



THE FOUNT

The ID Magazine for the Evolved Learning Professional

JANUARY 2022



**Aristotle, Persuasion
and
Instructional Design**

How do we Learn?
By
Ranit Massey

**The
Super Mario
Effect**

The Podium
Featuring Fatima
Boorany Rahiman

CONTENTS

2

Letter from the Editor

A short message from Shafali

24

The Super Mario Effect

Does failure motivate you to try again?

5

FOUNT Article

Aristotle, Persuasion and Instructional Design

25

Around the Web

Read CA-curated articles on ID, elearning, and training, without slushing through the web yourself.

10

The Double-Take

Terms that mean a whole lot more than what they appear to mean.

27

The Podium

The Podium features Fatima (Boorany) Rahiman of South African Institute of Distance Education (Saide.) Read about her ID Adventure.

11

Sloth & Froth

Froth returns from a successful 5-Day training program...

31

Wisdom & Wit

A mix of serious, funny, witty, and wise quotes that jolt you out of your rut-inspired daze.

12

Guest Article

"How Do We Learn?"
by Ranit Massey of G-Cube.

32

Announcements

Creative Agni's Calendar of the upcoming online certificate courses/programs and free workshops.

22

Stop @IDJunction

Change the way you learn about Instructional Design. Stop at the Instructional Design Junction.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Friends of the Learner,

Welcome to this New Year Issue of The FOUNT – The ID Magazine for the Evolved Learning Professional.

It's January and Winter is bearing down upon us with all its might. As I sit here writing this letter to you, everything I see outside is tinted gray and yet the knowledge that spring is right around the corner keeps me inspired. I know that this is the time to take stock of my strengths and weaknesses, to reset my annual objectives, and to move the goalpost if needed.

With this issue of The FOUNT, I'd like to make an announcement. For 2022, I'll be conducting [the IDCDD course](#) only once every quarter. The details are available on the website.

The IDCDD Course is Now the IDCDD Course...

The Instructional Design for Content Development and Training Certificate Course or the IDCDD Course is a bigger and more powerful IDCDD course that has a content outline enriched with the concepts and scope of the IDST course. The IDCDD course will be conducted over 10 weeks (instead of the earlier 8 weeks) and will be offered 4 times a year (once every quarter.) I invite you to [visit the page to read the details](#).

Due to the capricious behavior of COVID, Creative Agni will not be offering any contact programs until the end of 2022. All courses/programs shall be conducted online.

Now about this issue.

- Read the superbly researched and detailed article “How Do We Learn?” on the mechanics of learning, written by Ranit Massey, Senior Learning Strategist at G-Cube Solutions.
- Meet Fatima Rahiman, Program Specialist – Learning Technologies at the South African Institute of Distance Education and read about her Instructional Design Journey through The FOUNT’s Podium section.
- Read my thoughts on Ethos, Logos, and Pathos being the three great tools in an instructional designer’s toolkit.
- Also learn about the Super Mario Effect and use it in your work.

Then there are the regular columns with tons of cool info-bytes that would liven up your coffee-conversations.

I’ll meet you again when the weather has begun to warm up.

Thank You.

Shafali

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The Who and Why of the Cover:

Socrates professed, “Learning is the seeking of truth in matters, and it occurs when after questioning and interpreting the wisdom and knowledge of others, one comes to recognize their own ignorance.”

His disciple *Plato* added, “And may we not say, *Adeimantus*, that the most gifted minds, when they are ill- educated, become the worst?”

Aristotle, who was *Plato*’s pupil and *Alexander*’s Guru said, “It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.”

Each of these early philosophers thought that learning led to an evolved mind.

I believe that the ability to perceive their lack of knowledge one of the foremost characteristics of intelligent people, and the ability identify, scope, and fill up such lack of knowledge among others is what makes a great instructional designer.

When I read about the Greats who illuminated the path of knowledge for those who came after them, I’m always moved to sketch them. Last year, I did a rather rough sketch of *Aristotle*, which found its way to the cover of this issue.

The cover combines my sketch of *Aristotle* immersed in thought with the image of a person wearing a head-mounted MR display, a photo by *Jessica Lewis* on *Unsplash*.

