Instructional Design Defined

Description: These definitions serve to help you understand how an instructional designer can help you design or improve course design, instruction, and student learning outcomes.

Formal Definition:
Instructional design (ID) encompasses a wide array of activities to improve human performance, learning, products, processes, and overall return on investments. ID includes the use of research, theory, and common sense. Instructional designers work closely with organizations and subject matter experts to solve problems, determine needs, improve outcomes, and/or find opportunities through systematic analysis and model-based approaches. For example, before producing a learning object, designers will systematically breakdown the skills, subskills, and entry-level skills of learning tasks for analysis to inform design decisions. ID includes the full spectrum of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation via a systems approach method.

Informal Definition:
The instructional design process utilizes critical thinking, expert knowledge, best practices, and technologies to improve an organization either system-wide or in discrete work units. Technology refers to any tool, software or hardware, or process. For example, simple writing tasks can be improved with an ergo-dynamic fountain pen, desk, and workstation. From this example, even a pen is considered technology. It’s the role of the instructional designer to take all matters, including potentially insignificant ones like a writing tool, into consideration when developing a plan of action for intended outcomes.

For further assistance, contact Sandra Rogers at (251)380-4480 or visit her office in the Burke Memorial Library, Room 113.