

Instructional Design Skills: Core Skills and Practice



Session goal: scope a course, write objectives, storyboard, prototype, plan evaluation



ID is a practical craft—judgment matters more than memorizing models



You will practice the five core skills: analysis, design, development, implementation, evaluation



Built for aspiring and junior IDs, trainers, educators, and SMEs



Ground rules: use a real project, share drafts, give rubric-based feedback



The ID Landscape: Roles, Contexts, and 2026 Trends

PEOPLE
LEARNING
BRIGHTER
FUTURES

Where IDs work

- Where IDs work: corporate L&D, higher ed, K-12, government, nonprofits, freelance, ed-tech



ID vs. trainer, teacher, eLearning developer, and learning experience designer (LXD)



Trainer



Teacher



eLearning developer



Learning experience designer (LXD)



Top employer demands

- Top employer demands: Storyline, eLearning development, AI-assisted design, learning theory



Trends

- Trends: AI as design partner, skills-based learning, microlearning, flow of work

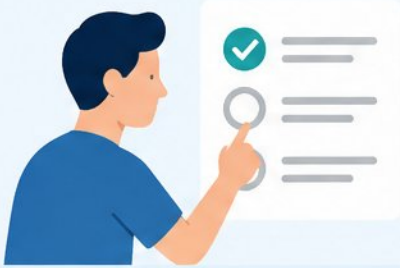


Junior roles screen for tools, fundamentals, and coachability; senior roles for judgment

SAME LEARNING.
A BRIGHTER TOMORROW.

Learning Theory Foundations for Practice

Behaviorism



Looks like practice, feedback, and reinforcement in a real course.

Cognitivism



Looks like structured explanations, models, and worked examples in a real course.

Constructivism



Looks like exploration, collaboration, and real-world problem solving in a real course.

Connectivism



Looks like learning through networks, diverse perspectives, and ongoing knowledge sharing in a real course.



Four lenses: behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, connectivism — each looks different in a real course



Theory shapes structure, activities, and assessment choices



Cognitive load theory: intrinsic, extraneous, and germane load; overload shows as errors, frustration, disengagement

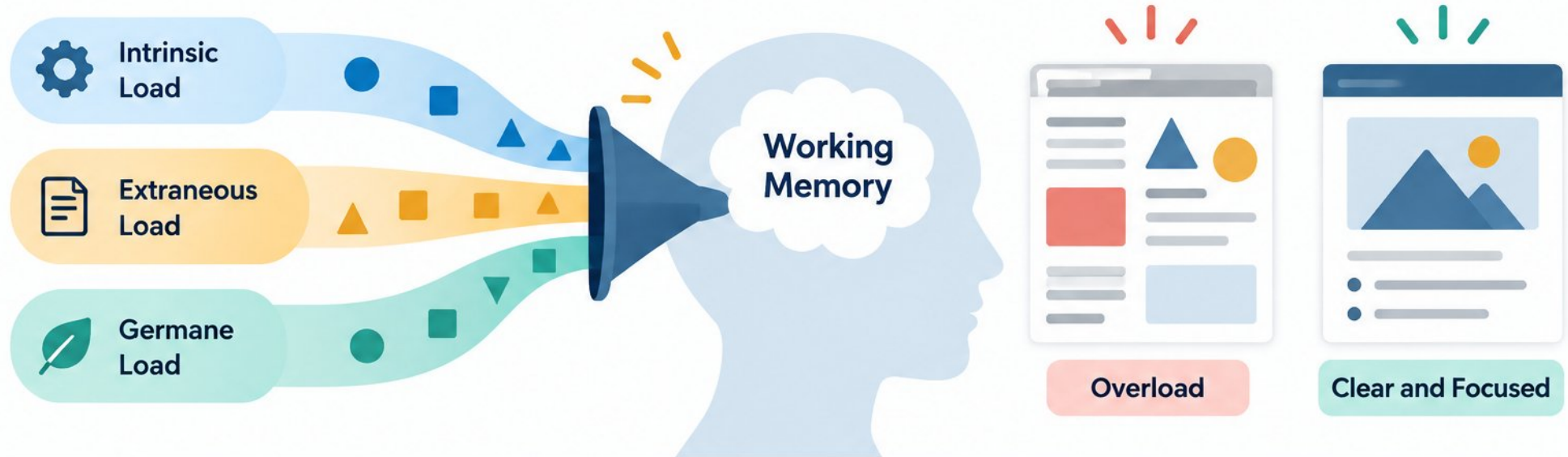


Adult learning (andragogy) and motivation (self-determination theory)



