Learning Theories in Practice

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Introduction

This guide is designed for instructional designers (IDs) and learning experience designers (LXDs) to explore and apply foundational learning theories in real-world contexts. Each section introduces a theory, explains its core concepts, and provides practical strategies for implementation.

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Constructivism

Constructivism emphasizes that learners actively build knowledge by connecting new information to prior experience and engaging in real-world tasks. Learning is not delivered—it's constructed through exploration, reflection, and context (Ertmer & Newby, 2020).

In the 1960s, Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner developed Constructivism. Engaging activities are integrated to accomplish Constructivism. Instructors provide opportunities for discovery, encourage personal connections, and scaffold content. Constructivism is most effective for higher order thinking, or complex or ill-defined topics.

Core Assumptions of Constructivism

- **Learners actively construct their knowledge.** Constructivism sees learning as an active process where learners build understanding by connecting new information to prior experiences. Design environments that promote exploration and personal meaning-making.
- **Learners Bring Unique Perspectives.** Learners bring unique backgrounds and prior knowledge that shape how they learn. Valuing these differences means offering flexible pathways and diverse resources to meet varying needs and perspectives.
- **Learning is Contextual and Situated.** Learning is most effective in authentic, real-world contexts. When content mirrors real-life situations, learners apply knowledge more meaningfully. Realistic experiences boost relevance, skill development, and retention.
- **Social Interaction Facilitates Learning.** Social constructivism emphasizes learning through collaboration. Peer interaction fosters deeper understanding through discussion and shared problem-solving. Use group work, peer feedback, and collaborative projects to enrich learning.

BONUS: Encourage reflection to foster deeper comprehension and self-awareness.

Implementing constructivism into Learning Designs:

1. **Use Scenario-Based Learning**
   - Branching with case studies
   - "Choose your path" dilemmas with consequences
   - Role-based storylines to explore perspectives

2. **Build on their Prior Knowledge**
    - With Preassessments
    - Low-stakes diagnostic quizzes
    - KWL charts (Know, Want to know, Learned)
    - Pre-course polls or reflective journaling
3. **Incorporate Social Learning**
    - Discussion forums with guided prompts
    - Peer review activities using rubrics
    - Collaborative group projects using tools like Padlet or Google Docs
4. **Ground Content in Reality**
    - Job shadowing simulation
    - “A day in the life” storytelling modules
    - Define importance through real employee’ stories and situations
    - Create effective learner personas + role-based decision-making for those specific personas
5. **Encourage Reflection**
    - Journaling or “pause & reflect” prompts
    - Post-quiz reflections: What would you do differently?
    - Padlet boards to capture thought processes
6. **Learners Shape Their Path**
    - Self-paced learning experiences
    - Personalized learning goals with tracked progress

Cognitivism

The learning theory: Cognitivism focuses on the internal mental processes involved in learning. It emphasizes how learners receive, organize, store, and retrieve information using mental frameworks called schemas. Schemas help learners make sense of new information by linking in to prior knowledge, guiding understanding, decision-making, and problem solving.

What *are* Schemas?

Created by Piaget, schemas are mental frameworks that help individuals organize and interpret information. They're cognitive "blueprints" that guide how we understand new experiences based on information that we already know.

Example of Schema(s) for Math Problems:

1. **Identify** the numbers
2. **Select** the operation (add, subtract)
3. **Apply** it - Solve the problem

This schema helps a learner approach any math problem in a structured way.

Did you notice? Bloom's Taxonomy helps categorize cognitive processes and learning outcomes, aiding in formulating clear objectives and assessments (Oyarzun & Conklin, 2021).

Implementing Cognitivism into Learning Designs:

- **Provide diverse forms of multimedia:** Present content with complementary visuals and audio/text—avoid redundant, text-heavy formats. For example, pair diagrams with narration, not identical captions.
- **Prompt Peer Interaction:** Use group discussions, forums, and collaborative projects to deepen understanding. Peer interaction encourages reflection, reasoning, and co-construction of knowledge.
- **Simulations and Role-Playing:** Incorporate interactive scenarios to engage learners and support active thinking through exploration and decision-making.
- **Personalize Feedback:** Provide adaptive feedback based on learner performance and behavior. Focus feedback on addressing misconceptions and reinforcing mental connections.

- **Cognitive Engagement:** Design tasks that require active engagement—like explaining, comparing, or applying—not just passive viewing or reading.

