Transcending Education:

4 Ingredients to Create Meaningful Learning Experiences

CAPSIM®

Unforgettable Business Learning

Introduction

Education prepares people for success in a rapidly changing world. But as the future of work fundamentally shifts and as a new generation of learners joins the ranks, instructors need to adapt their instructional tools and methods.

If you are an instructor seeking to transcend the limits of traditional education, you must incorporate four ingredients to create meaningful learning experiences to prepare learners for future success:

1. Assess Knowing and Doing

2. Foster Accurate Self-Awareness

3. Deliver an Engaging and Relevant Experience

4. Provide Actionable Feedback

Ingredient #1:

Assess Knowing and Doing

The challenge of turning knowledge into action, also known as the "knowing-doing gap," is not a new barrier. Learners will find that their performance and capabilities are hindered if they cannot apply relevant ideas and insight to everyday responsibilities and tasks.

The knowing-doing gap also can lead learners to develop habits that will hinder their progress in other significant ways. For example, it can lead them to prioritize memorization over application, cultivate self-serving biases, and develop a fear of failure. To help learners adopt a true growth mindset, you should give learners the chance to implement knowledge through actions, enhance their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and make decisions while drawing from a real-world perspective.

How Can I Close the Gap?

Here are five tips to help you assess the knowing-doing gap within your learners:

- ☑ Create environments where mistakes are learning opportunities, rather than consequences.[1]

- ☑ Challenge learners to do more than retain information.[2]

- ☑ Use simple, straightforward language to reduce confusion and increase efficiency.[3]

- ☑ Set SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely) to guide learners' efforts and development.

- ☑ Use experiential learning tools, such as simulations, that challenge learners to apply concepts in real-world scenarios.

Ingredient #2:

Foster Accurate Self-Awareness

"Self-awareness" is a term associated with personal and professional growth. Yet, only 10 percent to 15 percent of people are genuinely self-aware—which means that 90 percent of individuals struggle to accurately evaluate and recognize their strengths and weaknesses.[4] Without accurate self-awareness, learners often struggle to advance professionally, achieve goals, or build healthy relationships.

Having accurate self-awareness is valuable in all aspects of life, yet it is not a skill measured against standards. As a result, individuals must validate their self-perception. To help learners foster accurate self-awareness, you must adopt instructional methods that provide them with resources to cultivate self-knowledge, identify strengths and weaknesses, and understand how others perceive them.

How Do I Help Learners Increase Their Self-Awareness?

Here are five tips to help you improve self-awareness in your learners:

☑ Measure performance against a standardized set of metrics to avoid self-deception and inaccurate self-awareness.

☑ Use performance-linked self-awareness tools such as self-assessments to determine areas of improvement.

☑ Communicate the value and relevance of their feedback in achieving their future goals and aspirations.[5]

☑ Encourage learners to collaborate so that they can better evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.

☑ Teach personal developmental skills such as time management, work-life balance, and emotional intelligence.

Deliver an Engaging and Relevant Experience

Instructors universally face the challenge of keeping their learners engaged, fueled not only by the need to keep up with technological advancements but also by the fact that students increasingly have shorter attention spans and often lack a sense of real-world connection. As this paradigm shift continues, instructors need to adapt their instructional methods to accommodate the changing needs of today's learners and encourage in them a continuous motivation to develop.

Creating an engaging environment improves the educational experience significantly because it communicates to the learner the value of the connection between knowledge and relevance. When learners are more engaged and attentive, instructors see higher rates of participation, productivity, and overall enjoyment.

Learners must engage with resources, whether traditional or digital, that introduce them to situations that extend beyond their comfort zones, encourage real-world perspective, and allow them to learn from their mistakes in a controlled environment.

How Can I Increase Learners' Engagement?

Here are five tips to help you create more engaging learning environments:

- ☑ Combine both traditional and technological teaching methods.

- ☑ Answer the two most common questions asked by learners: "What am I going to use this for?" and "What does this have to do with me?"

- ☑ Use interactive platforms, such as simulations, to create a multisensory and immersive experience.

- ☑ Encourage open communication that allows learners to feel comfortable engaging in discussions and asking questions.

- ☑ Make the connection to the real world by incorporating current events that relate to learners' personal goals and interests.

