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Innovative Instructional Design in Contemporary Education: A Systematic Literature Review

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Reynald Alfred G. Sy, ORCID No. 0009 -0007-9522-4603

Graduate Student, Institute of Education Graduate Studies & Transnational Education, Far Eastern University-Manila, Philippines

Abstract

This study presents a systematic review of innovative instructional design (ID) strategies in contemporary education. Instructional design plays a central role in shaping effective learning experiences, yet traditional frameworks often struggle to address the diverse cognitive, social, and affective needs of modern learners. This review examines how ID models and emerging technologies can be integrated to improve engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. The review was guided by four research questions: (1) How do ID models influence student outcomes? (2) What innovative strategies integrate emerging technologies with traditional frameworks? (3) How can ID be adapted to diverse learner needs? (4) What recommendations can guide integration of ID innovations? A systematic search was conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, DOAJ, EBSCO, and Google Scholar. Eligibility criteria included peer-reviewed empirical studies published in English between 2020 and 2025. The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) was used for quality appraisal, and qualitative content analysis guided synthesis. Twenty studies met inclusion criteria. Findings showed that traditional models such as ADDIE, Gagné's Nine Events, and Merrill's First Principles remain effective when combined with active learning, differentiated instruction, and flipped classrooms. Emerging technologies, including AI-driven tutoring, predictive analytics, and immersive tools, enhanced personalization and inclusivity. Adaptations to cognitive, social, and affective needs were achieved through scaffolding, collaboration, and gamification. Recommendations emphasized institutional support, professional development, and alignment of innovations with structured frameworks. Evidence highlights both opportunities and challenges in integrating ID innovations. Limitations include restricted access to resources and uneven digital literacy.

Keywords: instructional design (ID), active learning, universal design for learning (UDL), artificial intelligence (ai) in education, student engagement

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of education has undergone profound transformation in recent years, driven by technological innovation, evolving learner expectations, and increasingly complex pedagogical contexts. These changes have elevated the role of instructional design (ID) as a strategic process for aligning objectives, learner needs, assessment strategies, and learning environments. More than a framework for content delivery, ID provides a systematic approach to creating meaningful learning experiences that foster engagement, sustain motivation, and enhance knowledge retention. These are critical outcomes for academic success in the 21st century (Quiros-Campas et al., 2019).

Foundational ID models such as ADDIE, Gagné's Nine Events of Instruction, and Merrill's First Principles of Instruction have long guided the planning and evaluation of learning experiences. These structured methodologies remain influential, yet their adaptation to technology-enhanced, learner-centered contexts is still underexplored. Advances in digital platforms, artificial intelligence (AI), and immersive technologies have expanded the potential of ID to personalize instruction, provide immediate feedback, and support diverse learner needs. However, many studies

evaluate these innovations in isolation rather than within integrated instructional frameworks, limiting understanding of how traditional models can be synthesized with emerging tools to address cognitive, social, and affective dimensions of learning (Abuhassna et al., 2024; Weng et al., 2024).

Recent scholarship underscores both opportunities and challenges. Mallillin et al. (2021) reported that remote learners often faced low motivation, limited engagement, and technological barriers, while Martínez-Jiménez and Ruiz-Jiménez (2020) demonstrated that flipped classrooms enhanced autonomy and performance. These findings highlight the promise of learner-centered strategies but also reveal gaps in systematic application of ID principles across diverse contexts. Moreover, pandemic-driven shifts to online and hybrid modalities have amplified issues of engagement, self-regulation, and equitable access, underscoring the need for frameworks that are flexible, culturally responsive, and inclusive.

Despite extensive research, the literature remains fragmented. Prior reviews and empirical studies often focus on specific instructional methods or technologies, without integrating theory-informed ID frameworks that holistically address learner diversity. This study seeks to fill that gap. Unlike earlier reviews that examine isolated interventions, it synthesizes traditional ID models with technology-enhanced strategies to propose an integrated approach for contemporary education.

Accordingly, this systematic review addresses the following research questions:

1. How do ID models influence student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes in contemporary contexts?

2. What innovative strategies can integrate emerging technologies, such as AI and immersive learning, with traditional ID frameworks?

3. How can ID be adapted to meet the cognitive, social, and affective needs of diverse learners?

4. What recommendations can guide the integration of ID innovations to improve student outcomes?

The theoretical significance of this review lies in bridging foundational ID models with contemporary learning theories that emphasize active learning, autonomy, and technology integration (Reigeluth, 1999; Jonassen, 1994). Its empirical significance rests on identifying evidence-based strategies, such as flipped classrooms, gamified learning, and AI-supported adaptive instruction that enhance motivation, engagement, and performance. By consolidating current scholarship, this review contributes actionable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking adaptable, inclusive, and effective instructional frameworks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Instructional Design as a Foundational Framework. Instructional Design (ID) provides a systematic process for aligning instructional goals with learner needs, ensuring progression from initial knowledge to defined outcomes (Mangtani, 2024). Its theoretical significance lies in integrating motivational and cognitive principles, while its practical value is in equipping educators with adaptable tools for coherent instruction. Recent developments emphasize technology-enhanced learning (TEL), which expands opportunities for personalization and inclusivity (Seel et al., 2017).

Theoretical Foundations: From Behaviorism to Connectivism. Learning theories provide the conceptual backbone of ID, each contributing distinct perspectives:

- Behaviorism emphasizes reinforcement and measurable outcomes, supporting mastery of foundational skills (Jabsheh, 2024).

- Cognitivism highlights mental processes, schema development, and cognitive load management, refining instructional sequencing (Mahbub & Beedle, 2025).