[See an example of Cognitivism in a Learning Design by clicking here.]

Situated Learning Theory

Learning happens through real-world participation, not in isolation. Situated Learning argues that knowledge is best acquired when it's embedded in authentic, social, and physical contexts (Goel et al., 2010).

Learners construct meaning by “learning through doing” in environments that reflect **how the knowledge will actually be used**.

Implementing Situated Learning Theory into Learning Designs:

- **Use real-world case studies** to ground abstract ideas in authentic contexts
- Create **branching scenarios** that **simulate** job roles, decision-making, or client interactions
- Design role-based simulations where learners **solve realistic problems**
- Incorporate social interaction—like peer feedback or collaborative tasks—**to reflect workplace learning**
- Make context explicit: clearly connect each activity to **how it applies in real settings**
- Use reflection prompts to help learners evaluate **how their choices would apply on the job**

[See an example of Situated Learning Theory in a Learning Design by clicking here.]

Andragogy

Andragogy, popularized by **Malcolm Knowles**, is the theory of how **adults** learn. It emphasizes that adults are not passive recipients of information—**they bring experiences, expectations, and self-direction to the learning process.** As a result, learning for adults must be relevant, practical, and respectful of their autonomy.

For IDs / LXDs, understanding and applying andragogical principles means designing with empathy, flexibility, and purpose.

Andragogy:

- Encourages learner ownership and buy-in
- Supports practical, workplace-aligned training
- Reinforces respect and collaboration between designer and learner
- Essential when designing for professionals, adult learners, or non-traditional learners

The Assumption(s) and Implementation of Andragogy into Learning Design:

1. **Need to Know:** Adults need to understand the purpose of what they're learning.
    a. Be clear about the "why" from the start
    b. Share goals, outcomes, and how learning connects to real-life problems
    c. Example: "This training will help you respond confidently to compliance scenarios you may face on the job."
2. **Self-Concept:** Adults want to be autonomous and self-directed in their learning.
    a. Offer choices (e.g., topics, paths, pace)
    b. Include self-checks and reflection opportunities
    c. Example: Let learners choose the order of topics based on their needs or role.
3. **Prior Experience:** Adults bring valuable prior knowledge that influences learning.
    a. Use scenarios that connect to real-world experience
    b. Encourage sharing or reflection on what they already know
    c. Example: "Think about a time when you had to lead a tough conversation. What worked or didn't?"
4. **Motivation to Learn:** Adults are driven more by internal motivators (growth, achievement, purpose) than external rewards.

   a. Reinforce how learning builds mastery and autonomy
   b. Avoid patronizing or overly simplified content
   c. Example: Use tone that assumes professionalism and respect for the learner's background.
5. **Orientation to Learning:** Adults prefer problem-solving over content memorization.
   a. Design learning around real challenges or tasks
   b. Use case studies, decision-making activities, and simulations
   c. Example: "You're a manager reviewing a team conflict—how do you respond?"
6. **Readiness to Learn:** Adults learn best when the topic is relevant to their current tasks or goals.
   a. Tie content to real-life responsibilities and immediate application
   b. Example: Include job-relevant practice tasks and role-based examples.

Gagné's Theory of Instruction

Robert Gagné's Theory of Instruction provides a structured sequence of steps to guide the learning process from start to finish. It's especially useful for training, eLearning, and skills-based instruction where clarity and flow are essential.

Gagné's nine events align with the cognitive processes involved in learning—helping instructional designers support attention, encoding, retention, and transfer of knowledge.

Gagné's 9 Events provides a **logical flow** for designing instruction, especially for **skills-based and procedural learning.**

- Involves scaffolding and processing
- Adaptable for in-person or blended formats
- Supports **step-by-step learning**
- Helpful when building **interactive eLearning modules**

Implementing Gagné's 9 Events into Learning Designs:

1. Step 1 Purpose: Stimulate curiosity and focus
    - Design Tip: Use a compelling question, surprising fact, short story, or visual hook
    - Example: "What would you do if your customer refused a refund... in front of a crowd?"
2. Step 2 Purpose: Clarify what they'll learn and why it matters
    - Design Tip: Use plain language to state learning goals and link to real-world value
    - Example: "By the end of this module, you'll be able to de-escalate a frustrated customer using three key steps."
3. Step 3 Purpose: Activate relevant schemas to prepare for new content
    - Design Tip: Ask learners to reflect on past experiences, or do a quick pre-check
    - Example: "Think back to a time when a conversation didn't go well—what made it difficult?"
4. Step 4 Purpose: Deliver new information in an organized way
    - Design Tip: Use chunked content, visuals, audio narration, and varied media formats
    - Example: Use short video demos, followed by labeled diagrams and concise bullet-point summaries.
5. Step 5 Purpose: Support understanding with examples and strategies

- Design Tip: Offer analogies, step-by-step models, or expert tips
- Example: “Here’s how a manager applies this strategy in the field—watch what she does differently.”