- Shafali





FOUNT ARTICLE

Aristotle, Persuasion, and Instructional Design

By Shafali R. Anand



SYNOPSIS

A Harvard Business Review Article “The Art of Persuasion hasn’t changed in 2000 years” by Carmine Gallo, got me thinking about the parallels between persuasion and teaching, and I realized that Aristotle’s Formula of Ethos-Logos-Pathos along with the two other rhetorical devices that this article mentions, could actually be the holy-grail of designing effective learning interactions.

I’ll start by giving you some background on Aristotle and his rhetorical devices, and then talk about the use of these devices in creation of learning content.

I’ve spent most of the last two decades emphasizing the need to know the meaning of the words we use, before we use them. I’ll start by defining the term that’s at the heart of this article.

Rhetoric:

Rhetoric is the term used to refer to the art/study of speaking and writing persuasively. Over time, the term rhetoric has been reduced to meaning empty bombast and glib talk, but for this article, we will ignore this denigration and stick to its first (and original) definition.

Aristotle (384 BCE – 322 BCE) who lived and studied in Plato’s Academy at Athens till the age of 37, which was also when Plato died, and traveled to Macedonia where he tutored Alexander and established a library. It was here that he wrote many papyrus scrolls on different subjects including Rhetoric or the art of persuasive speaking/persuasion.

In his three books that are together called “Rhetoric,” Plato explains how

Ethos, Logos, and Pathos work together to make a persuasive argument. Let us now understand each of these and see how they help us create effective content.

Ethos:

Ethos embodies itself in the character of the speaker or the persuader and persuades the listeners by establishing the credibility of the speaker. As audience we are continuously though subconsciously, reviewing the character of the speaker and trying to assess whether he or she is:

- Capable (has the knowledge, skills, ability)
- Credible (is trust-worthy)

Logos:

Logos is the logical premises and conclusions that the speaker shares with the audience. Aristotle called it the “reasoned discourse.” This is the content that is presented to the audience logically.

Logos is built around:

- the information,
- the concept,
- the facts,
- the idea, and so on.

Pathos:

Pathos is about making a connection with the audience by appealing to their emotions. Emotions are either positive or negative (involve either pleasure or pain,) and invoking them helps the speaker persuade the audience. Pathos is often evoked through metaphors and uses:

- Examples
- Anecdotes
- Stories

These three must be presented to the audience when the window of attention is open – and this, as we instructional designers know quite well, stays open only briefly.

Now let us review this triumvirate from an instructional design viewpoint. What happens when any one of these three agents of persuasion are removed?

No Ethos?

ARCS by John Keller tells us that to keep an audience’s attention fastened on to our content, we must ensure that the learner feels confident of the learning. A trainer who doesn’t come across as a person who knows what he trains upon wouldn’t be able to persuade the learners because the absence

of Ethos will make the learners lose motivation.

No Logos?

The focus of learning is the content, which is assimilated by the brain only after a “reasoned discourse.” Save for rote learning, all learning must be logically sound or the learner/the audience will lose interest in its acquisition. It is also important that a cognitive connection or a logical bridge, which enables the learner to review the new learning against prior constructs and accept it, must be designed between the learner and the learning.

No Pathos?

This is the trickiest of the three. While Ethos and Logos can be easily established (Ethos through judicious selection of the content provider and Pathos through instructional skill combined with subject matter skill,) Pathos isn’t an easy nut to crack.

Pathos, or the emotional connection with the audience must be built for a learning buy-in, and this is where most instructional designers fail.

Canned examples, rehashed stories, and stale anecdotes don’t cut ice with the audience. The examples must relate to the audience’s immediate environment and emotional needs, the stories must have characters that the audience can feel for, and the anecdotes should reach deep and answer personal questions.

In my personal experience, emotional connection or Pathos has more to do with any kind of persuasion, including persuasion for learning, than anything else.

So what’s the takeaway for us?

Establish the Ethos by presenting relevant credentials that the audience can relate to (and for this you must do a thorough audience analysis,) present the Logos with consistency, and create Pathos by:

- Determining the immediate need
- Connecting the learning with learner’s personal goals
- Establishing metaphors that the learner can remember
- Finding anecdotes that are relevant to the audience
- Writing/telling stories with characters and situations

relevant to the audience.

