disabilities in Room B-118 of Cain Hall. The phone number is 845-1637. For additional information visit [http://disability.tamu.edu](http://disability.tamu.edu).

**Plagiarism**
As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off one’s own ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of that person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the *Texas A&M University Student Rules*, under the section “Scholastic Dishonesty.”

**Copyright Statement**
The materials used in this course are copyrighted. These materials include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless permission is expressly granted.

**Academic Integrity**
*Aggie Honor Code:* “An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.”
Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. For additional information please visit: [http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/](http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/).

**APA**
The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is the primary style guide for several disciplines and fields of study, including agricultural education. It provides systematic and consistent rules for grammar, punctuation, spelling, quoting, manuscript format, presentation of tabular or graphic data, citations within the text, and referencing. It should not hinder your personal writing style. Applying American Psychological Association (APA) rules to your writing (a) helps writers learn APA style requirements, (b) helps readers focus on the manuscript’s content, and (c) suggests high-quality scholarly writing. When preparing and submitting papers, manuscripts, and other assignments for this course, you will follow the APA rules. Adherence to these rules will be considered in the grading of all assignments.