6. Step 6 Purpose: Let learners try what they’ve learned
    - Design Tip: Use knowledge checks, drag-and-drops, simulations, or role-play
    - Example: Learners choose how to respond in a branching customer scenario.
7. Step 7 Purpose: Reinforce what’s correct and correct what’s not
    - Design Tip: Use immediate, specific feedback—not just “correct”
    - Example: “Great choice—this approach validates the customer’s concern without overpromising.”
8. Step 8 Purpose: Measure if LO’s were met
    - Design Tip: Use aligned assessments
    - Example: A role-play video with learner responses scored.
9. Step 9 Purpose: Apply the knowledge
    - Design Tip: Use real-world scenarios, follow up
    - Example: “How would you apply this model?”

Mayer's Multimedia Principles

Developed by Dr. Richard E. Mayer, the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML) explains how learners absorb, process, and retain information when it's presented through words and visuals. Rooted in cognitivism, this theory emphasizes the need to reduce cognitive overload and support active learning through well-designed multimedia experiences.

CTML assumes that learners have:

- Dual-channel processing: People learn through two main channels—**visual/pictorial and auditory/verbal.**
- A Limited capacity: Each channel has limited working memory—too much input at once can **overload the system.**
- Active processing: Learning happens when learners select, organize, and integrate information **meaningfully** (Mayer, 2009; Conklin & Oyarzun, 2021).

Implementing Mayer's Multimedia Principles into Learning Designs:

1. Coherence Principle: Humans learn better when unnecessary content is removed.
2. Signaling Principle: Humans learn best when they are shown exactly what to pay attention to on screen.
3. Redundancy Principle: Humans learn best with narration and graphics (no text).
4. Spatial Contiguity Principle: Humans learn best when relevant text and visuals are physically close together.
5. Temporal Contiguity Principle: Humans learn best when words and visuals are presented simultaneously.
6. Segmenting Principle: People learn better when content is in small, manageable, and autonomous chunks.
7. The Pre-Training Principle: Humans learn more efficiently if they know some of the basics, or have a guide.
8. The Modality Principle: Humans learn best from visuals and spoken words than from visuals and printed words.
9. The Multimedia Principle: Humans learn best from words and pictures than just words alone.
10. The Personalization Principle: Humans learn best from a more informal, conversational voice, not a formal voice.

11. The Voice Principle: Humans learn best from a human voice than a computer voice.
12. The Image Principle: Humans do not necessarily learn better from a talking head video.

Gamification

Gamification is the use of game elements—like points, badges, and levels—in non-game environments to make learning more engaging and motivating. It aims to boost both intrinsic motivation (curiosity, mastery) and extrinsic motivation (rewards, recognition).

Gamification is not the same as game-based learning—it enhances learning through **elements of play, not full games.**

Effective gamification isn't just adding points; it's about creating meaningful interaction and progress (Erickson et al., 2020).

Implementing Gamification into Learning Designs:

- **Provide a Scenario-based design:** Embed content in a story or mission-driven structure to make abstract topics more meaningful
- **Recognition**: Use digital badges or points to symbolize mastery and participation
- **Provide progression:** Unlock content in levels; increase complexity as learners advance
- **Allowance to Try Again:** Allow multiple task attempts with feedback—encourage resilience
- **Choice & Autonomy:** Let learners pick from badges, tasks, or topics to increase ownership
- **Instant feedback:** Use auto-feedback tools, peer reviews, and badges to reinforce learning moments instantly

Connectivism

Connectivism, proposed by George Siemens (2005), is a learning theory for the digital age that emphasizes the role of networks, systems, and technologies in the learning process. It posits that learning occurs through the formation of connections—between people, digital tools, and information sources—and that knowledge can reside outside the individual, including in non-human systems.