Aristotle's 2300-year-old legacy still illuminates our path into the minds of our audience.

Here are some links for further reading:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle>

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/>



According to Socrates, to acquire skills and knowledge we must:

- *interpret the statements of others;*
- *examine the knowledge or wisdom of those who have been acknowledged to be wise.*
- *show those who are not wise their ignorance (I'd recommend that we do this politely.)*
- *learn from those who are wise;*
- *examine/review oneself;*
- *exhort others toward philosophy;*
- *examine the lives of others;*
- *attain moral knowledge.*

"I know that I am intelligent because I know that I know nothing."

- Socrates

THE DOUBLE-TAKE

How many of the following terms do you know?

1. Oxytocin
2. Rhetoric
3. MOOC
4. Rubric

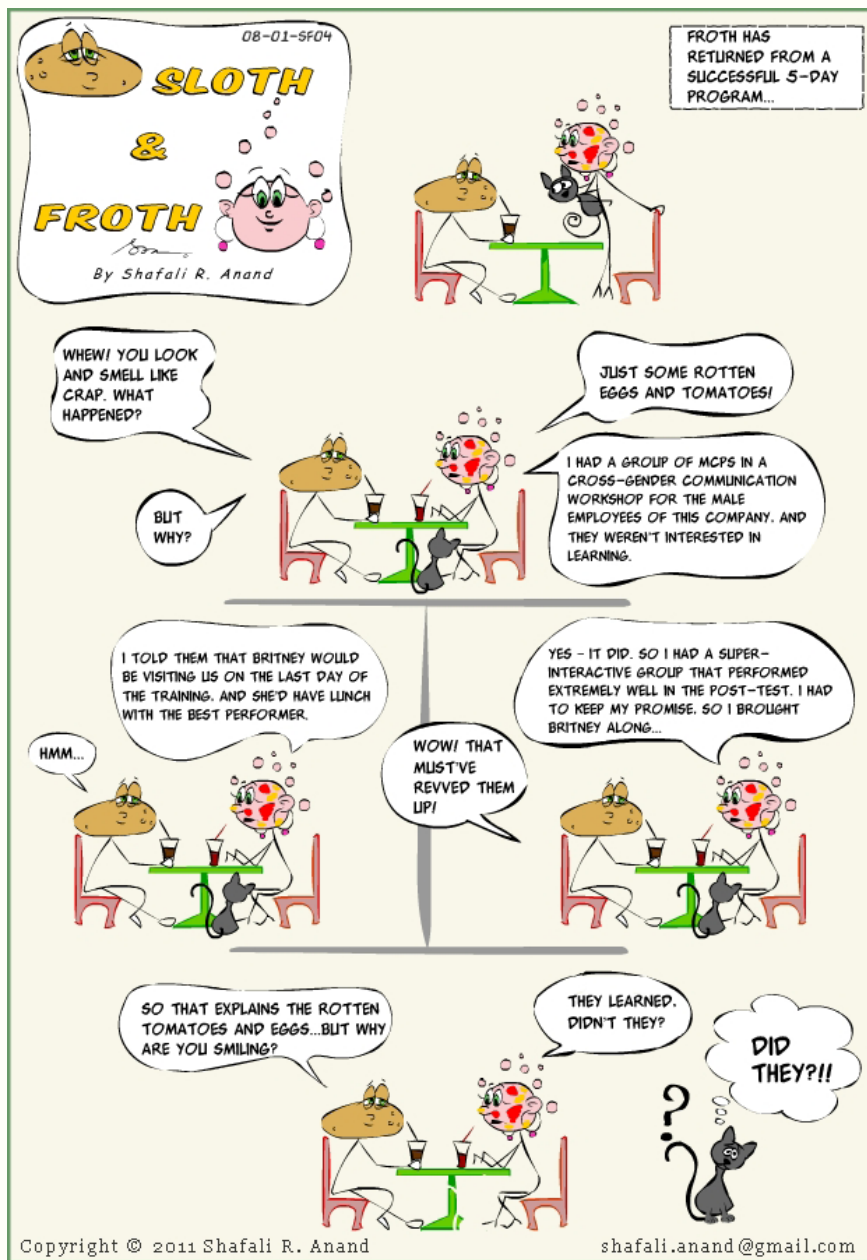


Here are the answers (jumbled up.)