- Constructivism stresses learner agency, collaboration, and contextual problem-solving, aligning with project-based and authentic tasks (Jabsheh, 2024).

- Connectivism extends learning into digital networks, emphasizing knowledge navigation and integration across interconnected sources.

- Critically, while behaviorism provides structure, constructivism and connectivism emphasize autonomy and contextual relevance. Effective ID frameworks often integrate these perspectives, balancing standardization with learner-centered flexibility.

Instructional Models as Operational Frameworks. The instructional models translate theory into practice:

- ADDIE offers iterative structure for analysis, design, and evaluation, effective in blended and MOOC contexts (Abuhassna et al., 2024; Bouchrika, 2025).

- Merrill's First Principles emphasize problem-centered learning and activation of prior knowledge, supporting transferability (Badali et al., 2020; Alias & Razak, 2024).

- Gagné's Nine Events provide sequential scaffolding for engagement and knowledge acquisition (Yulinda et al., 2024; Syihabul Ihsan Al Haqiqy et al., 2024).

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) foregrounds inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring diverse learners can engage meaningfully (Bray et al., 2023; Davis et al., 2021).

These models illustrate the operationalization of theory, yet their adaptation to technology-enhanced contexts remains uneven. Integrating UDL with traditional frameworks highlights the tension between structured sequencing and flexible inclusivity.

Innovative Approaches: Technology and Learner-Centered Strategies. Contemporary innovations extend classical models by embedding digital and adaptive methodologies:

- Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) aligns instruction with industry needs while supporting diverse learner profiles (Vierke et al., 2023).

- Active Learning strategies (problem-based learning, flipped classrooms) foster autonomy and higher-order skills (Martinez et al., 2025; Wang, 2023).

- Differentiated Instruction (DI) ensures equity by tailoring strategies to learner abilities and preferences (Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019).

- Personalized Learning leverages adaptive technologies and analytics to provide real-time, individualized feedback (Zhang et al., 2022; Short & Shemshack, 2023).

- Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) and Predictive Analytics employ AI to deliver adaptive instruction and forecast learner performance (Shah et al., 2024; Alam, 2023).

Critically, these innovations demonstrate the shift from instructor-centered to learner-centered paradigms. However, their effectiveness often depends on integration with established ID frameworks rather than isolated application.

Conceptual Synthesis: Toward Integrated Frameworks. The synergy between theories, models, and innovations underscores the need for integrated ID frameworks. Behaviorism and cognitivism provide structure, constructivism and connectivism emphasize autonomy and collaboration, while models such as ADDIE and UDL operationalize these principles. When combined with innovations like AI-driven

tutoring, VR/AR, gamification, and analytics, ID frameworks can holistically address learners' cognitive, social, and motivational needs.

This synthesis highlights a critical gap: while innovations are promising, research often evaluates them in isolation. A systematic integration of theory, design, and technology is essential to create adaptable, inclusive, and effective instructional strategies for contemporary education.

METHODS

Search Strategy. To identify relevant studies for the systematic review, a comprehensive and structured search process was conducted across major scholarly databases. The search aimed to gather studies that examined current innovations in instructional design, including technology-enhanced learning, active learning, differentiated instruction, personalized learning, intelligent tutoring systems, learning analytics, and emerging instructional design models discussed in the literature review. The search was performed using Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), ERIC, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and Google Scholar to ensure broad coverage of educational research. The search process was guided by recommendations for systematic reviews that emphasize transparency, reproducibility, and comprehensive evidence collection (Page et al., 2021). Last searches were on May 28, 2026.

The search terms were developed based on the key concepts identified from the literature review, particularly instructional design theories, instructional design models, contemporary learning theories, and emerging educational technologies. Several keyword combinations were employed using Boolean operators, such as "AND," to increase the retrieval of relevant studies while maintaining focus on the review topic. Main search strings used were:

- Instructional Design AND Innovation
- Technology-Enhanced Learning AND Instructional
- Personalized Learning AND Instructional Design
- Active Learning AND Instructional Design
- Artificial Intelligence AND Instructional Design

To maintain the relevance and quality of the evidence, eligibility criteria were applied during the screening process. Only peer-reviewed journal articles published in English were included. Considering the rapidly evolving nature of educational technologies and instructional innovations, the review focused on studies published between 2020 and 2026. Studies were required to address instructional design practices, frameworks, models, strategies, or innovations implemented in educational settings. Research conducted in primary, secondary, higher, and vocational education contexts was considered. Editorials, opinion papers, dissertations, conference abstracts, book reviews, and studies that did not directly discuss instructional design innovations were excluded.

After the search was completed, duplicate records were removed. The remaining articles underwent title and abstract screening to determine their relevance to the review objectives. Studies that met the initial screening requirements proceeded to full-text evaluation. During this stage, articles were assessed based on their alignment with the review focus on innovative instructional design practices and their contribution to understanding contemporary approaches to teaching and learning. The final set of eligible studies formed the evidence base for the synthesis and thematic analysis.

The decision to prioritize empirical research was intentional. Although conceptual papers and theoretical discussions offer valuable perspectives on instructional design, empirical studies provide evidence on how instructional innovations are implemented and experienced in real educational environments. Empirical findings allow researchers to examine the effectiveness of instructional design models, technology integration, learner engagement

strategies, and personalized learning approaches across different educational contexts. Consequently, emphasizing empirical literature strengthens the practical value of the review and supports evidence-based recommendations for educators, instructional designers, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking to improve learning experiences in contemporary education.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure that only relevant, credible, and high-quality studies were included in the systematic review. As shown in Table 1, the review specifically focused on studies that examined the application of innovative instructional design in contemporary education, ensuring that all selected articles directly addressed the research topic.