Avoid theory overload: pick the lens that fits the design problem

Cognitive Load in Practice: Designing for Working Memory



Working memory is tiny; overload shows as errors, frustration, disengagement



Manage intrinsic load: sequence tasks, check prerequisites, design backward



Cut extraneous load: remove inessentials, keep routines consistent, give concise directions

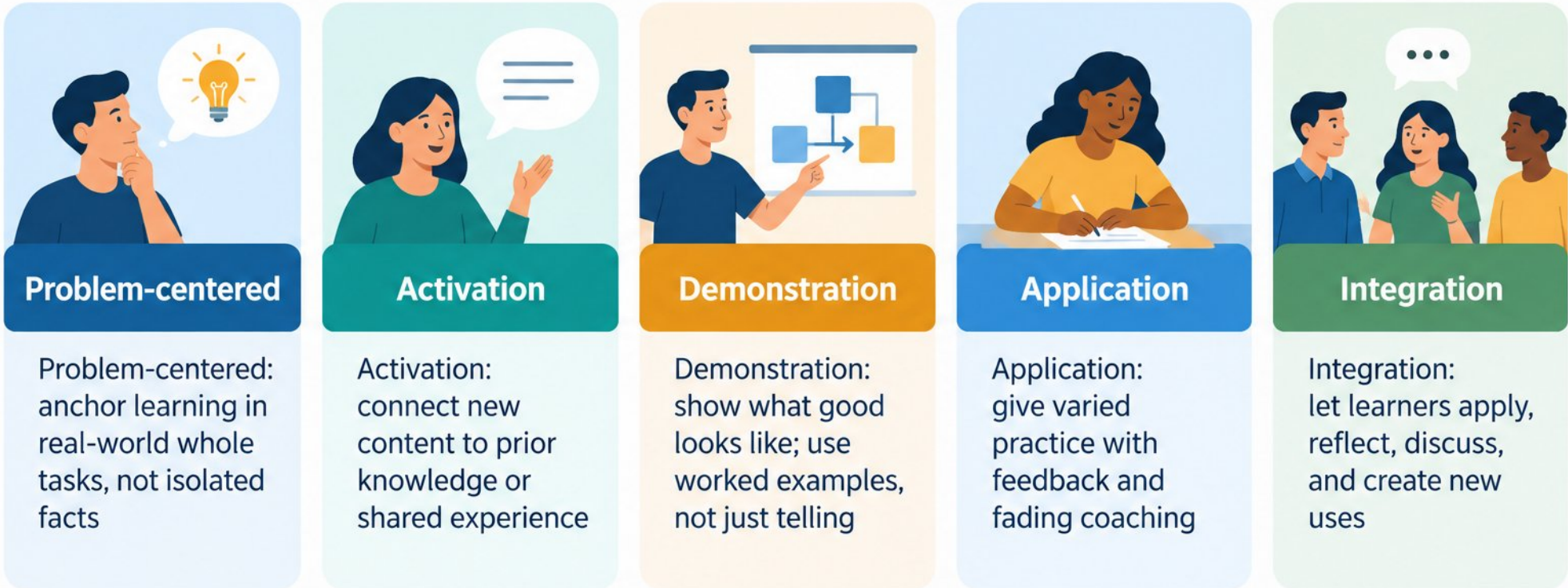


Pair visuals with narration; avoid redundant on-screen text and split attention



Practice design: space and interleave practice, use worked examples, fade guidance

Merrill's First Principles: A Practical Design Checklist



Analysis: Asking the Right Questions First



Needs assessment finds the performance gap; needs analysis explains why it exists



