

Riding the learning curve

The education and training sector has recognised the power of the Internet and this has helped in breaking the traditional barriers of time and place associated with the delivery channels of learning. Software development companies which have noted the trend have developed advanced learning environments that combine powerful Internet collaboration tools like e-mail, synchronous and asynchronous discussion, shared work spaces and video conferencing.

Instructional design is the practice of arranging media to help learners and teachers to transfer knowledge most effectively. Ideally, the process is fired by pedagogically tested theories of learning and may take place in student-only, teacher-led or community-based settings. Instructional design can start at any point. Often a glimmer of an idea is developed into the core of an

instruction situation. By the time the entire process is completed, the designer looks back and checks to see that all parts of the "science" have been taken into account. Then the entire process is written in a systematic process of developing instructional systems. Instructional development is the process of implementing the system or plan.

What do you have to do

Instructional designers prepare a series of self-instructional tutorials and provide interactive modules that guide students through some topics. Tests and assessments are tracked and reports are generated online. In a complete module of "distance education", along with the presentation of the course through media graphics and animation, collaborative tools like e-mail, discussion lists, live chats and shared work

AT A GLANCE



Instructional design is the practice of arranging media to help learners and teachers to transfer knowledge most effectively. The process broadly consists of determining the current state of learner understanding, defining the end goal of instruction and creating some media-based intervention to assist the process.

spaces are used for better learning. Instructional theories play an important role in the design of instructional materials. Theories such as behaviorism, constructivism etc help shape and define the outcome of instructional materials.

FIELD IN FOCUS: INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN



Academic and soft skills

You should be a graduate in any field. Being multi-disciplinary in nature, instructional design calls for the

acquisition of knowledge in several domains, particularly education, technology, project management, written communication and

business sensitivity. You should have good communication and writing skills and be concise and engaging. Creativity and a basic under-

standing of technology are other must-haves.

Job profiles

Instructional designers work in the educational sector, in computer companies specialising in education software, in the private sector, with the armed forces or with health services organisations. Some work for consulting companies or as freelancers also.

The opportunities for professionals in this field are booming, but there are very few people who are formally trained in instructional design. You could begin by assuming the main responsibility of implementing design specifications. You could later take up the role of an instructional designer. After a few years of experience in this field, you can attain the position of senior instructional designer, in which you would be involved in developing the overall course design strategy and managing projects from the content perspective. This calls for leadership skills in co-coordinating

with the team members and the client. Higher leadership positions could be: content manager in an e-learning firm, e-learning project manager in the training department of a company, the head of education services or director of course development in distance education institutions, the chief learning officer or vice-president of education or the director of training and development in a company.

The above mentioned positions depend on the type of organisation you are working for — corporate training departments, distance education institutions, corporate universities, e-learning firms or consulting firms specialising in training and development.

The salary may start at Rs 2 lakh per annum (the minimum for a trainee instructional designer) and with experience and expertise, may touch Rs 8 lakh to Rs 10 lakh per annum.