Connectivism emphasizes that the ability to find and connect to knowledge is more critical than the knowledge (or content) itself.

"The pipe is more important than the content within the pipe."—Siemens (2005).

Implementing Connectivism into Learning Designs:

- Design learning as a **networked experience**—encouraging engagement through forums, expert communities, databases, and personal learning networks.
- Structure content in **progressive levels**, increasing complexity as learners advance to support growth and mastery over time.
- Foster **diversity** through peer critique, interdisciplinary collaboration, and exposure to global or contrasting perspectives.
- Integrate **adaptive technologies—**like AI tools and simulations—as active contributors to the learning ecosystem.
- Prioritize **meta-learning over content mastery.** Teach learners how to find, assess, and apply information in real-world, evolving contexts.
- Keep learning current by embedding **real-time** news, updated research, and dynamic multimedia. Plan for version control from the start.

Experiential Learning Theory

ELT is a powerful framework for instructional designers because it centers learning on doing rather than just knowing. Developed by David A. Kolb, ELT suggests that knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. It's widely used in adult learning, workplace training, higher education, and performance-based learning environments.

Kolb outlines a four-stage learning cycle that effective instruction should engage:

1. Concrete Experience (CE) – **Doing** or **having** an actual experience
2. Reflective Observation (RO) – **Reflecting** on that experience
3. Abstract Conceptualization (AC) – **Learning from** the experience by forming ideas or modifying understanding
4. Active Experimentation (AE) – **Applying** what was learned to new situations

Importantly, learners may enter the cycle at any point, but true experiential learning involves engaging in all four stages.

"The process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." –David Kolb (1984).

Implementing ELT into Learning Designs:

- **Design Authentic, Realistic Experiences**
  - Create opportunities for learners to engage in meaningful, job-relevant tasks.
    - **Examples**:
      - Simulation
      - Branching scenarios
      - Role-plays
      - Problem-based learning
      - Case studies
      - Virtual reality (VR) experiences
- **Provide Reflection Opportunities**
  - Encourage learners to pause, reflect, and analyze what happened and why.
    - **Examples**:
      - Guided reflection questions following a scenario
      - Journaling prompts

        - Group follow-up discussions or forum discussions
        - Padlet boards for insights
- **Connect Experience to Concept**
    - Help learners bridge experience with theory or concepts.
        - **Examples**:
            - Link practice to frameworks or models
            - Include “What does this mean?” sections
            - Use storytelling to explain the “why” behind experiences
- **Encourage Application and Iteration**
    - Give learners multiple chances to apply what they’ve learned in different contexts.
        - **Examples**:
            - Challenges that build in complexity
            - Real-life assignments or simulations with feedback
            - Peer review or coaching for continuous improvement

Behaviorism

Rooted in the work of Pavlov, Thorndike, and Skinner, Behaviorism is a learning theory that focuses on **how external stimuli shape observable behavior, rather than internal thought processes. Learning is seen as a response to conditioning—a behavior reinforced is a behavior repeated (Ertmer & Newby, 2018).**

Key Concepts:

- Behavior is learned through conditioning
- It emphasizes measurable outcomes over mental processes
- Habits form through repeated stimulus-response interactions
- Learning is generalizable (e.g., from pigeons to people)

Implementing Behaviorism into Learning Designs:

- **Measurable Assessments:** Behaviorism asserts that specific digital prompts or stimuli can trigger certain student responses.
- **Provide Purposeful Feedback:** Use stimulus-response patterns (e.g., prompt → response → feedback).
- **Use Gamification:** Allow learners to earn badges, earn points, and gamified elements reinforce positive behavior.
- **Learner Action:** Success is defined by visible actions, not internal reflection.

Keller's ARCS Method

Keller's ARCS Model outlines four key elements of motivation that help learners stay engaged, focused, and committed to learning. It's especially useful in adult learning and digital environments (Kurt, 2022).

Implementing Keller's ARCS Method into Learning Designs:

- **Attention** - Capture interest and curiosity
    - Use unexpected questions, storytelling, gamification, or visuals to draw learners in.
- **Relevance** - Make it Matter
    - Connect learning to real-life roles, goals, or challenges the learner already cares about.
- Confidence - **The Belief in Success**
    - Give learners achievable challenges, clear goals, and feedback to grow trust in their ability.
- Satisfaction - **Make it Rewarding**
    - Reinforce success with praise, progress indicators, rewards, or real-world application.