Four needs shape goals: business, performance, learning, and learner needs



Learner, task, and context analysis: collect from multiple sources, then stop



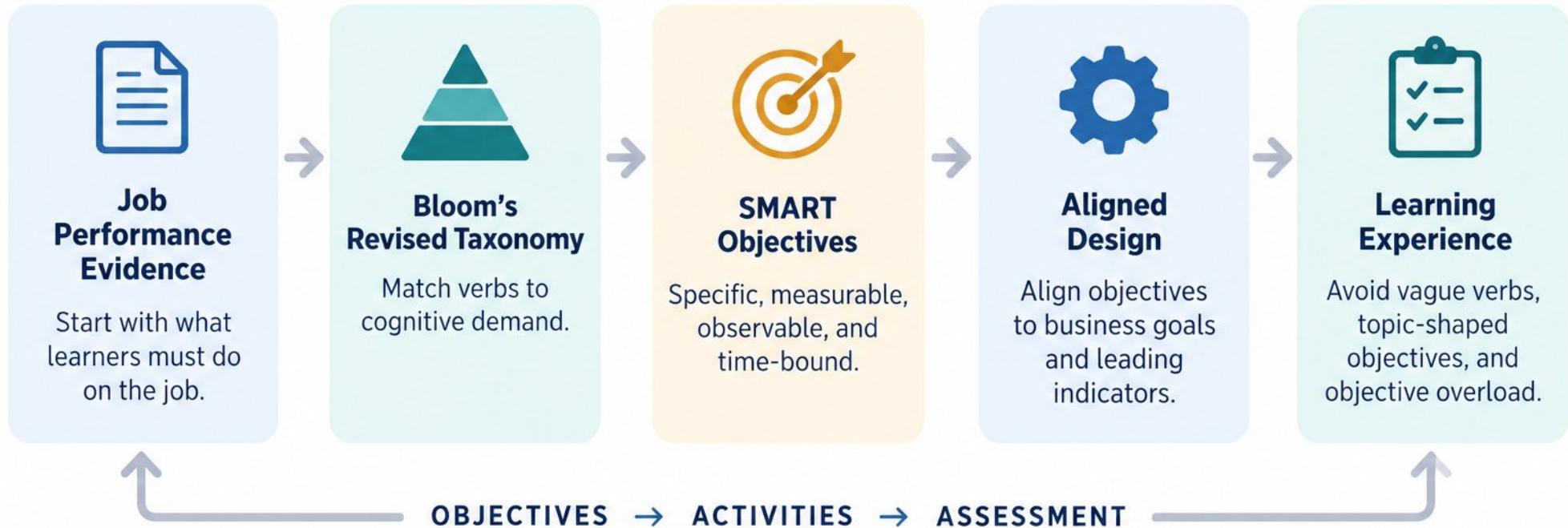
Work with SMEs through interviews, observation, and process mapping



Outputs: learner personas, task inventories, objective maps, one-page design brief