1. MOOCs are Massively Open Online Courses or learning made available to everyone without constraints – they may be free or paid.
2. A rubric is an assessment tool that states the performance expectations for a learning activity or assignment.
3. Oxytocin is also known as the love hormone and a neurotransmitter associated with empathy, trust, and relationship-building. Empathetic storytelling helps release this hormone in listeners and makes them more amenable to receiving the information provided along-with.
4. Rhetoric is the art of speaking/writing effectively. Over the past two millennia, the usage of this term has begun to include insincere and glib political speeches.

If you knew:

- 1 out of 4: Get out more.
- 2 out of 4: Pull your head out of the sand.
- 3 out of 4: You are in the game.
- 4 out of 4: Don't give others a complex.



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GUEST ARTICLE

How Do We Learn?

By Ranit Massey



SYNOPSIS

How does learning happen? Is the process akin to osmosis where we absorb learning from our environment? Or is it that our brains are engineered to observe, analyze, and select the right information?

In his learning design career spanning more than two decades, Ranit Massey has often found himself troubled by the question “HOW DO WE LEARN?”

In this article, he summarizes his insights into the process of human learning

What is learning?

Let's start with a simple question - what is learning? Learning is any process that in living organisms leads to permanent capacity change and which is not solely due to biological maturation of ageing. (Illeris, 2009.) In other words, learning is the capacity to do things you could not do before. All learning resides in memory but all memory is not learning. Learning refers to only those memory structures that you could retrieve and use (consciously or subconsciously), when needed, to do things which you could not do in the absence of those structures. This is important because awareness or mere knowledge in isolation don't constitute learning. They help only when they contribute to the capacity change, which is then reflected in doing things differently.

So how do you make sure that someone has learned something? You simply ask them to do something they could not do before. If they succeed, it's

a confirmation of learning. And if they fail, you need to figure out the misconceptions (or the lack of concepts) that led them to failure. However, simply telling them the content doesn't make them learn it - teach by telling does not work efficiently. But traditional systems of education and learning heavily rely on "teach by tell" methods. So we have institutions and training schools that make students sit in a classroom, passively receiving information from a boring theoretical lecture.

How to make people learn?

This is one of the most important questions that learning designers and technologists should answer. Thankfully, we are hard wired for learning—meaning we really

don't need to do much. **Learning is a natural process.** All living organisms learn, even when no one asks (or forces) them to learn. Starting with simple processes, such as chewing, we learn walking, speaking, interacting, behaving nicely, and so on, naturally throughout our lives (Patterson, 1973; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). So really the question to ask is—how to facilitate the natural learning processes? Unfortunately, many traditional methods, such as lecturing and asking students to

cram the learning material, hamper the natural learning processes instead of making learning easy and interesting for the learners.

As learning designers and technologists, our efforts should really be targeted at providing an array of active learning methods to students so that their learning



Photo Credit:
Clay Banks on Unsplash

could be maximized. Here are some research-backed points about learning:

1. Learning involves mind and body, not just mind.
2. Learning is natural.
3. We learn better in social environments.
4. Learning is both conscious and subconscious, focused and peripheral.
5. Emotions are critical to learning.
6. Mistakes act as a catalyst to learning.
7. Learning builds on previous learning.

Let us review them in more detail.

1. Learning involves mind and body, not just mind.

This is a direct conclusion from our discussion above. We learn by actively doing things that involve our mind and body instead of passively absorbing information. Do you know of any person who learned cycling just by going through a manual? Or any person who started cracking math problems right after the teacher explained the concept? Probably not! We learn when we try things

ourselves. Period! (Diamond, M.C. & Hobson, J., 1998; Capra, F., 1996; Damasio, A. R., 1994; Thelen, E. & Smith, L., 1994)

2. Learning is natural.

We are naturally curious about meaning/purpose behind everyday things. It has been called the “explanatory drive” (Gopnik, Meltzoff, 4 & Kuhl, 1999). This curiosity is closely linked to the ultimate goal of survival. To survive and thrive better in the various environments, we are curious about the cause and effect of various phenomena. If you leave someone on a deserted island, they will try to survive by learning new things every single day. This survival instinct makes scientists study sun, moon, and space; it makes biologists and environmentalists search for sustainable practices, and so on. But the point here is that forcing someone to learn sort of acts as a barrier to learning.