Table 1
Inclusion/Exclusion criteria.

No.	Filters	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1	Objective	Must focus on the application of Innovative Instructional Design in Contemporary Education.	Studies that do not focus on Innovative Instructional Design in Contemporary Education.
2	Study Design	Empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods)	Non-empirical papers (theoretical papers, literature reviews, methodological papers, conceptual papers) Editorials, philosophical or critical essays, opinion pieces, blog posts, or theoretical essays.
3	Publication Type	Original peer-reviewed journal articles or conference papers.	Publications from non-peer-reviewed sources or predatory journals.
4	Indexation	Indexed by Scopus, DOAJ, EBSCO, ERIC, Web of Science, or aggregated by Google Scholar.	Studies not indexed in recognized academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, etc.
5	Time Frame	Published between 2020 and 2025 to reflect recent developments in instructional design in contemporary education.	Studies covered from 2019 and below.
6	Language	Published in English.	Studies with languages other than English.

Empirical studies employing quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods approaches were included because they provide evidence-based findings derived from actual educational contexts. In contrast, theoretical papers, literature reviews, editorials, opinion articles, and other non-empirical publications were excluded since they do not offer primary research evidence. Furthermore, only peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers with clear methodological procedures were considered, strengthening the reliability and academic rigor of the review. Studies published in recognized academic databases such as Scopus, ERIC, Web of Science, EBSCO, DOAJ, and Google Scholar were prioritized to ensure scholarly quality and accessibility.

The criteria also emphasized the relevance and applicability of the findings to current educational practices. Only studies published between 2020 and 2025 were included to capture recent developments and emerging trends in instructional design, particularly in response to rapid technological advancements and evolving learning environments. Older studies published before 2020 were excluded because they may not accurately reflect contemporary educational contexts. Additionally, the review was limited to English-language publications to ensure consistency in data analysis and interpretation. While this language restriction may have excluded valuable studies published in other languages, it helped maintain accuracy and feasibility during the review process. Overall, these inclusion and exclusion criteria enabled the selection of timely, trustworthy, and directly relevant evidence, providing a strong foundation for understanding innovative instructional design practices in contemporary education.

PRISMA Flowchart. The PRISMA flowchart presented in Figure 1 visually maps the systematic procedure followed in identifying, screening, and selecting the studies included in the review. It explicitly illustrates the flow of records from initial database searches through successive stages of filtering, thereby providing a transparent account of how the final set of articles was derived. Through this diagram, the reader can clearly observe the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria at each stage, from identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion, demonstrating the rigor and consistency of the selection process. As such, this PRISMA flowchart functions not only as a summary of the methodology but also as evidence of the systematic and methodical approach employed in ensuring and guaranteeing the relevance and quality of the included studies.

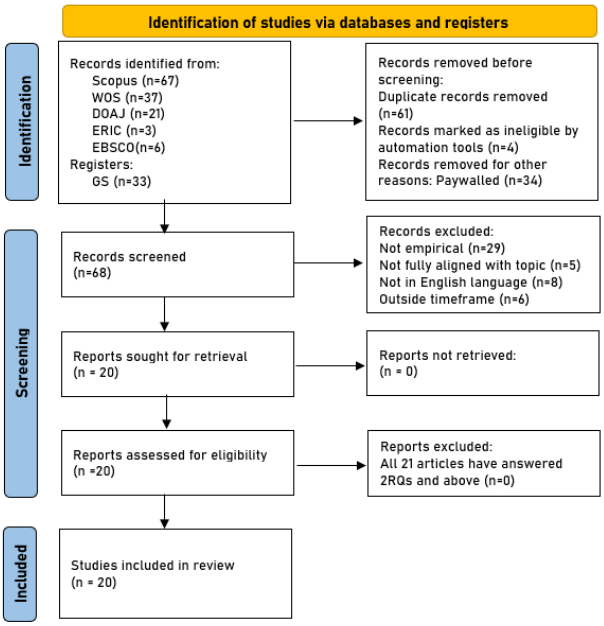

Figure 1

PRISMA flowchart illustrating the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion of studies in the systematic review on innovative instructional design in contemporary education.

Identification Phase. The initial search yielded a total of 167 records from multiple databases and registers, including Scopus (67), Web of Science (37), DOAJ (21), ERIC (3), EBSCO (6), and Google Scholar (33). This wide distribution of sources reflects a comprehensive search strategy, increasing the likelihood of capturing diverse and relevant studies across different indexing platforms.

However, a notable reduction occurred prior to screening. A total of 61 duplicate records, 4 automatically excluded records, and 34 paywalled articles were removed. The removal of duplicates is expected in systematic reviews as this suggests overlap across databases. Meanwhile, the exclusion of paywalled articles highlights a practical limitation, potentially restricting access to otherwise relevant studies. Despite this, the remaining dataset retained sufficient breadth for meaningful analysis.

Screening Phase. After the removal stage, 68 records proceeded to screening. During this stage, studies were evaluated based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. A total of 48 records were excluded for key reasons:

- Not empirical in nature (29)
- Not fully aligned with the research topic (5)
- Not published in English (8)
- Outside the specified timeframe (6)

This stage demonstrates a rigorous filtering process focused on ensuring methodological relevance and topical alignment. The high number of exclusions, particularly non-empirical studies, indicates that the review prioritizes evidence-based research, strengthening the overall validity of its findings. Additionally, the exclusion of non-English and out-of-scope timeframe studies ensures consistency but may limit cross-cultural perspectives.

