Learner Approaches to Distance Learning

Lesson Overview
Learner success in distance education is often misunderstood. There is a common belief that learners possess unique learning styles such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. However, studies have yet to show a strong relationship between these learning styles and actual learner success. Dillon and Greene suggest that learners, through achievement goals, self-efficacy, and strategy use, possess an aptitude to be successful in any learning environment (Dillon & Green, 2003, p. 239).

Goal[1]
After completing this lesson, the student will be able to identify and discuss various ways learners approach distance learning.

Audience
This lesson is designed for the educator or trainer who has an interest in or has been tasked to implement distance education.

Lesson Objectives
Terminal
* Using test subjects, students will label each subject with a likelihood to succeed in distance education with 100% accuracy.

Enabling
* Using the presented content, students will identify aspects of learner achievement goals with 80% accuracy.
* Using the presented content, students will identify aspects of learner self-efficacy with 80% accuracy.
* Using the presented content, students will identify aspects of learner strategy use with 80% accuracy.

Proposed Instructional Media
The content of this lesson will be presented using text, tables, graphics, and optional audio. When, and if, appropriate, animation may be used to reinforce the concepts presented.

Text will be used for its universal communications properties. Tables and graphics will be used for their interpretive qualities for representing concepts that are difficult in text. An optional audio track will be available for learners that have difficulty reading. Animation will be used when value is added to certain concepts, assessments, and feedback.

Activity List (Content Outline)

Concept	Instruction & Student Activity	Instructional Media	Duration (min:sec)
Mini-module 1: Introduction and Topic Background			
Course welcome	➢ Present high-level overview of course ➢ Identify intended audience ➢ Present learning objectives ➢ Describe, briefly, course media ➢ Describe, briefly, course content ➢ Describe, briefly, course assessment	Text Optional Audio Track	0:30
Review of distance learners and learning	➢ Discuss characteristics of distance learners ➢ Discuss factors affecting distance learners ➢ Discuss validity of learner styles	Text Graphic Optional Audio Track	1:00
Introduction of approaches to learning	➢ Discuss benefit of studying approaches to learning ➢ List the three major approach constructs as identified by Dillon and Greene	Text Optional Audio Track	0:15
Mini-module 2: Learners and Achievement Goals			
Introduction to achievement goals	➢ Define achievement goals ➢ Discuss ~~difference from performance goals~~ three types of achievement goals: learning, performance, and future[2]	Text Optional Audio Track	0:15
Relevance of internal and external loci of control	➢ Define locus of control ➢ Relate internal locus of control to success ➢ Relate external locus of control to success	Text Optional Audio Track	0:30
~~Future goals[3]~~	➢ ~~Define future goals~~ ➢ ~~Relate future goals to success~~	~~Text~~ ~~Optional Audio Track~~	~~0:30~~
~~Research review[4]~~	➢ ~~Present empirical research findings on the relationship of achievement goals to success~~	~~Text~~ ~~Tables~~ ~~Optional Audio Track~~	~~0:45~~
Assessment	➢ Answer 5 multiple choice questions ➢ Receive immediate feedback	Text Optional Audio Track	1:00
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Concept	Instruction & Student Activity	Instructional Media	Duration (min:sec)
Mini-module 3: Learners and Self-Efficacy			
Introduction to self-efficacy	➢ Define self-efficacy ➢ Relate to learning situations	Text Optional Audio Track	0:45
~~Relationship to motivation[5]~~	➢ ~~Discuss similarity to expectancy motivation~~	~~Text~~ ~~Optional Audio Track~~	~~0:30~~
~~Research review~~	➢ ~~Present empirical research findings on the relationship of self-efficacy to success~~	~~Text~~ ~~Tables~~ ~~Optional Audio Track~~	~~0:45~~
Assessment	➢ Answer ~~5~~[6] 3 multiple choice questions ➢ Receive immediate feedback	Text Optional Audio Track	1:00
Mini-module 4: Learners and Strategy Use			
Introduction to strategy use	➢ Define strategy use	Text Optional Audio Track	0:20
Deep processing	➢ Discuss deep processing of information	Text Optional Audio Track	0:20
Shallow processing	➢ Discuss shallow processing	Text Optional Audio Track	0:20
~~Research review~~	➢ ~~Present empirical research findings on the relationship of strategy use to success~~	~~Text~~ ~~Tables~~ ~~Optional Audio Track~~	~~1:00~~
Assessment	➢ Answer 5 multiple choice questions ➢ Receive immediate feedback	Text Optional Audio Track	1:00
Mini-module 5: Conclusion			
Relate to learner-instructor interaction	➢ Discuss Moore's theory of transactional distance	Text Graphic Optional Audio Track	0:45
Recap of material	➢ Discuss educator/trainer role in developing a learner's ability to approach learning situations	Text Optional Audio Track	0:30
Final Assessment			
Assessment	➢ Review 3 test subjects and their presented thoughts about a learning situation, and then rate their likelihood to succeed. ➢ Receive immediate feedback.	Text Optional Audio Track Possible Animation	1:00

