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IDT 510: Discussion 1

Bill Bennett

California State University Fullerton

First, I want to say “thank you” to Professor Renold for introducing us to *Trends and Issues in Instructional Design and Technology*, it has become my bible for instructional design. The topics and the number of research references in this book are outstanding.

After experiencing education from the student perspective for the last five years and as an instructor for the last fifteen years, I can state unequivocally that there is a paradigm shift occurring amongst educators at the college level and one that is being demanded by students. The move away from the fundamentalist approaches of learning theory into the realm of Constructivism will take education well into the 22nd century. I think this is a good direction to be heading because I believe that taking the individual learner into account when applying instruction and assessment is important. This is one of the reasons I have chosen to pursue the MSIDT project that I am. I think that the future of instructional design is in building adaptive learning systems. Today’s static learning systems are no longer appropriate for educating the increasingly diverse student populations that we are encountering. We can no longer assume that our students are like us and have been raised with the same social influences. We need to develop systems that can assess a learner’s current knowledge and skill sets and their optimal learning methods before we can apply effective learning strategies.

With that said, I also think that studying Cognitive Load Theory is a big component in being able to understand how to assess student’s learning abilities and how to apply the appropriate teaching methods in order to be effective teachers. Some of this can be done manually by educators working in the classroom environment, but I think that computerized processes, including systems with artificial intelligence, will best be able to assess and adapt dynamically to properly serve student needs when it comes to the process of knowledge transfer. I have been reading a lot about how many companies, like Cisco, are developing systems that can assess a learner’s current level of understanding about a particular subject and then provide just-in-time learning tools to help their employees solve business and technically related problems on the fly.

I think IDT is an educational frontier that has barely gotten off the ground and that the opportunities for exploration are virtually endless. We have yet to fully understand the potential application of the theories and technologies that we now have and I can only imagine there is still a lot more to come. I feel very lucky to be part of such this blossoming field and I can’t wait to see what’s around the next corner.