

THE PREVALENCE OF HELP-SEEKING IN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN PRACTICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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This paper delves into the intersectionality of help-seeking models and the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) framework in the context of instructional design. Academic help-seeking behavior is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various cognitive, social, cultural, and contextual factors. Similarly, the ADDIE framework is a systematic approach to instructional design, considering the iterative processes for effective learning design and interventions. This study aims to illustrate potential synergies and identify practical implications for instructional designers and course instructors by overlaying help-seeking models onto the ADDIE framework. The implications of this synthesis offer insights into designing more effective interventions that foster adaptive help-seeking behaviors and facilitate meaningful learning experiences.

INTRODUCTION

A core job responsibility for instructional designers working in higher education is to support faculty and student learning. Research examining the roles and competencies of instructional designers in higher education has evolved over time to encompass the continuously changing technologies, contexts, and learner needs that instructional designers interact with (Mueller et al., 2022; Pollard & Kumar, 2022).

Ritzhaupt and Martin (2014) identified key competencies of instructional designers

as “knowledge of methods and theories of instruction; soft skills; and the ability to work in a team-oriented environment.” The most highly prioritized were soft skills (interpersonal skills, written and oral communications skills), which were more desired than course authoring or multimedia production skills. Ritzhaupt & Kumar (2015) continued the exploration of ID competencies narrowed to the context of higher education. Knowledge of instructional design, learning theories and models, and communication skills were highlighted as paramount, specifically the ability to discuss solving educational challenges with technol-

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ogy (Ritzhaupt & Kumar, 2015). Pollard and Kumar (2022) elaborated that communication, listening, and negotiation skills are necessary as IDs must not only be able to solve a problem or propose an instructional solution “but also to convince the faculty SME that the solution is both viable and reasonable to implement” (p. 13).

IDs often work in teams and form communities of practice among themselves, with faculty, or for groups of faculty so that groups of peers can help each other (Pollard & Kumar, 2022). Ritzhaupt and Kumar (2015) emphasized the importance of including student collaboration and group work in design for building community and preparing students for the real world. This emphasis on collaborative environments fosters a sense of community and inherently encourages the development of effective help-seeking strategies among individuals. When learners and designers work closely together, they naturally explore and identify various methods of seeking and offering assistance, ranging from informal peer support to more structured mentoring systems. Exploring help-seeking strategies becomes crucial in navigating challenges and leveraging collective knowledge for individual and group success.

Help-seeking seeks information, assistance, or guidance to address or resolve a question, challenge, or uncertainty (Chowdhury & Halder, 2019). It is a fundamental self-regulatory strategy that involves recognizing when help is needed and taking steps to obtain that help, thereby facilitating learning, problem-solving, and personal development. Help-seeking behavior can be classified as adaptive or executive (Nelson-Le Gall, 1985). Adaptive help-seeking is characterized by a strategic and purposeful approach where individuals seek assistance to understand and overcome gaps in their knowledge or skills genuinely. It typically arises from a desire to enhance competence and is driven by intrinsic motivation, emphasizing long-term mastery rather than immediate performance. In con-

trast, executive help-seeking is often employed as a more superficial strategy where individuals seek help merely to complete the tasks, prioritizing task completion over mastery of material.

What instructional designers do in higher education is closely related to help-seeking. A report on instructional designers’ roles, workflow, and experience has identified four categories of responsibilities for instructional designers, including designing, managing, training, and providing support (Intentional Futures, 2016). Although separate roles are attached to instructional designers from different institutions, what remains constant in their responsibilities is the core goal of supporting faculty and student learning in an indirect and sometimes direct way (Beirne & Romanoski, 2018). Instructional designers must integrate help-seeking strategies into their practices to enhance their development and efficiency and model and facilitate these strategies for faculty and students, thereby enriching the learning environment. This paper provides an overview of how help-seeking strategies can be integrated into instructional design processes to support learning in higher education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Help-Seeking Models and Processes

Learners and instructors all make constant decisions in the learning and teaching process. Regarding learners’ models of the help-seeking process (Karabenick & Dembo, 2011; Nelson-Le Gall, 1981), similarities can be drawn about decisions being made. Nelson-Le Gall (1981) indicated that typically, learners experience the following five steps that will affect their help-seeking experiences:

1. Becoming aware of a need for help;
2. Deciding to seek help;
3. Identifying potential helper(s);
4. Using strategies to elicit help;
5. Evaluating the help-seeking episode.

