Putting it All Together

The Importance of Alignment in the Design, Delivery and Assessment of Instruction

Moderator: Donald Sefcik, DO, MBA
Content Expert: Deborah DeZure, PhD

This module will help you:
✓ Define alignment as it applies to instructional design
✓ Clarify the importance of alignment in promoting instructional effectiveness
✓ Identify the impact of misalignment on student learning

Achieving alignment is dependent on purposeful and proactive decision-making
✓ Major dimensions of instructional design include
  o Learners
  o Context for Learning
  o Learning Goals
  o Feedback and Assessment
  o Instructional (teaching) Methods and Materials

Planning instructional design and delivering it are not the same
* Planning is an iterative process that repeatedly checks for alignment and makes timely adjustments to maximize student learning opportunities
✓ Planning Phase (occurs in this order)
  o Establish the Learning Goals
  o Create appropriate Assessments and Feedback
  o Identify appropriate Teaching (instructional) Methods
  o Develop appropriate Teaching (instructional) Materials
✓ Implementation Phase (occurs in this order)
  o Provide a roadmap for learning (overview of course and syllabus)
  o Provide instructional experiences, integrating formative feedback
  o Provide summative assessments to determine if Learning Goals were mastered

Alignment is a "Magic Bullet"

Alignment: A Magic Bullet

- To maximize student learning, all the elements of instructional design need to align—working together to complement and support each other.

- Alignment in Instructional Design occurs in three phases:
  1. PRIOR TO Instruction
  2. DURING Instruction
  3. AFTER Instruction

Students are most successful when alignment exists

✓ Alignment helps
  - Students focus their attention on Learning Goals
  - Faculty identify and reinforce the goals that are the priorities for learning
  - Low-performing students navigate the instructional experience by providing clarity and consistency

Misalignment has consequences

✓ Examples of various types of misalignment
  o When Learning Goals and Instructional Methods & Materials are aligned, but Assessments are not, students tend to become frustrated and voice concerns that the learning experience is not fair
  
  o When Learning Goals and Assessments are aligned, but Instructional Methods & Materials are not, students tend to withdraw, skip classes and voice concerns about wasting their time
  
  o When Instructional Methods & Materials and Assessments are aligned, but Learning Goals are not provided, students may learn, but the result of their learning is not mastery of what the instructor intended

Purposeful selection of verbs and actions is important during instructional design

✓ Using the same verbs and actions in the Learning Goals, Instructional Methods & Materials, and Assessments is helps assure that alignment is achieved

Alignment helps maximize the learning of all students

✓ Alignment defines the learning expectations for students and faculty
✓ Alignment helps faculty remove unnecessary content from learning experiences
✓ Alignment helps faculty focus on priorities that guide student learning
  o Faculty need to be Intentional, Vigilant and Flexible
✓ Although all students benefit from alignment, low performers benefit the most

References


