Defining quality learning in self-paced eLearning: Practices and challenges

Kevin Forgard
UW-Madison SOE, WCER, WIDA

Session Interactive Component

Kevin Forgard

Senior Instructional Designer at University of Wisconsin – Madison

Worked in eLearning and instructional technology

Currently develops self-paced eLearning for K-12 educators

Introduce yourself on the shared document.

Session agenda

1. Discuss how self-paced e-learning fits within a formal and informal learning framework
2. Introduce some evaluation criteria
3. Review examples
4. Present the Theory of Transactional Distance framework
5. Discuss impact on SPeL design

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Are self-paced learning products effective?
Hello. My name is Ali. I am here to teach you about Self-paced eLearning.

Please read through the next 25 slides and take the test at the end to earn a badge.

Click next to begin!
We’re focusing on learning
Where does self-paced learning fit on this continuum?

Formal  Something in-between  Informal
The traditional distinction between formal and informal education is blurred once we recognize that physical location is no longer a constraint on where and how people learn…

(Burbules, p16, 2010 - From Ubiquitous Learning Chapter 2)
**ACTIVITY:** Record any learning experience you have had by placing it somewhere on this continuum.

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Debrief

Is there a clear distinction between the two poles?

How can this impact the design of formal and informal learning events?
Pick two

- FAST
- CHEAP
- GOOD
Evaluation criteria: A simple rubric

- **Effectiveness** – Are there clear learning goals that learners can achieve?
- **Efficiency** – Can the learning goals be achieved in a timely manner?
- **Appeal** – Are the instructional materials interesting and useable?
Further affordances

Interactive
Adaptable
Feedback system
Nonlinear access & choice

CHALLENGES
Open-ended learner input
Communication with other learners

How People Learn II (2018) influenced by Mayer’s work
Question break
Let’s look at some examples.

1. Review the 4 instructional examples
2. Comment on shared document
3. Try to use the **effectiveness**, **efficiency**, and **appeal** rubric

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Preventing Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence at UW-Madison

Preventing Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence

for Faculty and Staff

Why is this training important to me?

- 40-70% of female workers and 10-20% of male workers experience workplace sexual harassment.
- Victims of harassment often have negative emotional, physical, and financial impact.
- Those who observe harassment, or provide support to victims are also impacted.

These statistics show that Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence are present at UW-Madison. We hope this training increases your awareness to these situations, perhaps makes you more sensitive towards your own behaviors, and provides you with actions to take if you are affected or know of someone that is being affected by the behaviors described in this training.

Source: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Source: University of Wisconsin – Madison Canvas
Example 1: UW Madison – Compliance Training

View the employee training

- Screen reader users: Please use the alternative HTML version of Preventing Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence to complete this training requirement.
- The interactive training will offer to resume where you leave off. Click “Yes” to resume.
- Campus network connection is recommended.
- The training includes audio. Please connect headphones or turn on speakers.
- Recommended browsers: (Mac) Chrome, Safari, Firefox | (Win) Chrome, Safari, IE 10+

Begin Interactive Training Module

How can I get the most benefit from this training?

Focus on the following for each section:

- **Section One: Definitions and Prevention Strategies** | 30 minutes
  - We want to increase your awareness. Please be thorough when you encounter scenarios. Consider how those involved in each scenario may be impacted.

- **Section Two: Being Supportive and Knowledgeable** | 12 minutes
  - We want you to know how to respond or help. Focus on actions you may be able to take. Learn “The 3 Ds”.

- **Section Three: Reporting Options and Campus Policies** | 22 minutes
  - As you explore this section you should leave with confidence that there are support options if you or someone you know ever needs help.
Example 1: UW Madison – Compliance Training

Must proceed in order

Sexual Harassment
- Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual acts, unwelcome physical behavior or words that are sexual.

Illega and Unacceptable

Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment
- Behavior that substantially interferes with one’s work or academic career or creates intimidating, hostile or offensive work or education environment.

Quid Pro Quo (“this for that”) Sexual Harassment
- When submitting to or rejecting this behavior influences employment or academic opportunities and decisions.

- UW-Madison Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence policy
- State definition of sexual harassment
Example 2: Adobe Education Exchange

Source: Adobe Education Exchange - Cultivating Digital Literacy

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Example 2: Adobe Education Exchange

Cultivating Digital Literacy

0.5 of 3 hours Complete (15%)

Course Ends: Dec 31, 2021 6:00 PM CST

Completed 2 of 13

Cultivating Digital Literacy
Learn the importance of cultivating digital literacy in your campus, course or class.

Section 1

1. What is digital literacy?
2. Digital literacy in relation to other skills
3. Why digital literacy is important for learning
4. Why digital literacy is important for careers
5. Why digital literacy is essential in our everyday lives
6. Digital literacy in the humanities, arts and design
7. Digital literacy in STEM

Up Next: Why digital literacy is important for learning

Help & Support
- FAQs
- Tech Support
- Unenroll from this Course
- Share
Why digital literacy is important for learning

In this lesson, you'll learn why digital literacy is important for learning in any context or discipline. Our experts and educators then share examples that illustrate the importance of digital literacy in increasing learning outcomes for students.