Based on the model, the help-seeking process begins with learners' awareness that help is needed when they cannot solve the problem independently. This step reflects learners' assessment of the problem, their abilities, and their current resources to deal with the problem. Learners' metacognitive capabilities and decision-making are required. Learners' decision to seek help also indicates decision-making since they need to overcome their own autonomous or excessive self-worth beliefs to seek help. Researchers indicated that self-autonomous learners who perceive help-seeking as threatening self-worth or classroom status may intentionally avoid seeking help when they should (Butler, 1998; Deci & Ryan, 1987; Karabenick & Knapp, 1991). Another decision arises after deciding to seek help since they need to identify potential helper(s) from various sources. For example, learners may sometimes contact a course instructor because they want direct and professional guidance, while in another case, they may seek help from peers since they are close to each other. Learners make decisions about the most appropriate help-seeking source based on several factors. After deciding on the final helper(s), learners keep making decisions about their strategies. For instance, learners may sometimes choose to email the course instructor because, in that way, they can get the quickest response, while during meeting hours, they choose to go to the office since they regard face-to-face instructors as more effective and direct. Learners decide about their help-seeking

experience when they have obtained the help. They evaluate whether they obtain quality help, whether the help-seeking is time or energy-consuming, and whether the previous help-seeking experience affects their self-worth or self-efficacy, based on which they make decisions about their subsequent help-seeking, including whether, whom, how, when, and even where to seek help.

A more detailed step model (see Table 1) was proposed by Karabenick and Dembo (2011) and Karabenick and Newman (2009), who proposed that eight steps existed: (1) detecting a problem, (2) determining that help is needed, (3) deciding whether to seek help, (4) deciding what type of help to seek, (5) selecting the source of help, (6) soliciting the help, (7) obtaining help, and (8) processing help.

All critical steps in help-seeking are represented in the two help-seeking processes above. For example, the two help-seeking models agree that help-seeking starts with learners' awareness that a need for help is needed after they analyze the level of difficulties and their abilities. Similarly, these two models both argue that help-seeking ends with learners' evaluation or processing, which will negatively or positively affect learners' subsequent help-seeking decision-making. The only difference is that the second model (Karabenick & Dembo, 2011; Karabenick & Newman, 2009) breaks down essential steps and shows more learners' decision-making when they seek help. For example, in the third step, the model by Nelson-Le Gall

TABLE 1
A Comparison of Two Help-Seeking Processes

<i>Help-Seeking Process (Nelson-Le Gall, 1981)</i>	<i>Help-Seeking Process (Karabenick & Dembo, 2011; Karabenick & Newman, 2009)</i>
(1) Becoming aware of a need for help	(1) detecting a problem
(2) Deciding to seek help	(2) determining that help is needed
(3) Identifying potential helper(s)	(3) deciding whether to seek help
(4) Using strategies to elicit help	(4) deciding what type of help to seek
	(5) selecting the source of help
	(6) soliciting the help
	(7) obtaining help
(5) Evaluating the help-seeking episode	(8) processing help

(1981) only indicates that learners identify potential helper(s). However, the model by Karabenick and Dembo (2011) considers the type of help-seeking and the source of help-seeking. Researchers have identified distinct types and sources of help-seeking (Cheng et al., 2013; Karabenick & Knapp, 1991; Makara & Karabenick, 2013; Nelson-Le Gall, 1981). A complete list of help-seeking categorizations, definitions, and examples is presented in Table 2 (Yang & Stefaniak, 2023).

The ADDIE Process

The ADDIE process (Analyze, Design, Development, Implement, and Evaluate) is a fundamental guiding process to create effective learning experiences. Further, ADDIE is a generative process where intentionally planned activities aim to guide the learner as they construct knowledge on a mutually agreed upon topic in a dedicated learning environment (Branch, 2009). Dousay (2018) highlights the designation of ADDIE as a process, not a model. This ADDIE process is often described as the framework upon which most instructional design models can be mapped back (Dousay & Stefaniak, 2023).

Analyze

In this step, instructional designers seek to “identify the probable causes for a performance gap” (Branch, 2009, p. 17). First, it is essential to note that ADDIE is only helpful when the problem is instructional. Completing this initial gap analysis of the performance, the learner(s), the context, resources, and delivery are necessary to craft a solution for problems that can be resolved with instruction (Branch, 2009). It is imperative to analyze the multiple facets of a system that may be contributing to the performance gap, including the learners’ needs and prior knowledge, the learning environment, and the objectives to select an appropriate instructional design model to serve as the “blueprint” plan for instructional activities (Dousay & Stefaniak, 2023).