Sociocultural Learning Theory

Sociocultural Learning Theory, rooted in the work of Lev Vygotsky, emphasizes that learning is a social and cultural process. It occurs through interaction with others, within specific cultural contexts, and with the aid of tools such as language and shared experiences (Allman, 2020).

Core Principles:

1. Social Interaction Drives Learning
    a. Cognitive growth occurs through collaboration and guided support.
2. Culture Shapes Cognition
    a. Learning reflects the cultural tools, values, and traditions that learners bring.
3. Language Is a Learning Tool
    a. Dialogue, reflection, and inner speech facilitate deep thinking.
4. Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)
    a. The space where learners can grow with help —scaffolding helps bridge the gap.

Implementing Sociocultural Learning Theory into Learning Designs:

- **Use Collaborative Activities:** Group projects, peer discussions, and breakout rooms create rich learning dialogue
- **Design with Cultural Relevance:** Include diverse perspectives, media, and case studies that reflect learners' experiences
- **Encourage Language-Based Reflection:** Use prompts, journals, and structured discussions to turn thought into learning
- **Apply ZPD and Scaffolding:** Offer support like hints, examples, and feedback that fade as learners build independence.
- **Use Dynamic Assessment:** Focus on how learners can grow with support—not just what they know now.
- **Promote Private Speech:** Include space for learners to think aloud or talk themselves through tasks (e.g., audio recordings or videos).

See an example of Sociocultural Learning Theory (Padlet Board) in a Learning Design by clicking here.

Transactional Distance Theory

Transactional Distance is a theory by Michael Moore that defines the psychological and communicative space between learners and instructors in distance learning—not just physical separation, but how **structure, dialogue, and autonomy affect engagement** (Saba & Shearer, 2017).

Key Insights:

- More dialogue = *less* transactional distance
- More rigid structure = *higher* transactional distance
- Autonomous learners can thrive in high-distance environments

Implementing Transactional Distance Theory into Learning Designs:

- **Foster Dialogue**: Use discussion boards, live Q&As, feedback loops, or messaging tools. Build instructor presence with video messages or personalized check-ins.
- **Balance Structure with Flexibility**: Set clear expectations but offer options for pacing or sequencing. Use modular design so learners can progress at their own speed.
- **Support Autonomy**: Include self-assessments, learning path choices, and progress tracking. Give learners tools to set goals and reflect on learning.
- **Monitor Communication Gaps**: Watch for long stretches without feedback or interaction. Use surveys or check-ins to assess how connected learners feel.
- **Reduce Distance Through Design**: Use plain, inclusive language. Anticipate learner needs with just-in-time resources.
- **Embed Peer-to-Peer Interaction**: Incorporate structured peer feedback, breakout group tasks, or collaborative discussion prompts.

See an example of Transactional Distance Theory in a Learning Design by clicking here.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) explains how people are naturally driven to grow, learn, and perform at their best—but only when their basic psychological needs are met. In learning environments, motivation thrives when learners feel autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Core Principles of SDT:

- Autonomy – Learners need choice and ownership in how they learn
- Competence – Learners need to feel capable and successful through the right level of challenge
- Relatedness – Learners need connection and belonging in their learning environment
- Intrinsic Motivation: Driven by curiosity and personal satisfaction.
- Extrinsic Motivation: Driven by outcomes, rewards, or pressure.

Implementing Self Determination Theory into Learning Designs:

- Promote Autonomy -- Let learners choose from assignment formats or paths. Offer optional resources (e.g., video, text, interactive formats).
- Foster Competence -- Design progressive challenges that match skill levels. Include specific, timely, and growth-focused feedback.
- Encourage Relatedness -- Create meaningful peer discussions or group projects. Share stories, videos, or examples that reflect learners' lived experiences.
- Build Intrinsic Motivation -- Frame learning around real-world problems and personal relevance. Use self-assessment tools that encourage reflection and goal setting.

Community of Inquiry

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) Framework is a model for designing meaningful online and blended learning experiences. Rooted in constructivist learning theory, it emphasizes that knowledge is built through social interaction, dialogue, and reflection—not just delivered by the instructor (Cleveland-Innes & Hawryluk, 2023).

