EDCI 588 Discussion:

Application of Motivation and Flow

Schunk, Meece and Pintrich (2014) state, “Flow is a personal process and reflects open systemic goals (p. 257).” Open goals are those that a person develops through experience. It is not something that can be taught in a course but a real sense of comfort and familiarity with the subject at hand. They may then become intensely involved in the subject and or activity losing awareness of the length of time they are spending on the activity and seek the activity not for any expectation (Schunk, et al, 2014). However does flow always lead to deep learning? Is there an emotional piece that draws the learner in to satisfy some other type of innate goal? If the first is true then yes instructional designers should always design so learners reach flow. If it is not true then designers need to be careful in creating design that produces flow. The same is true for the second question. If the learner is satisfying an innate goal not related to the instruction then the deep learning that could be accomplished with a state of flow may not occur.

My children went to a co-operative preschool, where the learning was based on play. They participated in different play activities that would foster the pre-skills of math, science, language, art and body movement. Parents took turns acting as teacher aids in the classroom to help guide children in play. I saw many 2-4 year olds experiencing flow while in the classroom (many throwing tantrums when they had to transition to the next activity for example). I feel they were in the depths of learning during these times. They were playing and having fun and learning but did not know they were learning. I think we can look to the Chan (1999) study to determine if play and fun are valid in motivation to learn. The study concluded that, “when people are motivated to learn, they not only learn more, they also experience more positive affect and self-esteem” (p. 159) but at the same time the motivation is not equal in all learners. Chen found that balance is best when it comes to presentation and content relevance. Too much hypermedia stimulation can be distracting and it should be used only when the content relevance is high. To relate this to fun and play in learning, it can be used as either a motivator or as a learning tool. As in my pre-school example, play can be incorporated into the adult learning world in many ways, currently elearning games are a hot commodity for adult learning. A game can draw a learner (such as Trivial Pursuit) where adults have fun testing their knowledge. It can be motivating and build self-esteem if the game is played in groups. Possible using online gaming for learning where students compete against each other will promote flow, challenge, goal setting, concentration, structuring control and immediate feedback.


Comparing HPT, ID and Motivation

HPT and ID are separate entities that can be used together to influence task performance. HPT is more focused on cost-effective strategies to improve performance of individuals and can incorporate Instructional Design to implement those strategies. In the Hadre’ (2003) paper, we are looking at ID and HPT motivation in an organizational culture. Hadre’ (2003) states, “the benefits of motivationally enhancing performance contexts go beyond individual success and self-image, or even functional productivity” (p. 59), and that job success is a result of “self-determined motivation” (p. 59), which in turn promotes “interest in the success of the organization” (p. 59).

According to USA Today only 30% of Americans are “engaged and inspired at work” (USATODAY.com) and this is even with cushy perks being offered to the upper 18% of workers. Imagine the middle-class perception, working in jobs with few to no perks. While there may be several underlying issues, I think motivational design is very relevant in both fields and for both scenarios (an employee may be working for a company because of the perks but that doesn’t mean they are happy in their work). In ID where instruction is created to inform and improve employee knowledge, motivation is a key factor in promotion of new learning and information. In HPT motivation is the key to improving middle performers and promoting high performers. One catch is the motivation needs to be proactive and not presented only when there is a problem. Sometimes this is not possible because not all problems can be perceived. So it is important for employees to have growth plans with steps to move toward goals that are set by the employee and their supervisors with indications for: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, promoting self-efficacy, and positive self-perceptions, attributions, and control belief

It is difficult to say if motivation in ID is more important than motivation in HPT. I think both can be used equally together or apart depending on the situation. Is there such a thing as too much motivation?

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