Design

Following analysis, the Design phase lays the groundwork for the instructional strategy to be built. Branch (2009) outlines that this step includes completing a task inventory, composing the performance objectives, and generating the strategies for testing. The instructional goals are clarified, and specific learning objectives, content sequencing, and assessment activities are planned. This includes decisions about how the instruction will be delivered and which tools will be used to enhance learning.

Develop

In the Development phase of the ADDIE model, the plans formed during the Design phase are brought to life. This stage involves the actual assembly of the lesson through generating content, creating or curating media, drafting guidance for the learner and instructor, testing, and making revisions (Branch, 2009). This phase includes the development of selection infrastructure, which may include learning management systems and other technology integrations for the delivery of the instruction. This phase is iterative—it includes prototyping and testing to ensure that the actual course meets the goals.

Implement

In the implementation phase, the lessons that have been created are delivered to the students. In this rollout, the target audience engages with the content, participates in activities, and completes assessments. Implementation includes setting up the learning environment (online or face-to-face), engaging the students, and crafting learner and facilitator plans (Branch, 2009). Beyond the plans, this phase is where the instructors finally communicate with the students, providing guidance, feedback, and support. This communication informs the following phase, as students’ questions and performance will highlight issues to consider revising.

TABLE 2
Main Categorizations of Help-Seeking Behavior

<i>Researcher(s)</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Example/ Focus</i>
Nelson-Le Gall, 1981	Executive/ Expedient help-seeking	Instances in which the person's intention is only to have somebody else on his or her behalf solve a problem or attain a goal.	Dependency-oriented.
	Instrumental/ Adaptive Help-seeking	Instances in which the person seeks a limited amount & type of help to help himself or herself independently solve the problem or attain a goal.	Mastery-oriented.
Karabenick & Knapp, 1991	Formal Help-seeking	Learners obtain help from formal sources.	Seek help from instructors, university-provided support personnel, and ask questions in class.
	Informal Help-seeking	Learners obtain help from informal sources.	Seek help from other students and more knowledgeable friends.
	Instrumental Activities	Learners take action to help themselves perform better.	Try harder, study more or take better notes.
	Lowering Performance Aspirations	Learners choose to lower their original aspirations and do easier things next time.	Take a lighter load next time or select easier courses next term.
Cheng et al., 2013	Altering Goals	Learners change their goals based on their experiences.	Transfer to another school, change major or minor.
	Information Searching	Search online for answers to solve academic problems.	Search information on Google or other relevant websites.
	Formal Query	Contact teachers or tutors online to request help.	Email course instructors or tutors to get help.
Makara & Karabenick, 2013	Informal Query	Contact peers or unknown experts online to request help.	Receive help through e-tutor systems. Go to social network sites to request help from unknown experts or other peers.
	Formal (F) & Informal (In)	Seek help through formal and informal sources	F: course website, instructor, syllabus, textbook, tutor center, etc. In: chat room, discussion board, peer, etc.
	Personal (P) & Impersonal (Im)	The relationship between the help seeker and the help source is close or distant.	P: peer, instructor in person, friend, family, etc. Im: course website, web search engine, syllabus, textbook, etc.
	Mediated (M) & Face-to-face (F)	The help-seeking episode occurs with the help of technology or help-seekers and help-givers meet physically.	M: chat room, discussion board, course website, syllabus, textbooks, etc. F: instructor in person, peer in person, tutor center, etc.
	Dynamic (D) & Static (S)	The help source adapts or changes over time based on learners' needs or not	D: chat room, discussion board, instructor, peer, friend, tutor center, etc. S: course website, syllabus, textbook, etc.

Evaluate

Evaluation is the final phase, where instructional designers assess the effectiveness of the learning experience. Here, instructional designers should determine the evaluation criteria and select the appropriate evaluation tool(s) before conducting the evaluation (Branch, 2009). Both formative and summative evalu-

ations should be completed to check progress, make adjustments throughout the process, and assess the overall effectiveness after the course has been delivered. This includes analyzing learner feedback, assessment results, engagement data, and more to identify areas of success and opportunities for improvement for future iterations.