Writing Outcomes and Objectives That Drive Design

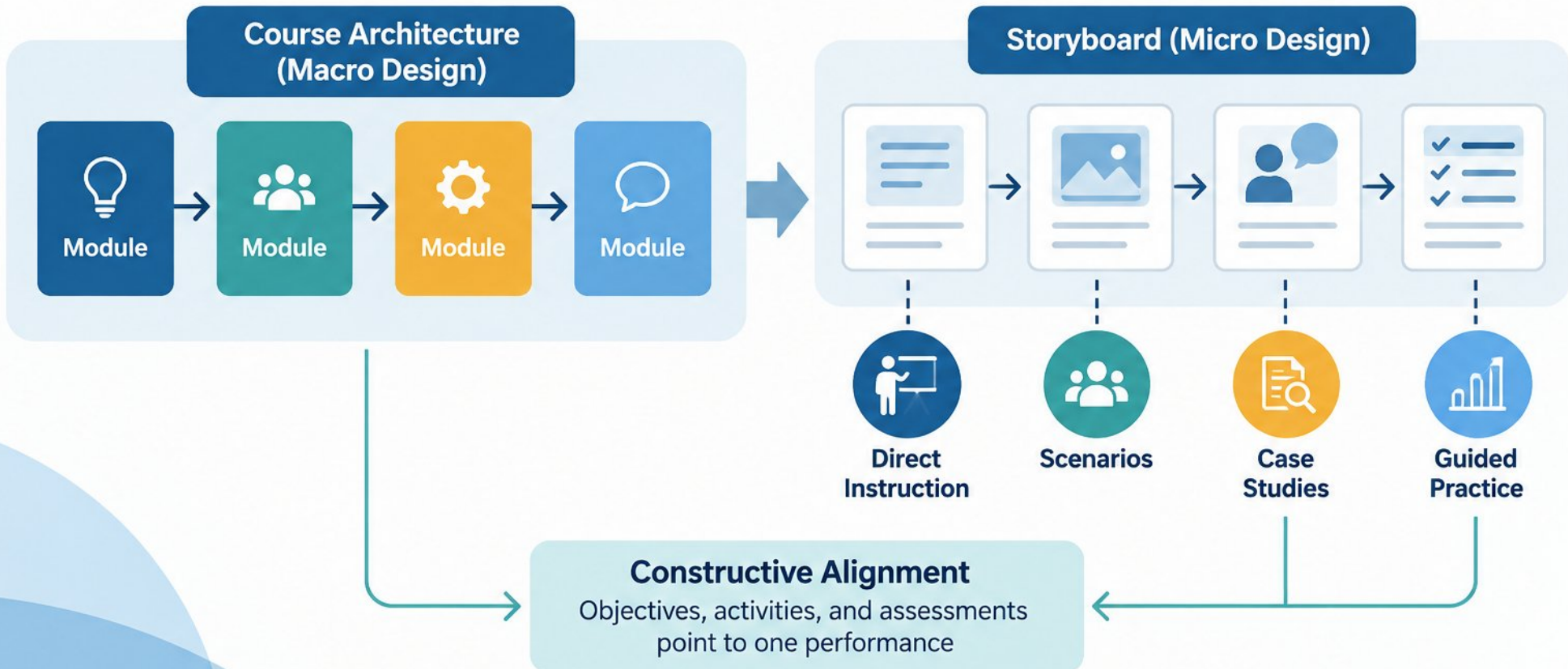


- Start with performance: what learners must do on the job
- Bloom's revised taxonomy: match verbs to cognitive demand
- SMART objectives: specific, measurable, observable, and time-bound
- Align objectives to business goals and leading indicators
- Avoid vague verbs, topic-shaped objectives, and objective overload



Design: Blueprinting the Learning Experience

- Macro and micro design: course architecture and moment-by-moment decisions
- Frameworks fit the problem: ADDIE, SAM, rapid prototyping, problem-centered planning
- Storyboards show flow, low-fidelity to draft, high-fidelity to refine
- Strategy matches the goal: scenarios, case studies, guided practice
- Constructive alignment: objectives, activities, and assessments point to one performance



Development: Building Materials That Teach



Write facilitator guides, workbooks, and job aids people can actually use



Script video and eLearning: plain language, chunked narration, medium-first design



Match tools to the job: Storyline for custom interactivity, Rise for speed, Captivate for simulations, Lectora for accessibility



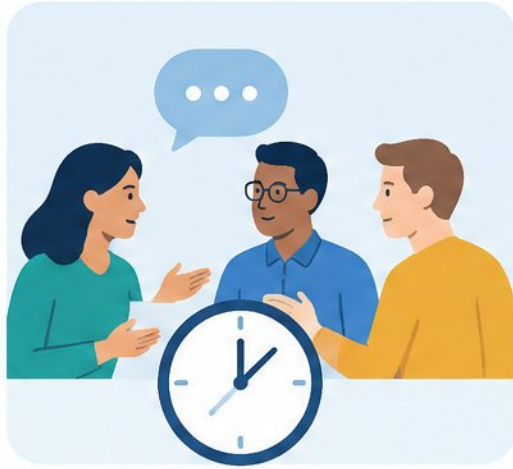
Confirm standards before building: SCORM 1.2/2004, xAPI, tested in your LMS



Build accessibility in from the start: alt text, captions, keyboard navigation, WCAG awareness



Quality Checks and Working with SMEs

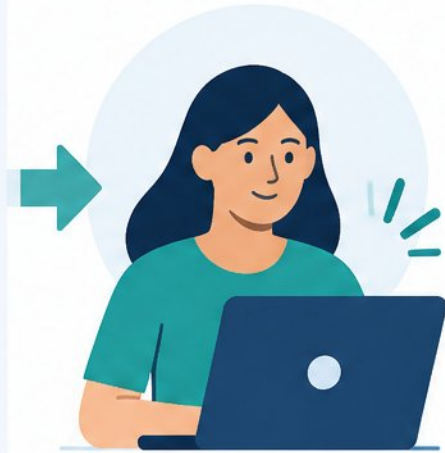


Time-box SME reviews, use version control, and keep a clear change log



QA checklist

-  Objective alignment
-  Readability
-  Consistency
-  Media quality
-  Copyright basics
-  Accessibility
-  Localization



