Transcript

Opening 00:00
Instructional design, learning experience design, user experience design. In what ways are they similar or different? Today we have Mandy Lin, a graduate student in educational technology and Applied Learning Sciences at Carnegie Mellon University to talk with us about what she thinks.

Liwei 00:21
So at the very beginning let's hear a little bit more about yourself.

Mandy 00:25
Yeah, sure so currently I am a master student majoring in educational technology and applied learning science at Carnegie Mellon University and before that, I just gained my bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where I gained my teaching certificates there. My teaching specializes in elementary education and special education. I want to see the potential of educational technology. Since my program, the acronym is called METALS, is part of the (HCI) Human Computer Interaction Institute inside the Carnegie Mellon University. So we have a lot of product design classes as well, and UX classes. So I also have the chance to take those and get myself engaged with the product design process.

Liwei 01:43
So now coming down to the theme of today's interview is really to kind of discuss the differences and similarities between these three or among these three fields.

Mandy 01:56
My current perspective is that I think UX design differs a lot from instructional design. That's pretty obvious. But the learning experience design is a little combination of the UX design, but more leaning towards the instruction side.

Mandy 02:32
I will mainly focus on the major differences among UX and instruction. So they're both creating products while the deliverables are different. For UX, they're designing all kinds of either physical or digital products or services, while for instructional design, it's mainly focusing on curriculum or learning contents, so the final deliverables are very, very different while the target users are also different. For UX design, the target users are the users who use the services or the products. And for instructional design, the users are the learners who are taking the contents or the curriculum. So I think this is the major difference between UX design and instructional design.

[In terms of similarities,] I think both instructional design and product design follow this kind of model (see Figure 1). It's just the context and the users are different as I mentioned. You need to find what are the unfulfilled needs and unsatisfied needs from the users or the learners and then you have the problem statement and then you validate users' needs or learners'

knowledge gaps, for example. And then you have the statement and you propose what are the objectives. It could be the objectives for a product; it could be the learning objectives in this way and then you have an alternative hypothesis of how you can actually deliver a solution. So for product, you could brainstorm some ideas and show a storyboard just like what I show in my portfolio. While for instructional design, you could design several potential contents and discuss with your teammates and see whether those contents are good solutions. After that, you have the parameter development, which in UX you are actually designing something using wireframes and prototypes. And then for instructional design now you have the overall structure for the curriculum, you are adding learning contents, building videos, adding audios, adding learning interactive activities. So those are the parameter developments. After that, you synthesize everything and then you give an evaluation. For UX, you do usability testing with the users. While for instruction, you do the evaluation with your users or you talk with subject matter experts to see if they agree with this or not. And yeah, this is a very iterative process as well, where you can go back to any of the steps, if you don't like one of your solutions or if you find out the needs are not validated by users or learners.

Liwei 06:06
So after having discussed all these differences and similarities, our last question is actually --- What do you think or how would you use those insights to inform your future work either in instructional design or user experience design?

Mandy 06:22
I think after finding the similarities, I am now having a more open mindset. Like, I can actually use a lot of methods from UX research into instructional design. For example, they both have think aloud methods. But how UX researchers use them and instructional designers use them are completely different.

Mandy 06:54
So for example, UX researchers use think alouds to do usability testing with the user to see how they complete the tasks online and then see whether the interactions in a web page is user friendly or not. While for instruction design, they use think aloud to first talk with subject matter experts to learn about their expert knowledge. Second, they can also conduct think alouds with novice learners. With novice learners, they can find where the errors are, what some common mistakes from novices are. So even though they have the same method, how they use them are very different and I just found it intriguing that even though it's the same method we can get completely different results.

Mandy 07:51
I also like how the new position "learning experience designer" is a little bit of a combination of UX and instructional design just because it focuses more on our users, or learners. I think one important word from UX or user-centered methodology is **empathy**. And then I think learning experience designers are trying to build upon that empathy into their content and curriculum or activities that they're trying to connect themselves with learners. That's just my take-away after

combining my instructional design background or learning background with the HCI methods I'm learning right now.

Liwei 08:50
Yeah, actually I think that's very insightful. The idea that you brought up about this core, I would say like, a quality of experience designers, is to be able to be empathetic with the users or the learners, which is essential to conducting experience design or experience research. So yeah, I've learned a lot from what you have shared with us today and I'm sure our readers will, too, to stir up more discussions or conversations among people who are either in the ID field or LXD field, or who are working as LXD, but who used to be IDs in the past.

Ending 09:31
Thank you so much Mandy for sharing with us your insights on the differences and similarities between instructional design, learning experience design, and user experience design. If you are interested in discussing elearning topics. Please feel free to let us know, and let's talk in our next episode.