3. We learn better in social environments.

Not only learning is natural, it becomes faster and better in social environments. (Lave et.al., 1991) (Vygotsky, 1978).

According to Vygotsky, the level of **potential** development (the “zone of proximal development”) is the level of development that the learner is capable of reaching under the guidance of

and peripheral.

We learn all the time, always - even without intention. It could be a conscious effort, for example enrolling in a guitar class or



Photo Credit: Element 5 Digital on Unsplash

teachers or in collaboration with peers. Therefore, as learning designers and technologists, we need to find better ways of making learners interact with teachers as well as peers. In the recent years, learning professionals have recognized the value of collaborative gaming in achievement of learning goals.

4. Learning is both conscious and subconscious, and focused

subconscious, for example how to not let the negative people impact your peace of mind. Learning could be a focused effort, for example keeping aside time to practice singing, or it could be peripheral, for example not to touch a hot object.

We all know and witness conscious learning around us. But human beings also learn from the background - the context that is not consciously attended to. This is illustrated

by research on implicit memory (Schacter, 1996) as well as mirror neurons (Rizzolatti, G., & Craighero, L., 2004), which shows how children “pick up” behaviors, beliefs, and preferences or dislikes while engaging in life experience.

While the subconscious learning helps us in everyday life, conscious learning

can help us in

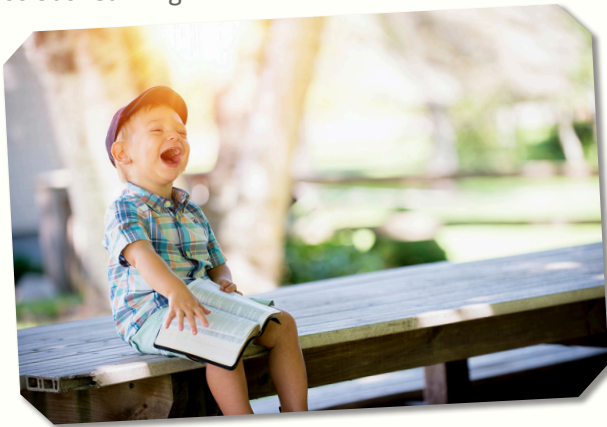


Photo Credit: Ben White on Unsplash

achieving our goals in a timely manner; subconscious learning is unpredictable—we don’t know when and how it happens, while conscious and focused learning could be predicted to a large extent. It’s the conscious and focused learning that we, learning designers and technologists try to induce.

5. Emotions are critical to learning.

We tend to remember and learn from incidents to which we have a high emotional response. Have you noticed that you vividly remember almost everything about an incident that caused you an emotional stress or ecstasy?

People

remember great details of any fatal accident that may have suffered. It’s interesting to know that they will remember the details that had no contribution to the accident, for example what colored clothes they were wearing, the song they were listening to while driving the car when met with an accident, and the last sign board they saw! Similarly, people

remember their marriages, the days their kids were born, or their graduation days. They will vividly remember how exactly they felt too.

Why does this happen?

This happens because our minds are smart enough to store all the information that caused a threat to our survival or things that aid our survival. Whenever this happens, it causes an emotional outburst. Anything that causes heightened emotions becomes a candidate to store in our memory, so that if a similar situation arises in future we are able to wade our way out of it or enjoy to the fullest. This is the reason, we tend to remember stories and movies that make us emotional.

Writers and artists have known this for a long time-- emotions are an important driving force behind thoughts, decisions and responses. Neuroscience has now confirmed (Pert 1997, Damasio 1999) this. Powerful learning is enhanced by rich emotional experiences.

As learning designers and technologists, we need to exploit this capacity of human beings to make them learn

something. In other words, if we are able to instill the right emotions in learners, there is a better chance that they will learn effectively.

