

Systems and Instructional Design

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A *system* is a set of interrelated parts, all working together toward a defined goal. The parts of the system depend on each other for input and output. The entire system uses feedback to determine if its desired goal has been reached. If not, then the system is modified until it reaches its goal (Dick et al., 2015).

Systems can also be defined as deliberately designed synthetic organisms, comprised of interrelated and interacting

components that are employed to function in an integrated fashion to attain a predetermined purpose (Banathy, 1968).

Next, *instructional systems design* can be defined as an organized procedure that includes the steps of analyzing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating *instruction* (Seels & Richey, 1994).

Instructional systems design is commonly referred to as instructional design. Instructional designers are teaching and learning specialists with extensive training and experience. They are at the core of effective instruction generally, and distance education design specifically.

High quality distance education has instructional design as the critical element, and with instructional designers as the critical professionals. Without the efforts of qualified instructional designers, distance education is likely to become like some other emerging fields—another educational innovation of questionable success.

Instructional design and instructional designers are often overlooked when planning for distance education is undertaken. However, the best distance education leaders know that at least three course design ideas are important:



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