Eligibility Phase. From the screened records, 20 reports were sought and successfully retrieved, with no missing full texts. This complete retrieval rate reflects an efficient and well-managed screening process. All retrieved studies were then assessed for eligibility, and notably, no studies were excluded at this stage. This outcome suggests that the earlier screening criteria were sufficiently stringent, ensuring that only highly relevant studies advanced to full-text review. It also indicates clear alignment between the initial inclusion criteria and the research questions guiding the review.

Inclusion Phase. Ultimately, 20 studies were included in the final review. The consistency between the number of retrieved, assessed, and included studies reflects a well-calibrated selection process with minimal ambiguity or discrepancy in decision-making. The fact that all included articles met at least two or more research questions further demonstrates their strong relevance to the study's objectives. This strengthens the analytical foundation of the review, as each study contributes substantively to addressing the research aims.

However, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The exclusion of paywalled and non-English studies may have narrowed the scope of the review, potentially omitting valuable perspectives. Nonetheless, these constraints are common in systematic reviews and do not significantly undermine the integrity of the process.

Overall, the PRISMA flow diagram reflects a carefully executed screening and selection procedure that enhances the credibility of the systematic review. The structured reduction from a large pool of studies to a focused set of 20 high-quality articles ensures that the final analysis is both reliable and relevant to the research questions on innovative instructional design.

Quality Appraisal. The quality appraisal of the 20 studies included in this review (Table 3) indicates that the overall evidence base is methodologically sound and suitable for synthesis.

Table 2

Quality appraisal report summary of the 20 articles subjected for review.

No.	Study Author/Year	Methodological Design	MMAT Initial Screening Questions	MMAT Methodological Quality Questions	Inclusion Decision
1	Gosavi et al. (2022)	Quantitative	2/2	4/4	Included
2	Jacobson et al. (2022)	Quantitative	2/2	4/4	Included
3	Rahim et al. (2023)	Quantitative	2/2	4/4	Included
4	Almarzuki et al. (2024)	Quantitative	2/2	3/4	Included
5	Mallillin et al. (2021)	Quantitative	2/2	4/4	Included
6	Mallillin et al. (2020)	Quantitative	2/2	3/4	Included
7	Al Haqiqy et al. (2024)	Quantitative	2/2	2/4	Included
8	Bucheli et al. (2024)	Quantitative	2/2	2/4	Included
9	Cochrane et al. (2022)	Qualitative	2/2	3/4	Included
10	Hlosta et al. (2022)	Mixed method	2/2	3/4	Included
11	Klepsch et al. (2020)	Quantitative	2/2	4/4	Included
12	Kurniawan et al. (2025)	Mixed method	2/2	4/4	Included
13	Martin-Alguacil et al. (2024)	Quantitative	2/2	4/4	Included
14	Hidalgo et al. (2024)	Quantitative	2/2	4/4	Included
15	Ruiz-Jimenez et al. (2022)	Quantitative	2/2	3/4	Included
16	Subban et al. (2025)	Qualitative	2/2	4/4	Included
17	Sui et al. (2023)	Quantitative	2/2	4/4	Included
18	Waghmare et al (2024)	Quantitative	2/2	4/4	Included
19	Wang (2023)	Quantitative	2/2	4/4	Included
20	Rahim et al (2023)	Qualitative	2/2	3/4	Included

All studies successfully met the MMAT initial screening criteria, achieving a score of 2/2, which suggests that each article had clear research questions and used appropriate data to address the study objectives. Furthermore, all studies met the minimum methodological quality requirements and were therefore retained for analysis. Among the included articles, twelve studies achieved the highest methodological score of 4/4, six studies scored 3/4, and two studies scored 2/4. These results demonstrate that most of the selected studies exhibited strong methodological rigor, while the remaining studies still provided valuable evidence despite minor methodological limitations. The appraisal process also reflected methodological diversity, with the review including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies, thereby providing a broader and more comprehensive understanding of innovative instructional design in contemporary education.

The findings of the quality assessment suggest that the review is grounded in credible and reliable evidence. The use of the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) enabled the consistent evaluation of studies across different research designs, ensuring that quality standards were applied fairly and systematically. Although a small number of studies obtained lower scores, they remained relevant to the review topic and met the established inclusion threshold. Retaining these studies helped capture a wider range of perspectives, contexts, and instructional innovations while maintaining methodological quality. Overall, the appraisal results strengthen the trustworthiness of the review findings by ensuring that the synthesis was based on studies with acceptable to high levels of research quality, thereby increasing confidence in the conclusions drawn regarding innovative instructional design practices in contemporary education.

Data Analysis. This systematic review employed Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) as the primary method for synthesizing evidence from the 20 selected studies on innovative instructional design in contemporary education. Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is a systematic approach that enables researchers to identify, organize, and interpret patterns and meanings from textual data across multiple studies (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2014).

Given the methodological diversity of the included articles, which consisted of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research, QCA was considered an appropriate analytical strategy because it allows findings from different study designs to be integrated into a coherent body of evidence. The analysis followed three interconnected phases: preparation, organization, and reporting. During the preparation phase, relevant findings and discussions from each article were carefully examined and extracted. In the organization phase, extracted information was coded according to the review objectives and grouped into meaningful categories. Finally, in the reporting phase, recurring themes and patterns were synthesized and presented to explain how innovative instructional design is being applied within contemporary educational settings.

To accommodate the different methodological designs represented in the review, the QCA process was adapted accordingly. For quantitative studies, emphasis was placed on analyzing the narrative sections, particularly the discussion and interpretation of findings, rather than the statistical results alone. This allowed the review to capture the educational implications and practical significance of instructional innovations reported by the authors. For qualitative studies, the results, discussions, and conclusions were examined in depth to identify recurring concepts, experiences, and perspectives related to innovative instructional design. Meanwhile, mixed-methods studies were analyzed by combining both approaches: qualitative findings were coded thematically, while quantitative results were summarized and linked to emerging themes. This approach ensured that valuable insights from all study types contributed meaningfully to the synthesis and prevented potentially important findings from being overlooked.