ADDIE is a valuable process for instructional designers due to its ability to be adapted to fit most contexts and be reused for continuous improvement (Branch, 2009). Such an iterative approach ensures that instructional materials remain relevant, effective, and aligned with the learners’ needs and goals. This allows for flexibility and feedback during the design process to refine content based on the needs of the learning audience (Gibbons, 2014). ADDIE provides a systematic framework for designing educational content and promotes a dynamic systemic approach to instructional design that, coupled with help-seeking strategies, can provide a responsive framework for designing learner-centered instruction.

An Overlay of ADDIE and Help-Seeking Processes

In instructional design, the ID process provides a systematic process for determining training needs, designing and developing training programs and materials, implementing the program, and evaluating its effectiveness (Gagne et al., 2005). Table 3 details the ADDIE framework with main tasks at each step (Peterson, 2003), aligned with the proposed help-seeking processes.

Analyze

In this phase, we propose that the help-seeking process involves analyzing the problems and their abilities and evaluating past help-seeking experiences. A common scenario

TABLE 3
An Overlay of ADDIE and Help-Seeking Processes (adapted from Karabenick & Dembo, 2011)

<i>ADDIE</i>		
<i>Step</i>	<i>Main Tasks</i>	<i>Help-Seeking Process</i>
Analyze (the process of defining what is to be learned)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a needs assessment to determine the needs of the audience. 2. Conduct task analysis to identify the instructional content or skills related. 3. Perform instructional analysis to identify what must be learned. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis of the level of difficulties encountered. 2. Analysis of learner’s abilities. 3. Evaluation of past help-seeking experiences.
Design (the process of specifying how it is to be learned)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify objectives. 2. Determine how the objectives will be met. 3. Determine how the instructional strategies will be employed to achieve the objectives. 4. Determine how the media and methods will be most effective in the delivery of the objectives. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Identification of learning goals. 5. Identification of potential helper(s). 6. Deciding that help-seeking is needed and possible.
Develop (the process of authoring and producing the materials)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop or select materials and media. 2. Conduct formative evaluations. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Development of strategies to seek help.
Implement (the process of installing the project in the real-world context)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Continue to analyze, redesign, and enhance the instructional product. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Employ strategies to elicit help.
Evaluate (the process of determining the effectiveness of the instruction)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine if the problem has been solved. 2. Determine if the objectives have been met. 3. Determine the impact of the product or course. 4. Determine if the changes are necessary for the future delivery of the program or course. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Evaluate the current help-seeking episode.

is that learners have identified a problem that is beyond their abilities and speculate that they cannot solve the problem independently without external help.

Design

In this phase, we propose that the help-seeking process involves the identification of learning goals, potential helper(s), and the decision that help-seeking is needed and possible. According to Ryan et al. (1997), academic goals to maintain an image of academic excellence and perceptions of help-seeking as threatening to their academic pursuits can lead to avoidance of help-seeking. Moreover, Nelson-Le Gall (1981) indicated that learners with an executive goal counted on the help to complete tasks, whereas learners with an instrumental goal aimed for just enough assistance to complete the task independently. Similar findings were proposed by Karabenick and Dembo (2011), who declared that learner's help-seeking behavior was influenced by their overall perceptions of the achievement goals within the classroom.

Develop

In this phase, we propose that the help-seeking process comprises the development of strategies to seek help. Learners' decision to use strategies is affected by several factors. For example, in a study by Giblin et al. (2021), three factors related to help-seeking sources have been identified, including accessibility, availability, and quality. In other words, if the help-seeking source is accessible, available, and high-quality, learners will be more likely to use that source.

Implement

In this phase, we propose that the help-seeking process includes employing strategies to seek help. Learners in this step have identified the proper help-seeking source, and their goal is to use specific strategies to reach the source. For example, an ideal help-seeking source for a course instructor has been identified. How could the student reach the instructor? A com-

plete list of help-seeking strategies can be found in Table 2. Giblin et al. (2021) identified two solicitation strategies: contact and online search process, which are now widely accepted as face-to-face and online help-seeking.

Evaluate

In the final phase, we propose that the help-seeking process end with learners evaluating the current help-seeking episode. If learners have a successful help-seeking experience with little or no cost or threat to their status or esteem, this positive experience will typically influence their subsequent help-seeking intentions. Otherwise, learners may develop a negative perception of help-seeking, reducing their likelihood of seeking help in the future.