6. Mistakes act as a catalyst to learning.

The old adage—we learn from our mistakes—is true after all. We learn faster and better right after we have made a mistake.

Why does this happen?

This happens because when we do something in a certain way or make a decision, we are using our existing memory structures to handle the situation. And obviously we are expecting to succeed! But if we don't, we have an expectation failure. This makes all our senses alert. *Wait a second! This wasn't supposed to end like this. What did I do wrong?* Our survival instinct kicks in and we are very receptive to learn the correct way of doing the thing or making the right decision. That is why diagnostic and corrective feedback is so important in learning. That is a powerful tool that learning designers and technologists could use to create effective learning experiences.

7. Learning builds on previous learning.

The brain is designed to perceive and generate patterns (Restak, 1996) and resists having meaningless patterns imposed on it by others. Jean Piaget (1896-1980) in his Cognitive Development theory introduced the word Schema, which according to him are categories of knowledge that help us to interpret

and understand the world. For example, if a child has only seen and interacted with smaller dogs, in her mind the concept of a dog is small, adorable, cute animal that she could play with, until she meets a ferocious dog. This will give rise to a sub-schema, if

you will, that has two types of dogs—cute and ferocious—under the bigger schema of “Dog”. This is how concepts develop in our minds. We tend to store concepts as well as the experiences through which we acquired those concepts as various schemas in our mind.

Jeff Pankin (2016) further elaborated on this and postulated the Schema theory, which solidify schemas as organized units of knowledge

for a subject or event. They are based on past experiences and are accessed to guide current understanding or action. Schemas are dynamic—they keep evolving all the time, store both “what” and “how” of the concept, and act as a guiding force to interpret new information.

Simply put, when we learn something new,



Photo Credit: Andrew Neel on Unsplash

we search through our existing schemas and try to attach our new learning to one of the existing schemas through characteristics and pattern recognition. Only when our new learning could not be attached to an existing schema, we tend to create a new one. As they say, learning is easy but unlearning is far more difficult.

As learning designers and technologists, we need to help the learners draw this association with their previous knowledge and skills and reinforce the concepts as much as we can. If we build on

existing learning, there is a greater chance of achieving the learning goals.

It's ironical that most learning systems and products don't leverage on the above points to make the learning experience more engaging and effective.

I would like to end this article with the famous quote by Benjamin Franklin:

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”



Ranit Massey is a Senior Learning Strategist at G-Cube Solutions. Earlier he worked as a Global Learning Solutions Architect with NIIT Limited. Connect with him at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ranit/>

If...

*If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:*

*If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:*

*If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'*

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!*

-Rudyard Kipling

STOP @ INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN JUNCTION

Read rut-breaking articles @ Instructional Design Junction.

Plato: The Thinkers, Philosophers, and Teachers (Part 2)

Plato was a thinker, philosopher, and teacher who lived in the 4th century BC. Among other things, his most important claim to fame was that he started an academy for higher learning – possibly the first in the western world and second in the world, as University of Takshashila (Taxila) predated it by almost a century.



Read More @

- <https://instructionaldesignjunction.com/2022/01/10/plato-the-thinkers-philosophers-trainers-teachers-instructional-designers-part-2/>

Eklavya's Quest – Self-learning & the Importance of Symbols

Eklavya, one of the tragic heroes of Mahabharata, learned archery on his own and became such a great archer that Dronacharya began to fear that he would far exceed the capabilities of Arjuna, his disciple.

What was it that kept Eklavya's eyes trained upon his goal?

Read More @

- <https://instructionaldesignjunction.com/2022/01/10/eklavys-quest-self-learning-the-importance-of-symbols/>

Why the Knowledge of Instructional Design Improves your Life?

Instructional Design is the study of the theories, models, and methods that make learning transfer effective. Most of these concepts apply as readily to life and other kinds of communication as they do to learning. Discover how Instructional Design helps us get the most out of life.



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- <https://instructionaldesignjunction.com/2022/01/10/why-the-knowledge-of-instructional-design-improves-your-life/>



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The Super Mario Effect

If you grew up in the eighties, you may know about Mario, but if his name doesn't ring a bell, click/tap <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario>.

"Super Mario Effect" is a term coined by Apple engineer Mark Rober.