Provide Actionable Feedback

Actionable feedback promotes essential personal and professional development. This objective and meaningful learner development tailors to each individual and focuses on the actions that led to a successful or unsuccessful performance.

Unfortunately, providing actionable feedback for each person is often an obstacle for instructors due to a lack of time, the size of the group, and the level of individualization required to make such feedback valuable. Traditional instructional methods focus only on the results in ways that ignore actionable guidance needed to promote meaningful development. Too often, instructors expect learners to figure things out on their own.

Instructional methods must provide objective feedback that allows learners to reflect meaningfully on their performance, guides them through their shortcomings, and offers recommendations for improvements. Although it may be time-consuming, providing actionable feedback is critical for learners to grow, identify areas of development, and ensure long-term success.

How Should I Give Actionable Feedback?

Here are five tips to help you provide learners with more valuable and actionable feedback:

☑ Use online software or programs that provide objective and individualized assessments, as well as point to the next steps in development.

☑ Avoid ambiguous feedback such as "good job" since it doesn't provide actionable direction for improvement.[6]

☑ Provide feedback promptly, so it's still relevant and applicable for individuals to make improvements.[6]

☑ Provide feedback that focuses on a learner's actions and the changes you would like to see in the future, rather than the person's character.[7]

☑ Explain to students that gathering such actionable feedback is an ongoing process needed for their development.

A Tool for All Four Ingredients

CAPSIM|nbox®

Finding the time and resources to implement all four elements is easier said than done. That's why we created CapsimInbox—a microsimulation platform that accomplishes three educational objectives:

- ☑ Exposes learners to authentic workplace scenarios in a real-world context.

- ☑ Objectively measures the effectiveness of their decision-making.

- ☑ Provides actionable feedback for personal development.
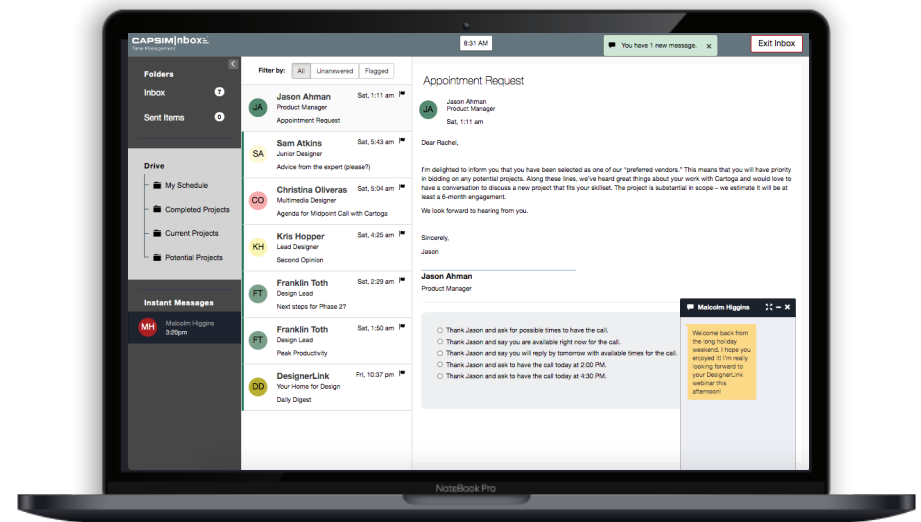
To get started, build your own inbox simulation with the CapsimInbox Authoring Platform – a free, user-friendly environment to bring real-world scenarios to life. Or, check out our suite of existing versions created by talented educators from around the world.

Build an Inbox Simulation

See Existing Versions

References

[1] Tugend, A. (2011, September 6). The Role of Mistakes in the Classroom.

[2] Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R. I. (2001). The Knowing-Doing Gap. Supply Chain Management: An International Journal, 6(3). doi: 10.1108/scm.2001.6.3.142.1

[3] Andersen , M. (2017, December 19). Turning Knowledge Into Action.

[4] Forsey, C. (2018, May 11). The True Meaning of Self-Awareness (& How to Tell If You're Actually Self-Aware).

[5] Gomez, E. (2018, July 30). How to Improve Accurate Self-Awareness.

[6] BYU. (n.d.). Provide Effective Feedback

[7] MacKay, J. (2019, April 23). The 7 Essential Qualities of Effective Feedback.