The use of QCA provided a structured and transparent means of identifying common trends, effective practices, challenges, and emerging innovations across the included studies. Through thematic coding and categorization, the review was able to generate a comprehensive understanding of how contemporary instructional design approaches are transforming teaching and learning environments. Furthermore, the integration of evidence from quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies enhanced the depth and richness of the analysis, providing a balanced interpretation of the available literature. This analytical approach is consistent with established systematic review practices that emphasize the value of thematic synthesis for examining complex educational phenomena and understanding how instructional innovations operate across diverse contexts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2014). Consequently, the data analysis process strengthened the credibility of the review and supported the development of evidence-based conclusions regarding innovative instructional design in contemporary education.

RESULTS

Study Characteristics. The study characteristics presented in Table 3 highlight the global and multidisciplinary nature of innovative instructional design research. The 20 studies were conducted across Asia, Europe, North America, Africa, and Oceania, reflecting broad international interest in improving teaching and learning through innovative approaches. Methodologically, the studies employed diverse designs, including experimental, quasi-experimental, quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, survey-based, classroom action research, case studies, and computational modeling. Sample sizes ranged from small educator-focused investigations to large-scale datasets involving thousands of students, providing both in-depth perspectives and broader educational trends. Data were collected using surveys, interviews, observations, tests, learning analytics, institutional records, predictive models, and automated educational systems, demonstrating the increasing use of both traditional and technology-driven research methods in instructional design.

Table 3
Study characteristic of the 20 articles subjected for review.

Author/s & Year	Country	Study Design	Sample Size & Population	Data Collection Method	Outcomes Measured	Key Findings
Gosavi & Arora (2022)	India	Experimental study with statistical validation	Multiple cohorts of computer engineering students (51–130 per cohort)	Exam results (ESE); case study/role play rubrics; Chi-square analysis; student feedback surveys	Academic performance, skills development, student satisfaction	Active learning strategies (case study, role play, flipped classroom, quizzes) significantly improved academic performance, skills, and satisfaction among reluctant learners
Jacobson, Zhang, & Zhu (2022)	USA & China	Survey-based study	N=28 students (from 32 enrolled)	Likert-scale survey; rankings; free-text responses; Wilcoxon rank sum tests	Engagement, enjoyment, perceived effectiveness for learning objectives	Active techniques (debate, discussion, simulations) were more effective for higher-order skills; traditional methods rated higher for memorization; a mix of methods is optimal
Rahim, Jaafar, & Baskaran (2023)	Malaysia & Australia	Conceptual and applied research	System-design oriented (student response datasets)	Data pre-processing of student responses; extraction of features; evaluation function development	Mastery level measurement, personalized tutoring effectiveness	ITS with AI-driven evaluation functions (weighted criteria aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy) enhances personalized tutoring and adaptive guidance
Almarzuki et al. (2024)	Malaysia & Indonesia	Experimental study using computational modeling	N=20 students per dataset (from ASSISTment: 708,632 problems; KDD Cup 2010)	Dataset analysis; preprocessing; iBKT with confidence parameter; RMSE evaluation	Predictive accuracy of mastery, student performance prediction	Enhanced iBKT with confidence parameter P(C) improves predictive accuracy in ITS, enabling better personalized learning paths
Mallillin et al. (2021)	Philippines & Libya	Quantitative research design	N=30 professional lecturers	Purposive sampling; survey instruments; weighted mean; descriptive analysis	Cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domain outcomes; teaching strategy effectiveness	Students show strong ability in meaning construction (cognitive), motivation/values (affective), and expressive movement (psychomotor); teaching strategies significantly relate to academic performance
Mallillin et al. (2020)	Oman, Philippines, & Libya	Mixed-methods research design	N=38 HEI students	Questionnaires via email; observation; thematic analysis; frequency/percentage distributions	Online learning issues, knowledge integration, learning enhancement	Online learning challenges (connectivity, audio, adaptation) directly impact engagement and motivation; instructional design must adapt to diverse cognitive, affective, and social contexts
Martín-Alguacil & Avedillo (2024)	Spain	Longitudinal quasi-experimental comparative design	N=531 students (across 3 academic years); 326 surveys	Bloom's Taxonomy tests; Wooclap® polling; Likert-scale surveys; open-ended responses; thematic analysis	Higher-order cognitive skills, student satisfaction, learning preferences	Student-centered active learning (flipped classroom, TBL, PBL) significantly improved higher-order cognitive skills; lower-order memorization showed no difference
Hidalgo Peñate, Padrón-Robaina, & Nieves (2024)	Spain	Quantitative cross-sectional survey (SEM)	N=139 vocational schools	7-point Likert survey; SEM with maximum likelihood; CFA; Cronbach's α>0.93; AVE>0.79	Technological resources, sensing capability, innovativeness, school reputation	Technological resources foster dynamic capabilities (sensing and innovativeness), which indirectly improve institutional reputation and student outcomes in vocational education
Ruiz-Jiménez et al. (2022)	Spain	Quantitative survey-based study (PLS modeling)	N=107 undergraduate students (from 172 enrolled)	Validated questionnaire (α=0.83); PLS analysis; formative assessment tools (Kahoot!, Socrative, Quizziz)	Attitude, formative assessment perception, academic results perception	Students' attitudes and formative assessment perceptions strongly predict perceived academic improvement in flipped classrooms; increased motivation, flexibility, and autonomy reported
Subban et al. (2025)	Australia & Indonesia	Qualitative case study	N=5 higher education educators	Semi-structured interviews (video conferencing); member-checking; Braun & Clarke thematic analysis	Educator perceptions of differentiated instruction, implementation challenges	DI in higher education is inconsistent ("hit and miss"); educators face challenges adapting frameworks for diverse cognitive, social, and affective needs in hybrid/remote contexts
Sui, Yen, & Chang (2023)	Taiwan & Indonesia	Quantitative study (SEM with ML and Bayesian estimation)	N=262 eighth-grade students	Pre/post-tests; MSLQ-adapted instruments; TAM scales; Bayesian SEM	Metacognitive self-regulation, self-efficacy, perceived usefulness/ease of use	Technology-enhanced environments positively influence self-regulation and self-efficacy; Bayesian SEM provides richer insights on technology acceptance and SRL
Waghmare et al. (2024)	India	Practice-based descriptive study	N=135 engineering students	Flipped classroom implementation; NPTEL videos; quizzes; evaluation rubrics for concept maps and crossword puzzles	Student performance, clarity, creativity, accuracy, engagement	Flipped classroom and TEL strategies (LMS, concept maps, crossword puzzles) improve student performance and accommodate different learning paces and styles