The Intersection of ID and Help-Seeking

A core goal of instructional design in higher education is to support student learning and faculty in an indirect and sometimes direct way. This is in line with seeking help, which is to promote learning outcomes by solving the problems learners have. It is purported that help-seeking should be incorporated as a significant component of instructional design based on their connections.

The first connection between instructional design and help-seeking is creating and maintaining a learning-supportive environment. Studies have indicated that a mastery-oriented learning environment significantly promotes learners' adaptive help-seeking behavior (Karabenick & Dembo, 2011). In contrast, a performance-based environment can cause statistically significant non-adaptive help-seeking (Giblin & Stefaniak, 2017). Moreover, instructional design can incorporate interactive elements and collaboration activities, including discussion forums, group activities, and peer feedback, to encourage learners to seek and offer help.

The second connection is the systematic process that instructional design and help-seeking encompass. Researchers in help-seeking

have been trying to identify steps explaining learners' help-seeking behavior (Karabenick & Dembo, 2011; Nelson-Le Gall, 1981). Although these researchers identified different steps in help-seeking, some common themes can be identified. Firstly, they all agreed that help-seeking started with learners' analysis of the level of difficulties and their abilities. Secondly, they all admitted that learners strategically chose the help sources. Thirdly, they all considered the learners' evaluation of the help. The ADDIE framework provides a systematic process for determining training needs, designing and developing training programs and materials, implementing the program, and evaluating the effectiveness of the training program (Gagne et al., 2005). Upon examining the ADDIE framework in conjunction with help-seeking, it becomes apparent that the help-seeking process can be delineated into distinct stages aligned with the five steps of the ADDIE framework (see Table 3).

The third connection is the influence of individual learner differences. Research has shown that individual learner differences significantly impact help-seeking behavior. Several factors, such as ethnicity (Parnes et al., 2020), self-efficacy (Yang et al., 2016), prior knowledge (Aleven et al., 2003; Ryan & Shin, 2011; Wood & Wood, 1999), emotional intelligence (Astatke, 2018), and cultural factors (Karabenick & Knapp, 1991), play a role in shaping how learners seek help. Considering these differences is crucial in instructional design to ensure that personalized learning experiences are provided and that diverse help-seeking preferences of learners are accommodated.

The relationship between help-seeking and instructional design is about creating a learning environment that empowers learners to recognize their need for help, provides them with the necessary resources and support, and fosters their ability to seek assistance effectively. By incorporating these considerations into instructional design, instructors and instructional designers can enhance the learning

experience and support learners in achieving their educational goals.

DISCUSSION

The attempt to integrate help-seeking models into the ADDIE process can lead to more learners-centered instructional design practices and support more efficient learning systems to meet the diverse needs of learners in various educational settings. From an instructional designer's perspective, the attempt has implications for the course design and the online course facilitation.

Integrating Help-Seeking Into Course Design

As instructional designers progress through the course design process, they must keep the learners and instructors in mind during each phase. When engaging in a course design project, instructional designers serve in a coaching capacity to their partners, and when facilitating a course, instructors serve as coaches to their students. A coach aims to help others improve and accomplishes this goal by providing encouragement and feedback (Pousa & Matthieu, 2014). In coaching relationships, Passmore (2007) highlights the importance of coaches having confidence in themselves and their ability to lead, as well as having confidence in their coaches and their ability to reflect, learn, and make changes. Similarly, IDs and instructors should have confidence in and empathy for their students and work to create a comfortable, positive, and safe environment to support their learning and growth (Tracey & Baaki, 2022). It is essential to form a relationship where the learners develop trust in their instructor's expertise and investment in their growth and improvement. Once this relationship is established, learners are open to seeking help from their instructors. Without this trust, learners may seek help from other, less-appropriate sources (Qayyum, 2018).

Seeking help when needed is a positive step toward learning and understanding. The analysis completed in the first phase of ADDIE is critical for understanding where learners currently are and what resources they have available (and what they need) in order to align expectations and goals. During the design and development phases, instructional designers and instructors should carefully craft instructions that provide clear standards of performance and acceptable resources that can be used for help if needed (York & Ertmer, 2016). To clarify standards, instructional designers can propose rubrics, utilize examples, or provide tutorials for support. It may also be helpful to outline sources they do not view as acceptable when students seek help. These help resources should be easily accessible and integrated into the environment where they are most likely needed. It is also helpful to provide multiple channels for help-seeking (Fan & Lin, 2023). In an online course, for example, beyond only offering an email address or office hours for questions, a discussion board where students can post and respond to each other's questions allows peer interaction and may alleviate some workload, especially if multiple students have the same question. Once the implementation phase occurs, instructional designers and instructors can gather data about the topics where students most frequently sought help and make adjustments to the next iteration of the course. As a course is evaluated, help-seeking resources should be updated to ensure they remain accurate and fit the learning experience.