Here are some more great examples of lesson plans and creative projects that you can adapt for your own educational context, or even assign directly to your students.

Inspiration | Digitizing the research paper with sound

Through Adobe tools, we leverage new possibilities opened up by using digital literacy and technologies. A few decades ago it would
Example 3 - Duo Lingo App: Spanish

Which of these is “the boy“?

- el niño
- la mujer
- la niña
- el hombre

Translate this sentence

The boy

You're 7 XP away from your daily goal!

Lesson complete! +10 XP
Combo bonus! +3 XP

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Source: https://www.duolingo.com
Example 4 - Scenario-based branched e-learning

Sophie is an instructional design consultant. She’s tired of spending hours and hours writing proposals for clients who don’t end up hiring her or really aren’t a good fit in the first place. Help Sophie follow a new process for screening clients to see if this is actually a good fit for her skills and to establish a professional relationship with her new client.

Start page

Sophie receives an email from a prospective client, Robert.

What should Sophie do?

- Send Robert a price estimate.
- Send Robert some client screening questions.
- Send Robert questions on the course length.

Choice page

Sophie thinks these responses all seem reasonable, so she sends Robert a link to her calendar so he can schedule a meeting.

Correct choices leads to scenario...

Sophie provides a fixed-price quote based on her limited information. Robert immediately accepts without negotiating, making Sophie wonder if her price was too low.

One month into the project, Sophie realizes what a terrible mistake she has made. She severely underestimated the scope of the project and the time required. She’s frustrated, and her client is annoyed at how long everything is taking. Sophie works long hours for weeks—so many hours that her effective hourly rate is much lower than usual.

Once the project is finished, Sophie vows to never give a price estimate again unless she has more information.

Wrong choice feedback

Robert replies with his answers to the five screening questions.

Choice page 2

Sofie starts by summarizing her understanding of the problem Robert is facing and asking him to confirm.

Yes, that’s right. Our existing classroom training is good, but it’s just too time consuming and expensive to fly everyone in from all over the country for on-site training.

Visit us online at https://www.syniadlearning.com

Link: bit.ly/frogOLC2021
Let’s review our comments
What’s the intention of the learner?
What’s the intention of the instruction?

...to impact behavioral change, improve performance, or something else?
What’s the intention of the learner? What’s the intention of the instruction?

THINK ALOUD: What influences certain design choices?

What influences our design choices?
What are the needs?
How do we expect learners to engage with the materials?
What do learners expect?

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Extracting SPeL from JPeL (just plain e-Learning)

Thought-leader Perspectives

(Design to motivate)

Ruth Clark and Richard Mayer: *eLearning and the Science of Instruction*  
(Design for best cognitive impact)

*How People Learn II: Learners, Contexts, and Cultures (and HPL I)*  
(Design for best cognitive impact)
SPeL Definition Idea?

Learners consuming learning materials at their own pace and dedicated time in an unfacilitated learning environment.
So, what’s the purpose or instructional problem SPeL is trying to solve?

To impact behavioral change, improve performance, or...
But maybe I want to learn something to just solve an immediate problem.
Mooc Retention Rates

Consistently low retention and recent enrollment declines

Year-to-year enrollment of learner cohorts defined by their year of first activity. Parenthesis shows percentage retained from initial cohort size.

Registration year
- 2012–2013
- 2013–2014
- 2014–2015
- 2015–2016
- 2016–2017
- 2017–2018

MOOC Completion Rate - Lederman (2019)
How else might we start to think about this phenomenon of self-paced eLearning?
Another perspective
Theory of Transactional Distance (TTD)

• Structure – design of course
• Dialogue – responses between learner and educator
• Autonomy – learner choice

Moore (1997)
Saba & Shearer (2018)
Self-paced eLearning seen through the Theory of Transactional Distance (TTD)

- Structure – highly structured
- Dialogue – none
- Autonomy – limited learner choice

Think about how this may match our discussion between formal and informal learning.
What happens when you “lock” a learner in self-paced linear course?

- Highly structured
- Limited (or programmed) autonomy
- No dialogue
Design Considerations

STRUCTURE: Adaptive design but also restrictive
AUTONOMY: Need to train learners to be self-regulated

Design Considerations

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Source: University of Wisconsin – Madison
AUTONOMY: Provide learner control of content, pacing, and support
DIALOGUE: The missing piece in SPeL. How can we design for a shared understanding?

Source: https://www.duolingo.com
Design and Implementation Challenges for SPeL

- Accessibility
- Equity
- Learner Motivation
- Fidelity
Are designs like this effective, efficient, and appealing?
Or even this...

Source: https://elearningindustry.com

Contact
forgard@wisc.edu
@kforgard
Linkedin/kevinforgard

Thank you!
Kevin Forgard