- **Cognitive Presence**
  - Learners construct meaning through critical thinking, inquiry, and reflection.
  - Stages: Triggering Event → Exploration → Integration → Resolution.
- **Teaching Presence**
  - The design, facilitation, and direction of learning. This includes instructor guidance and peer facilitation.
- **Social Presence**
  - The ability of learners to project themselves socially and emotionally. It includes open communication, group cohesion, and trust.
- **Emotional Presence**
  - Acknowledges the role of emotional well-being in learning. Fosters empathy, persistence, and a supportive environment (Majeski et al., 2018).

Implementing the COI into Learning Designs:

- Support Cognitive Presence
  - Use open-ended questions and real-world scenarios
  - Include reflection prompts and stages of inquiry (e.g., discussion → synthesis → solution)
  - Build knowledge through interaction, not just delivery
- Build Social Presence
  - Start with personal introductions and community-building activities
  - Use discussion forums and video replies to foster connection
  - Encourage informal spaces (e.g., “coffee chat” boards)
- Strengthen Teaching Presence
  - Provide clear structure and expectations
  - Use videos, announcements, and weekly feedback
  - Encourage peer facilitation and student-led discussion
- Foster Emotional Presence
  - Use empathy in feedback, practice reflective listening

- Provide mindfulness activities, emotional check-ins, or journaling
- Normalize struggle, support goal-setting, and emphasize progress over perfection

Community of Practice

A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of people who share a common interest or expertise and engage in collective learning through real-world problem-solving and knowledge exchange. CoPs are rooted in Sociocultural Learning Theory, which emphasizes that learning is shaped by social interaction, shared culture, and authentic practice (Allman, 2020; Pyrko et al., 2016).

The Core Elements of the CoP Framework:

- **Shared Domain**
  - Members have a common interest or professional focus (e.g., instructional design, healthcare, K–12 education)
- **Practice-Based Learning**
  - Learning happens by engaging in real problems, applying tools, and refining skills through interaction
- **Community Interaction**
  - Success depends on trust, dialogue, reflection, and a shared commitment to growth
- **"Thinking Together"**
  - Members collaboratively build understanding and innovate by negotiating meaning—not just consuming content

Implementing the CoP into Learning Designs:

- Design for Collaboration: Create assignments that simulate real workplace tasks. Facilitate group problem-solving around shared challenges
- Support "Thinking Together" -- Include think-pair-share activities, peer review, or co-reflection prompts. Use discussion forums to explore diverse perspectives on shared content
- Leverage Expertise -- Include peer-led sessions or showcase learner-created solutions. Offer rotating roles (e.g., discussion leader, project manager)
- Build a Sense of Belonging -- Begin with personal storytelling, team introductions, and shared goals. Celebrate milestones, contributions, and community wins

Glossary

Term	Definition
Andragogy	The theory and practice of adult learning, emphasizing autonomy, relevance, and experience-based learning.
Cognitive Load	The amount of mental effort required to learn something. Instructional design aims to reduce unnecessary load.
Cognitivism	A learning theory focused on internal mental processes like memory, schema, and problem-solving.
Constructivism	A theory that learners build knowledge actively by connecting new ideas to prior experiences.
Connectivism	A digital-age theory emphasizing learning through networks, systems, and technology.
Experiential Learning	Learning through reflection on doing, typically using real-world tasks and simulations.
Feedback (Adaptive)	Tailored guidance given to learners based on their performance, behavior, or engagement.
Gamification	The use of game elements (points, levels, badges) to increase engagement and motivation in learning.
Gagnés Nine Events	A structured sequence of instructional steps that support attention, retention, and application.
Instructional Design (ID)	The practice of designing, developing, and delivering effective learning experiences.
Learning Experience Design (LXD)	A learner-centered approach to design that integrates empathy, storytelling, and engagement.

Term	Definition
Metacognition	The ability to think about one's own thinking; planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's learning process.
Multimedia Principles (Mayer)	Guidelines for designing effective multimedia learning, focusing on cognitive efficiency and dual-channel processing.
Scaffolding	Temporary support provided to learners to help them master new concepts or skills.
Schema	A mental framework that helps organize and interpret information, aiding learning and recall.
Self-Determination Theory (SDT)	A motivation theory emphasizing autonomy, competence, and relatedness.
Situated Learning	Learning that takes place in authentic, real-world contexts and social environments.
Transactional Distance	The psychological gap between learners and instructors in remote environments, shaped by dialogue and structure.
Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)	The range of tasks a learner can perform with support but not yet independently.