Considerations in Choosing Instructional Strategies

Consider the following in selecting instructional strategies.

Learners – If learners are inexperienced, instruction based on an expositive strategy is usually the most effective approach. Exposition leads learners through a subject at a uniform rate, with the pace set more by the instructor than by the learner. On the other hand, learners who are already experienced will rebel against an expositive strategy. They often prefer a process of discovery that makes full use of their experiences and allows them to become involved in, and committed to, learning.

Desired learning outcomes – Learners should not be asked to acquire basic knowledge in the same way they acquire motor skills or new attitudes. Selecting an expositive strategy that is successful in teaching basic knowledge could proved unsuccessful in teaching motor skills or attitudes.

Learning and working environments – If the two environments are the same, as in the case of on-the-job training, an expositive strategy is usually most efficient. If they differ, a discovery strategy usually works best. Generally, the closer the relationship between the conditions in the learning and working environments, the greater the likelihood that learners will be able to apply on the job what they learn during instruction.

Constraints on the instructional design process – Of primary consideration are time and control factors. A discovery strategy simply requires more delivery than an expositive strategy. Learners must be led to reach their own discoveries. That takes time, since individuals learn at different rates. Greater control is possible with an expositive strategy in which the instructor transmits the same information to all learners. There may be differences in how information is received and interpreted. An expositive strategy usually leads to greater control over outcomes than a discovery strategy in which learners reach their own independent conclusions about their experiences.

Rates of Forgetting Content (without any follow-up by student to review content) *

Point-in-Time	Retained	Forgotten
After I day	54%	46%
After 7 days	35%	65%
After 14 days	21%	79%
After 21 days	18%	82%
After 63 days	17%	83%

*Reading information on a computer screen is 25% less efficient that reading it from paper.

Learning/Teaching Styles and Retention Rates

Type of Learning Approach	Retention Rate
Abstract Conceptualization	20%
AC + Reflective Observation	50%
AC + RO + Concrete Experience	70%
AC + RO + CE + Active Experimentation	90%