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Wang (2023)	China	Comparative experimental study	N=71 English learners (TI: 24; FI: 22; OFI: 25)	Pre/post-tests (IELTS reading); SRL questionnaire; weekly online quizzes; log-on time tracking	Reading skills, self-regulated learning strategies, online learning behaviors	Online flipped instruction outperformed traditional and flipped methods; strong evidence for adapting ID frameworks for cognitive (SRL), social (collaboration), and affective (anxiety reduction) needs
Zhang et al (2024)	China	Quantitative	1,870 undergraduate students from a university in central China.	Academic records, consumption data, library transactions, access control records, and campus Wi-Fi logs.	Student behavior prediction; learning analytics; intervention strategies.	The predictive model identified student behavioral patterns and supported targeted educational interventions.

The reviewed studies primarily examined outcomes related to academic performance, engagement, motivation, self-regulated learning, cognitive development, collaboration, creativity, learner satisfaction, technology acceptance, and institutional improvement. A common theme was the effectiveness of learner-centered and technology-enhanced instructional strategies, such as flipped classrooms, differentiated instruction, active learning, mobile learning, intelligent tutoring systems, learning analytics, and AI-supported educational environments. Findings consistently indicated positive effects on higher-order thinking skills, learner autonomy, participation, and personalized learning experiences. At the same time, several studies emphasized the importance of contextual factors, including technological access, learner diversity, educator readiness, and the limitations of relying solely on automated systems.

Overall, the characteristics of the included studies provide strong and varied evidence that innovative instructional design can enhance learning outcomes while addressing the cognitive, social, and affective needs of contemporary learners across different educational settings.

Influence of Instructional Design Models on Engagement and Outcomes. The analysis of the 20 studies revealed that instructional design (ID) models consistently influence student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes by providing structured yet adaptable frameworks. Traditional models such as Gagné's Nine Events and ADDIE demonstrated effectiveness in scaffolding learning and ensuring sequential progression, particularly in online and blended contexts (Yulinda et al., 2024; Abuhassna et al., 2024). Studies on flipped classrooms and active learning approaches showed significant improvements in higher-

order cognitive skills, collaboration, and self-regulation, highlighting the importance of learner-centered strategies (Martinez et al., 2025; Wang, 2023).

Quantitative findings confirmed that students exposed to active and differentiated instructional designs reported higher satisfaction, stronger motivation, and improved performance compared to traditional lecture-based methods (Jacobson et al., 2022;

Gosavi et al., 2022). These results suggest that ID models not only structure learning but also enhance engagement when integrated with participatory and interactive strategies.

Emerging technologies further amplified the impact of instructional design by enabling personalization and adaptive learning. Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS), predictive analytics, and personalized digital environments provided immediate feedback, tailored learning paths, and data-driven interventions that improved mastery and motivation (Rahim, 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2025). Studies employing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles demonstrated that inclusivity and accessibility fostered stronger learner engagement and confidence, especially when combined with digital tools (Bucheli et al., 2024; Bray et al., 2023). Mixed-methods research highlighted that technology-enhanced self-regulation interventions significantly improved autonomy and persistence, with explanatory models showing strong predictive power for motivation and performance (Sui et al., 2023). These findings reinforce that integrating AI-driven systems, immersive tools, and analytics into ID frameworks creates responsive environments that address cognitive, social, and affective learner needs.

Thematic synthesis across qualitative and quantitative evidence emphasized that effective instructional design requires balancing structure with flexibility. While behaviorist and cognitivist principles provided necessary organization and cognitive load management (Mahbub & Beedle, 2025), constructivist and connectivist approaches promoted collaboration, autonomy, and contextual learning (Jabsheh, 2024). Studies consistently reported that students valued instructional designs that offered choice, interactivity, and relevance, with positive effects on motivation and long-term retention (Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2022). However, limitations were noted in predictive models where errors reduced trust and adoption (Hlosta et al., 2022), and in online contexts where connectivity issues hindered engagement (Mallillin et al., 2020a).

Overall, the results demonstrate that innovative instructional design, anchored in theory, operationalized through structured models, and enhanced by technology, creates inclusive, engaging, and effective learning experiences that align with contemporary educational demands.