Integrating Help-Seeking into Online Course Facilitation

Examining the help-seeking process from the perspective of ADDIE can provide instructors with some theoretical guidelines to facilitate learners' help-seeking. In both face-to-face and online settings, instructors play a vital role in facilitating learners' help-seeking behavior. Online teaching requires instructors to possess higher digital competencies, increasing job

demands. Koc and Liu (2016) suggested that teaching staff should employ creative strategies, such as utilizing online apps and mobile technologies, to promote online help-seeking behaviors and enhance student support. Additionally, instructors should be able to deal with technical issues, such as platform malfunctions or unstable internet connections, as these challenges can disrupt the facilitation of help-seeking behavior and hinder effective communication between instructors and learners.

A second recommendation for online instructors is to maintain and increase their online presence. One study revealed that students with frequent interactions with their instructors were more likely to seek help online (Whipp & Lorentz, 2009). From the instructors' perspective, their beliefs about their online presence and efforts to improve it significantly impact learners' overall learning experience (Richardson et al., 2016). In online environments, where learners highly value communication and instructors' responsiveness, failing to establish and maintain a sense of community can negatively affect learners' help-seeking experience (Sheridan & Kelly, 2010).

A third recommendation for instructors is to provide tailored help to students with diverse backgrounds and learning preferences. Researchers have identified numerous learner factors, such as gender, personality, self-efficacy, and goal orientation, which can impact help-seeking behavior (Bruso et al., 2020; Deci & Ryan, 1987; Karabenick & Knapp, 1991; Nelson-Le et al., 1985). It can be easier for instructors with special training to assist a large and diverse student population. An easy way to provide tailored help is to ensure that various help-seeking options are available. For example, instructors can maintain regular office hours and provide email addresses to ensure availability when students need help.

Future Research

Integrating help-seeking strategies into the design of online learning experiences is an area ripe for future research. Traditional class-

room settings provide an environment where students can more easily seek help from peers or instructors. However, in online learning, isolation can hinder students' ability to request assistance, potentially impacting their learning progress and motivation. Research has shown that students more confident in navigating online learning platforms are more likely to engage in help-seeking activities (Ding & Er, 2018).

Case studies examining how help-seeking strategies can be integrated into online course design can also support the scholarship calling for instructors to actively promote help-seeking in their courses (Giblin et al., 2021; Munda et al., 2016). Such case studies can provide a qualitative lens into instructors' responsiveness to support students' abilities to engage in adaptive help-seeking techniques (Kozanitis et al., 2007). This research contributes valuable insights into effective teaching practices and will further improve the instructional design of online learning experiences, ensuring a more supportive and engaging educational environment.

Future research should aim to investigate how an integrated instructional design process with help-seeking strategies for online instruction can proactively incorporate help-seeking features that mimic the accessibility and immediacy of in-person learning environments. This could involve exploring innovative approaches such as AI-powered tutors, integrated peer support networks, and real-time feedback systems (Fan & Lin, 2023; Koc & Liu, 2016). By focusing on making help-seeking an intrinsic part of online learning design, researchers can uncover strategies that reduce the barriers to seeking help and promote a culture of collaboration and continuous learning among online learners.

CONCLUSION

The integration of help-seeking strategies into the instructional design process for online learning has the potential to foster more learner-centered environments. By incorporat-

ing intentional learning activities that facilitate adaptive help-seeking techniques, instructors understand how to encourage students to seek assistance for task completion, genuine comprehension, and skill development. This approach aligns with the broader goal of creating a student-centric educational experience where the emphasis is not solely on task completion but on nurturing a culture of continuous learning and self-improvement.

Through responsive instructional design, instructors can strategically embed opportunities for help-seeking within online courses, empowering students to take ownership of their learning journey. This reflects a shift in help-seeking dialogue that engages the instructor and the student. As we refine and enhance instructional design practices, prioritizing help-seeking strategies ensures that online learning experiences become more dynamic, adaptive, and conducive to learners' needs.

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