Assessment Plan[7]
Students of this lesson will take four assessments. The first three are comprised of ~~five~~[8] multiple choice questions based on the material covered in the mini-module. Upon submitting their answers students will receive feedback on their performance of the assessment. Questions that were incorrectly answered will be identified and remedial information will be provided. As noted in the enabling objectives, students are expected to achieve 80% accuracy, or four out of five questions correct.

The final assessment is comprised of an application of the concepts learned. Three test subjects are provided, along with their individual thoughts about a learning situation. The thoughts will provide the student with how the particular test subject is approaching the learning situation. Students are asked to rate likelihood of success for each test subject. The rating scale is:
  ⊙ Very likely to succeed
  ⊙ Likely to succeed, but with challenges
  ⊙ Not likely to succeed
Immediate feedback will be provided for this assessment. If the student chooses the predetermined likelihood of success, they will be notified of their correct answer. If the student chooses other than the predetermined likelihood of success, remedial information will be presented and the student will be asked to try again. As there are only three possibilities for each student, upon the second failed attempt, the correct likelihood will be presented, along with its rationale.

Evaluation Plan
Students of this lesson will be invited to provide feedback to the instructional designer. Through a Help button, students will have access to a comment form. At any time students may complete this form and provide candid comments. The form does not require the student to have access to an email client.

After completing the final assessment, the student will be asked to complete a short survey that will provide the instructional designer data about the student's learning experience. In addition to the preset questions, the student will have the option to type candid comments about the course. The survey does not require the student to have access to an email client.

References:

Dillon, C. & Greene, B. (2003). Learner differences in distance learning: finding differences that matter. In M. G. Moore & W. G. Anderson (Eds.), *Handbook of distance education* (pp. 235-244). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Simonson, M., Smaldino, S., Albright, M., & Zvacek, S. (2006). *Teaching and learning at a distance*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.[9]

Summary of Changes/Modifications

[1] JoAnna Caesar suggested adding Goal as a heading to continue the smooth flow of information presented in the document.

[2] While developing the full instructional content, I noticed that limiting this discussion to performance goals would not be complete; therefore, I expanded the discussion to include learning and future goals.

[3] The discussion of future goals has been moved to the introduction section of this mini-module. In developing the full content it seemed more appropriate to present this information before the locus of control discussion.

[4] The research review portions of this course have been eliminated for the purpose of maintaining a 10-15 minute classroom time. Should learners review the reference materials available through the bibliography page, they will introduced to the same research material that would have been discussed.

[5] The motivation discussion within the self-efficacy mini-module was also eliminated due to classroom time.

[6] Due to the brevity of the self-efficacy discussion, I reduced the number of assessment questions from 5 to 3.

[7] Dusti Annan requested further explanation of the details for the final assessment. I incorporated further details into the description of the assessment to help communicate the plan.

[8] Since the self-efficacy mini-module no longer has five assessment questions, I have removed this quantifier of five from the text.

[9] Although not directly mentioned in this Lesson Plan/Outline, the Simonson et al. text is referenced in the full course content; therefore, to make this Lesson Plan/Outline complete, I have chosen to include it.