The Key Takeaways

- 1.The perception of failure has an impact on the chances of success.
- 2.Failure must be seen as "doorkeepers" to success, instead of a lack of success.
- 3.People are more willing to try (and try again) when they believe that failure doesn't result in a punishment (such as a reduction in points.)

The Experiment

Rober asked his 15 Million YouTube followers to take a test that would prove that everyone could be programmer. This was a simple test that required one to drag and drop elements to form an algorithm and when the sequence was correct, then a car would run and reach its destination.

However, he didn't tell his followers that there were two versions of the test, and the only difference between them was that the failure messages were different. In the first case, the message shaved off 5 points from their (virtual) balance and in the other, the message didn't talk about the points at all and asked them to try again.

Those who got the first (punishment) message tried an average of 7 times less than those who got the second, and only 52% of those getting the first message got it right, vs. 68% in the second case.

What we can clearly see here is that people are more willing to go on trying if they don't perceive the threat of punishment. What we can also see is that more tries result in more success.

Mark remembered his gaming days and recalled that in video games the players always focused on learning from failures instead of focusing on them. He coined this 'The Super Mario Effect' after his all-time favorite game.

Read a beautifully presented article on this effect [here](#)

AROUND THE WEB

Creative Agni curated some nice-to-read articles from around the web. Check them out.

Why is AI the Future of Socratic Learning Methods?

AI or Artificial Intelligence can play the role of a facilitator in learning. It can achieve this by “pairing like-minded students for Peer-to-Peer (P2P) learning.” It accomplishes this pairing by providing prompts for questions in Socratic Discussions, by testing learners who want to self-assess, and by opening discussions with users of the technology.”

- <https://www.eschoolnews.com/2021/05/05/why-ai-is-the-future-of-socratic-learning-methods/>

Future of Artificial Intelligence in the Education Sector

This data-packed article lists the ways in which artificial intelligence can help change the education industry.

The article concludes that “with the right use of the technology, you can improve lesson planning, implement better teaching styles, make your classes inclusive, and even flip the classrooms when needed.”

- <https://scicomm.in/education/future-of-artificial-intelligence-in-education-sector/>

ADDIE vs. SAM for eLearning

This article (and you can watch a video too) by Tim Slade, compares ADDIE with SAM, and crisply states that “The truth is, they <ADDIE and SAM> are more akin to project management models, which are focused on process rather than design.”

- <https://elearningacademy.io/blog/addie-vs-sam-for-elearning/>

How to Structure a Winning eLearning Team?

If you are in the process of setting up your eLearning team and you have little or no experience of eLearning content creation (don't ask me why that might happen – all I know is that it does – and quite often too,) then read this short primer on how you must structure your eLearning team.

- <https://www.elucidat.com/blog/elearning-team-structure/>

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THE PODIUM

My ID Journey

By Fatima (Boorany) Rahiman



The workings of the mind have for long intrigued me (while on that note, I'd like to mention the Netflix series "The Mind Explained" justifies a cerebral couch binge.) I would constantly think about it, much like a spouse anguishing

over the fleeting moments spent with a philandering partner. You see, I had a rather tumultuous relationship with applying my mind effectively in my undergraduate studies as a medical student. As a result, I failed to complete this

degree.

Having excelled consistently at both primary and high school, and then failing dismally in my medical courses; I was left feeling like a jilted bride at the altar of a profession I fervently believed in. After all, as an idealistic student, nothing could surpass a career in medicine when it came to serving humanity meaningfully. As a result, I was forever a humanitarian medical manqué.

The spectre of failure – a nagging ghost which then consumed my thoughts (and which I later found a begrudging respect for) haunted me – it inspired me to seek the reason for my academic failings, or at the very least, assist those who were dealt a similar blow. This is how I started out on my journey into the world of learning.

Segueing into a Science degree after abandoning medicine, I completed a post graduate degree in Journalism and Media studies - a discipline that finally resonated with my intrinsic passion for words and which provided an opportunity to flirt with a short but absorbing course in Media in Education where I looked at edutainment models. This experience enabled me to secure jobs for a period, at various concerns involving

content development tasks where I served as a citizen journalism portal manager, engaged in desk-top research tasks at a HIV/AIDS not-for-profit organisation and later managed a primary school broadcast channel for an edutainment organisation.