Plain language: short sentences, active voice, learner-friendly tone



Accessibility and localization checks before launch



Authoring tool support:
Lectora leads on WCAG/Section 508;
Storyline and iSpring publish SCORM and xAPI

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

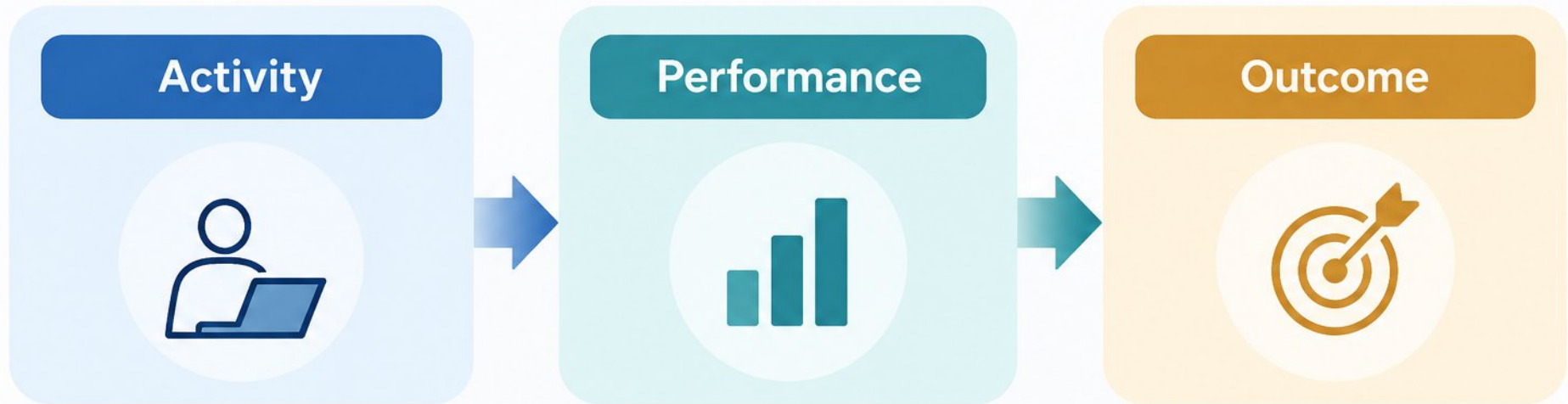
Measure what matters. Learn and improve.



Learning Analytics: Measuring What Matters



From Learning
Data to
Real-World Impact



- Three layers of LMS data: activity, performance, and outcome
- Activity shows what learners do; outcome shows what changes
- Watch behavior: completion, drop-off points, time on task, revisits
- Move from activity metrics to business metrics: retention, productivity, time-to-competency
- Completion rates alone do not prove impact—avoid the activity trap



Practice Lab: Designing a Mini Course



Apply analysis, design, development, and evaluation to one small module



Keep scope finishable: one performance goal, two or three objectives, one assessment



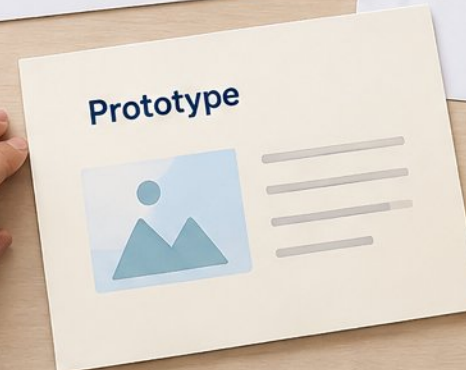
Give and receive peer feedback using a simple design rubric



Avoid common pitfalls: too many objectives, content-first thinking, skipped evaluation



Present your prototype and get facilitator feedback



Portfolio, Tools, and Your Next 30-60-90 Days



- **Portfolio essentials:** design documents, storyboards, prototypes—with a short rationale for each



- Junior roles screen for tool skills, fundamentals, and coachability; show evidence, not just claims



- **Practice free or low-cost:** H5P, Canva, PowerPoint, plus authoring tool free trials



- **Credentials to explore:** ATD Instructional Design Certificate, APTD/CPTD, ISPI's CPT



30
Days



60
Days



90
Days

- **Your 30-60-90 plan:** build samples, gather feedback, and document your design decisions

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