Integrating Emerging Technologies with Traditional Instructional Design Frameworks. Results revealed that instructional design (ID) frameworks are increasingly adapted through the integration of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), immersive learning, and predictive analytics. Several studies demonstrated how Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) and Bayesian Knowledge Tracing (BKT) models enhance personalization by providing immediate feedback, adaptive pathways, and mastery-based progression (Rahim, 2023; Almarzuki, 2024). These AI-driven innovations align with traditional frameworks like ADDIE and Gagné's Nine Events by embedding adaptive mechanisms into structured instructional sequences, thereby improving accuracy in predicting learner needs and fostering engagement. Similarly, predictive learning analytics and machine learning approaches were shown to support early identification of at-risk students, though challenges such as algorithmic errors and trust issues were noted (Hlosta et al., 2022). These findings highlight that AI-based strategies can strengthen instructional design but require careful integration to ensure transparency and fairness.

Beyond AI, immersive and digital technologies were found to expand the scope of instructional design by promoting inclusivity and learner-centered engagement. Studies applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles demonstrated that digital tools, gamification, and multimedia resources enhance accessibility and motivation when aligned with pedagogical frameworks (Bucheli et al., 2024; Bray et al., 2023). Mobile learning and VR/AR applications further extended instructional design by fostering collaboration, creativity, and learner agency (Cochrane, 2022). These innovations resonate with constructivist and connectivist perspectives, which emphasize autonomy, contextual learning, and networked knowledge integration (Jabsheh, 2024). Importantly, the evidence suggests that technology integration is most effective when it complements rather than replaces traditional instructional models, ensuring coherence while addressing diverse learner needs.

Thematic synthesis across qualitative and quantitative findings emphasized that innovative instructional design requires balancing structure with adaptability. Personalized digital environments, differentiated instruction, and robotics education were shown to improve engagement and problem-solving skills by tailoring content and assessment to learner profiles (Kurniawan et al., 2025). At the same time, studies using conventional ICT tools such as flipped classrooms and online collaborative platforms demonstrated incremental innovation by embedding digital resources into established frameworks (Ruiz-Jiménez et al., 2022; Wang, 2023). While some articles only partially addressed emerging technologies, the overall evidence indicates that integrating AI, immersive tools, and adaptive systems into instructional design enhances inclusivity, personalization, and learner motivation. These findings reinforce the need for flexible frameworks that systematically combine theory, structured models, and technological innovation to meet cognitive, social, and affective learner needs in contemporary education.

Adapting Instructional Design to Diverse Learner Needs. Across the 20 studies, instructional design (ID) was shown to adapt effectively when frameworks were reshaped to address the cognitive, social, and affective dimensions of diverse learners. Cognitive adaptations were most frequently emphasized, with frameworks such as Cognitive Load Theory and Merrill's First Principles guiding the organization of content to reduce overload and strengthen comprehension (Mahbub & Beedle, 2025; Alias & Razak, 2024). Studies highlighted the importance of scaffolding, differentiated instruction, and personalized pathways to accommodate varying levels of readiness and prior knowledge (Kurniawan et al., 2025). Social needs were addressed through collaborative learning designs, flipped classrooms, and mobile-supported approaches that encouraged teamwork, peer mentoring, and shared problem-solving (Jacobson et al., 2022; Cochrane, 2022). These strategies align with constructivist and connectivist perspectives, which emphasize knowledge co-construction and interaction across networks (Jabsheh, 2024). Affective dimensions were supported through gamification, formative feedback, and learner choice, which fostered motivation, confidence, and reduced anxiety (Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019; Wang, 2023). Together, these findings suggest that adapting ID requires a holistic approach that balances structured cognitive support with opportunities for social engagement and emotional growth.

Thematic coding further revealed that inclusive frameworks such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provide a strong foundation for meeting diverse learner needs by integrating representation, engagement, and expression (Bray et al., 2023; Bucheli et al., 2024). Technology-enhanced strategies, including adaptive platforms, robotics projects, and self-regulation tools, were shown to extend these frameworks by offering real-time feedback and personalized learning experiences (Sui et al., 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2025). At the same time, several studies noted challenges such as unequal access to resources, digital literacy gaps, and contextual barriers like family

distractions or poor connectivity, which limited the effectiveness of adaptations (Mallillin et al., 2020a). Despite these constraints, the overall evidence demonstrates that instructional design can be successfully reconfigured to meet cognitive, social, and affective needs when theory-driven models are combined with learner-centered innovations. This reinforces the importance of flexible, inclusive, and technology-supported instructional frameworks in contemporary education.

Recommendations for Integrating Instructional Design Innovations. The studies reviewed offered a wide range of recommendations for integrating instructional design (ID) innovations to improve student learning outcomes. A recurring theme was the importance of aligning technology-driven strategies with established instructional frameworks to ensure coherence and effectiveness. For example, research on Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) and Bayesian Knowledge Tracing emphasized the need for adaptive mechanisms that incorporate confidence levels, mastery measurement, and real-time feedback to personalize learning pathways (Rahim, 2023; Almarzuki, 2024). Similarly, predictive learning analytics studies recommended combining algorithmic insights with teacher judgment to address contextual factors that automated systems may overlook (Hlosta et al., 2022). These findings highlight that while AI and analytics can enhance instructional design, their integration must be guided by principles of transparency, fairness, and human oversight. Beyond AI, recommendations also pointed to the value of scaffolding, authentic collaborative tasks, and blended approaches that merge traditional methods with active and technology-enhanced learning (Cochrane, 2022; Jacobson et al., 2022). Such strategies ensure that innovations do not operate in isolation but are embedded within pedagogical structures that support diverse learner needs.