While the job of managing the school channel did not provide any opportunities for me to be actively engaged in material development, it did whet my appetite for discovering and learning how content could be designed in more engaging and effective ways.

In 2008, when I was in-between jobs (I had taken time off to be with my children at home,) I engaged in an online search for remote courses and discovered serendipitously Wavelength's Instructional Design and Content Writing Online Certificate course (the IDCWC course.)

At the time, I had no idea of what a storyboard entailed. My knowledge of its use was limited to the term being bandied about in the filmmaking circles. I also had no idea of the term 'instructional design,' but I remember clearly how the storyboard exercise which we were tasked with in the IDCWC course lit the proverbial bulb of insight into teaching and learning



approaches. Among other things, I learned about:

- the significance of a collaborative approach i.e. that a team with several different skillsets would be required for designing effective learning artefacts,
- the possibilities of non-linear branching or sequencing through elearning, which accommodated different learning paces
- the need of a finely-tuned empathetic attitude for the learner through anticipating their needs and challenges etc.

These insights of what instructional design entailed, resonated deeply and immediately crystallized my career aspirations with my fate sealed as a learning enabler and creator.

Shortly after completing the IDCWC course I landed a job at our local university as a content developer and dabbled with digital authoring tools as well as the learning management systems. I discovered I had a keen interest in the Information Technology tools – a potentially effective aid in augmenting teaching and learning practices.

The spectre of medical school that had haunted me previously now

smiled approvingly and nudged me to complete a Masters Degree in Educational Technology. This enabled me to delve deep into the discipline of teaching and learning theories and critically examine the various pedagogical approaches. Moreover, I embraced a nuanced understanding of *Instructional Design versus Learning Design* and realized the importance of understanding how learning is *acquired* by the student rather than focusing on only how it is delivered by the teacher as per the instructional design paradigm.

Nourished with a social constructivist lens and an enhanced understanding of how to engage student effectively to enable deeper learning, I soon landed back at my alma mater, [the University of the Witwatersand at Johannesburg](#), but now I was heading the instructional design team – which of course, under my supervision was *the learning design team*. :-)

I currently serve as a programme specialist in learning technologies at a not-for-profit [Saide](#) where I am involved in a variety of projects and my responsibilities include project management, materials development, online course design facilitation, and research. I am also the communications manager

for a student success initiative called **Siyaphumelela** that's aimed at building capacity on student success interventions in the higher education sector in South Africa.

In hindsight it is heart-warming to note how my past conspired to render me an accidental technopedagogue and facilitated my aspiration to assist at-risk students from replicating the scenario of my earlier dismal academic failings, which I could achieve by helping educators use transformative teaching and learning practices.

While failure is indeed a stepping stone, the key to success is to recognise that the path you tread

would be intersected by the paths of others, and that your stepping stone may bridge an even bigger gap for someone else.

Building agency to develop humanity – is the mantra that resides at the heart of a humanising pedagogy. I hope to continue embracing and advocating this mantra through my learning design story, which is still developing.

Language Note: The FOUNT doesn't change the language used by the author, which in this case, is UK English.



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WISDOM & WIT



One hour per day of study in your chosen field is all it takes. One hour per day of study will put you at the top of your field within three years. Within five years you'll be a national authority. In seven years, you can be one of the best people in the world at what you do.

-Earl Nightingale

I never learned from a man who agreed with me.

-Robert A. Heinlein

Here's some advice: At a job interview, tell them you're willing to give 110 percent. Unless the job is of a statistician.

-Adam Gropman

Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow.

-Anthony J. D'Angelo

Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.

-Mahatma Gandhi

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(formerly IDCD Online)

Course Start Date: April 10, 2022, Last Date to Apply: March 10, 2022

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Course Start Date: July 10, 2022, Last Date to Apply: June 10, 2021

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- C2D2: Creativity for Content Design and Development (2-Day)
- GoT: Gamification of Trainings (2-Day)
- ISW: Instructional Storywriting and Storytelling (1-Day)
- CT: Cartooning for Trainers (1-Day)
- CWW: Content Writing for the Web (1-Day)



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