

Current Topics in Learning and Instruction
Fall, 2013
Unique #10595

Class meets Wednesdays from 4-6:45 in SZB 435.

Marilla Svinicki
office SZB 538K
phone 512-471-3650
email: msvinicki@austin.utexas.edu

Objectives:

You will increase your awareness of current developments in learning processes and instructional design that are influencing how teachers and students improve their performance in achieving typical educational goals.

You will be able to identify a recent learning construct or instructional practice relevant to your specialty area and research its origins, conceptual family history, points of similarity and difference from related constructs or practices, and implications for either learning theory or instructional design.

Process:

We will do the above by:

- A. Critical reading of selected paired articles on an area of current interest in learning AND a current instructional design/system that are influencing how we think about learning and how we teach.

Current pairings under consideration are:

choices	Current interest in learning	Recent associated instructional designs
topic 1	active learning	Flipped classrooms, personal response systems, self-explanations, worked problems, learning for understanding
topic 2	situated learning	Problem-based learning, project-based learning, experiential learning, use of simulations, service learning
topic 3	social bases of learning	Group learning, peer learning, apprenticeships, Team-based learning, learning in a group, learning as a group
topic 4	online learning	MOOCS, CMC, and other online learning models, what are the skills for learning online?
topic 5	discipline specific learning	signature pedagogies, pedagogical content knowledge, epistemologies and learning
topic 6	self-regulated learning	calibration of performance, illusions of understanding, metacognition, learning from errors, developmental, cognitive limits on self-regulation, regulation of motivation and emotion
topic 7	neuroscience contributions to understanding learning	brain-based teaching, developmental issues, brain plasticity, executive functions

- B. Each participant identifies either 1. a recent construct (like "distributed cognition") or 2. new instructional strategy (like "self-explanation strategies") and researches it, developing a theoretical concept map connecting it to other constructs or methods, and a set of implications for either theory or methodology in learning and instruction. This can be a general topic or one that is specific to your specialty of interest (such as technology, reading, language learning, science, etc.)

For example:

You can start with a construct like distributed cognition, show how it is related to things like socio-constructivism, social interdependence, modeling, etc. and then speculate how it would impact instructional practice if it is found to be a valid construct.

Or you can start with an instructional strategy like self-explanation strategies and research how it got started, how it is related to various alternative theoretical explanations and other similar strategies, and how it can be improved by understanding its relationship to learning theory.

Evaluation:

1. Weekly readings and posts to the online discussion of the topic based on your analysis of the readings for that day or analysis of an article in your specialty area that you believe is related to an instructional design that exemplifies the topic of that section.

45% of the grade

2. Personal Specialty Area Analysis: A three part paper that you will periodically discuss in class throughout the semester as follows:

Part 1: A description and preliminary discussion of the new learning construct or instructional strategy you have chosen to explore this semester. This paper forms the first part of your exploration of the topic. It will be no longer than 4 pages.

In addition you will have a 5 minute block of time in class to describe your choice to the rest of the group and to brainstorm with them about the possible connections or implications they see. Their brainstorming can help you with the next section of the paper. This might be done in smaller groups, depending on class size.

A 5 minute overview presentation and brainstorming with class on the 11th and the paper due September 18^h.

Part 2: A description of the theoretical background that informs either your construct or your instructional strategy. Where does it come from? What is similar and what is different about it in comparison to other constructs or strategies that are focused on the same ideas? This part of the paper will be around 8-10 pages and form the bulk of the work in analyzing how either the construct or the instructional strategy is contributing to the literature on learning and instruction. This would be similar to the integrated analysis of the prospectus.

A 15 minute presentation in class on the history of your topic on either October 16th or 23rd . Paper due November 13th .

Part 3: The significance of this construct for instruction or this instructional strategy for theoretical development. This part of the paper will be around 4-5 pages and would project forward the effects that this construct might have for instruction or the effects that the instructional strategy might have on theory development of the field. What are the remaining issues that need to be cleared up for either theory or practice, given what you have learned about your topic? It would also include an annotated bibliography of the 10 most useful articles you found on your topic.

A 15 minute summary presentation to the class on either November 20th or December 4th . Paper due December 16th (after classes end).

45% of the grade

3. Attendance and participation in class discussions.

Missing more than two classes without a documented reason will affect your final grade. (This includes being excessively late or leaving class early. Sorry I have to make this rule, but better said now than later.)

Participation in class discussions can be offering your ideas based on your prior knowledge from classes or experiences or your readings analysis, commenting on the ideas of others, or responding to questions by me or other participants in the class.

Hopefully as an intelligent learning community, we will all recognize and acknowledge the importance of everyone's contribution in a respectful manner, even when we disagree.

10% of the grade

Date	Topic	Assigned reading or activity
August 28	Introduction to class and review of processes with example	Will distribute the reading list when we've chosen the topics
September 4	Topic lecture and discussion	reading list items
September 11	instructional examples from group and the reading list choices	1. Post article analysis of instruction example by Monday at 5 (compare one of your own plus one of the ones on the reading list); 2. personal specialty choice descriptions (5 minutes in class)
September 18	topic lecture and discussion	1. reading list 2. Paper part 1 due via email by 5
September 25	instructional examples from group and reading list choices	1. Post article analysis of instruction example by Monday at 5 (compare one of your own plus one of the ones on the reading list);
October 2	topic lecture and discussion	1. reading list items under
October 9	instructional examples from group and reading list choices	1. Post article analysis of instruction example by Monday at 5 (compare one of your own plus one of the ones on the reading list);
October 16	topic lecture and discussion	1. reading list 2. first half of personal specialty presentations for paper part 2
October 23	instructional examples from group and reading list choices	1. Post article analysis of instruction example by Monday at 5 (compare one of your own plus one of the ones on the reading list); 2. second half of personal specialty presentations for paper part 2
October 30	topic lecture and discussion	1. reading list
November 6	instructional examples from group and reading list choices	1. Post article analysis of instruction example by Monday at 5 (compare one of your own plus one of the ones on the reading list);
November 13	Review and analysis of the field – What's next for us?	Reflections on topics Paper part 2 due via email by 5
November 20	First half of final specialty presentations	no assignments
November 27	no class due to Thanksgiving	
December 4	Second half of final specialty presentations	no assignments
By December 16 th	Paper part 3 due via email by 5 pm	

The above is a generic schedule, topics to be filled in after class 1.