Another set of recommendations focused on inclusivity, accessibility, and institutional support. Studies applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL) frameworks stressed that digital tools, multimedia, and gamification should be carefully integrated to reduce barriers and foster engagement across cognitive, social, and affective domains (Bucheli et al., 2024; Bray et al., 2023). Professional development for educators was repeatedly emphasized, with calls for training in differentiated instruction, technology use, and active learning strategies to maximize the benefits of innovations (Subban et al., 2025; Avadillo et al., 2024). Practical suggestions included improving infrastructure, addressing technical barriers such as connectivity and device access, and embedding formative assessment into flipped learning models to sustain motivation and performance (Ruiz-Jiménez et al., 2022; Mallillin et al., 2020b). Several studies also recommended designing purpose-built tools that scaffold self-regulation, metacognition, and collaborative engagement, rather than relying on generic ICT platforms (Sui et al., 2023; Wang, 2023). Collectively, these recommendations underscore that successful integration of ID innovations requires not only technological adoption but also institutional commitment, educator readiness, and learner-centered design. By combining structured models with adaptive technologies and inclusive practices, instructional design can create environments that are both innovative and effective in improving student outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this review confirm that instructional design (ID) models remain central to shaping effective learning experiences, but their adaptation to contemporary contexts requires integration with learner-centered strategies and emerging technologies. Evidence from studies on active learning, flipped classrooms, and differentiated instruction demonstrated that traditional frameworks, such as ADDIE and Gagné's Nine Events, continue to provide structure and coherence, yet their effectiveness is amplified when combined with participatory approaches that foster autonomy, collaboration, and higher-order thinking (Martinez et al., 2025; Yulinda et al., 2024). This

aligns with constructivist and connectivist perspectives, which emphasize knowledge co-construction and contextual engagement (Jabsheh, 2024). Thus, ID models influence engagement and outcomes most strongly when they balance structured sequencing with opportunities for learner agency, confirming the need for hybrid approaches that merge classical design principles with modern pedagogical innovations.

The integration of emerging technologies into instructional frameworks was shown to be both promising and complex. Artificial intelligence (AI), predictive analytics, and immersive tools, like virtual and augmented reality, help personalize learning, provide instant feedback, and create adaptive pathways that respond to different learner needs (Rahim, 2023; Cochrane, 2022). However, several studies cautioned that technology alone does not guarantee improved outcomes; its effectiveness depends on alignment with pedagogical frameworks such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which ensures inclusivity and accessibility (Bucheli et al., 2024; Bray et al., 2023). Moreover, challenges such as algorithmic errors, digital literacy gaps, and unequal access to resources highlight the importance of combining technological innovation with human oversight and institutional support (Hlosta et al., 2022; Mallillin et al., 2020b). These findings underscore that technology integration must be deliberate, transparent, and responsive to learner diversity rather than implemented in isolation.

Adaptation of ID frameworks to cognitive, social, and affective needs emerged as a critical theme across the reviewed studies. Cognitive needs were addressed through scaffolding, schema development, and cognitive load management, while social dimensions were supported by collaborative learning environments and peer mentoring (Mahbub & Beedle, 2025; Jacobson et al., 2022). Affective needs, including motivation, confidence, and reduced anxiety, were fostered through gamification, formative feedback, and learner choice (Smale-Jacobse et al., 2019; Wang, 2023). Inclusive frameworks such as UDL and personalized digital environments provided holistic approaches that reduced barriers and promoted equity (Kurniawan et al., 2025). Nevertheless, limitations such as inconsistent access to technology and contextual challenges like family distractions or poor connectivity reveal that adaptation must be flexible and context-sensitive (Mallillin et al., 2020b). These insights highlight that effective instructional design requires a multidimensional approach that integrates cognitive scaffolding, social collaboration, and affective support to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Finally, the recommendations synthesized across the studies emphasize the importance of institutional commitment, educator readiness, and learner-centered design in guiding the integration of ID innovations. Professional development for teachers, investment in infrastructure, and alignment of innovations with structured frameworks were consistently identified as prerequisites for success (Subban et al., 2025; Ruiz-Jiménez et al., 2022). Practical guidance included adopting adaptive systems, embedding formative assessment, and designing purpose-built tools that scaffold self-regulation and metacognition (Sui et al., 2023; Wang, 2023). At the same time, recommendations stressed the need for transparency in AI-driven systems, careful integration of digital tools into pedagogical models, and responsiveness to equity concerns (Bucheli et al., 2024; Hlosta et al., 2022). Collectively, these findings suggest that instructional design innovations can significantly improve student outcomes when guided by evidence-based recommendations that balance technological potential with pedagogical coherence and inclusivity. This reinforces the broader implication that instructional design in contemporary education must evolve as a dynamic, theory-informed, and context-sensitive practice.

Implications and Future Directions. The findings of this review carry important implications for educators, instructional designers, and policymakers. Practically, the evidence

suggests that instructional design innovations, such as AI-driven tutoring systems, immersive learning environments, and differentiated digital platforms, should be embedded within structured frameworks like ADDIE, Gagné's Nine Events, and Universal Design for Learning to ensure coherence, inclusivity, and adaptability (Bucheli et al., 2024; Bray et al., 2023). Institutions must invest in professional development, infrastructure, and equitable access to technology so that educators can confidently implement these innovations and learners can benefit from them regardless of background or context (Mallillin et al., 2020a; Subban et al., 2025). At the same time, future research should expand beyond higher and vocational education to examine how instructional design adaptations function in primary and secondary schools, where learner diversity and resource constraints are often more pronounced. Longitudinal studies are also needed to assess the sustained impact of innovations such as predictive analytics and self-regulation tools on motivation, collaboration, and knowledge retention across different cultural and socio-economic settings (Sui et al., 2023; Wang, 2023). By combining practical implementation strategies with ongoing empirical inquiry, instructional design can evolve into a dynamic, evidence-based practice that meets the cognitive, social, and affective needs of learners in contemporary education.

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