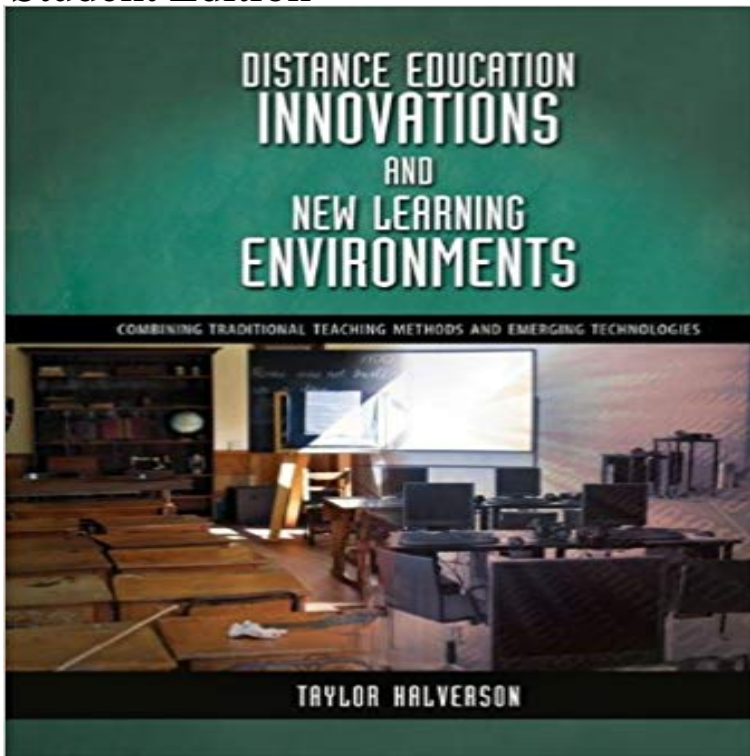


Distance Education Innovations and New Learning Environments: Combining Traditional Teaching Methods and Emerging Technologies, Student Edition



Note: this is a shortened version of the original, hardcover work. References have been removed. Despite a growing body of experimental and practical knowledge concerning the best teaching practices for blended learning contexts, there still remains a great need for prescriptive guidance to design blended learning environments. Instructional design theories can fill that gap. What are the best strategies for designing instruction for blended learning formats? Which instructional design theories are best suited to accomplish this task? This book proposes to offer some answers to these questions by identifying instructional design theories (i.e., sets of prescriptive strategies for designing instruction), selecting the most promising theory (Pennsylvania State University's Innovations in Distance Education or IDE), applying that theory to a blended learning environment, and using formative evaluation to improve the theory for future applications. Blended learning will continue to be a promising avenue for teaching and learning for the foreseeable future. Many university instructors are already using some aspect of an online or technology-mediated learning environment to supplement, enhance, or extend the traditional learning environment. It is only appropriate that instructional design strategies are provided to guide the development of these learning environments. This book is an attempt to address that need. This book highlights the positive learning outcomes that the IDE instructional design theory can generate for blended learning environments. For example, based on IDE prescriptions, blending learning environments should employ asynchronous discussions. In a small class, an instructor can reasonably participate in and review all discussions. But this work becomes exponentially more time-consuming with each student added to

the roster. Asynchronous discussion technology can help an instructor accommodate larger class sizes without sacrificing attending to the individual in class discussions. Furthermore, learner participation in blended learning environments tends to be more substantial as students put more thought and research into their responses since they are not given at the spur of the moment. The IDE theory is valuable in providing specific strategies for designing sustained and extended learning environments. This finding has implications for humanities-based courses where instruction often touches upon issues that are controversial, complicated, or close to the heart for many students. The formative evaluation of the IDE theory demonstrates that blended learning environments can provide learners a sense of safety for exploring challenging topics. When students feel safe to explore new ideas in a non-threatening manner, they are more likely to learn and to grow. Blended learning environments, if one follows the IDE prescriptions, also provide opportunities for all learners to participate, not just those who might dominate a face-to-face classroom thereby intimidating other learners from fully participating. This book adds to the growing evidence that blended learning promises to be a significant step in the evolutionary process of great teaching and learning. It provides solid, straightforward guidance on building robust blended learning, and will be of interest to those in education, particularly instructors and designers of humanities-based college courses. It will also be of interest to instructional design theorists and practitioners seeking guidance in designing blended-learning environments.

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