

Practice & Preparation IDE 621 Thought Paper

For my **Project Title**, I authored the document titled "Thought Paper". In the **Context of the project work**, I wrote this paper for my IDE 621: Principles of Instruction and Learning course under the instruction of Dr. Robert Pusch. As a Sergeant Major with over two decades of experience in military medicine, I approached this course seeking mechanisms for real-world application rather than just theoretical clarity. The paper synthesizes key concepts from the course, exploring Merrill's First Principles of Instruction and evaluating three major learning theories—behaviorism, cognitivism, and social learning theory, to determine how they inform instructional design in high-stakes, adaptive environments.

For the **Author and list of contributors**, I, Douglass Wilson, am the primary author of this project.

Regarding the **Description of which phase(s) of IDD&E this product represents**, this work strongly aligns with the analysis and evaluation phases of instructional systems design. I analyzed foundational theoretical frameworks, including David Merrill's principles of problem-centered learning, activation, demonstration, application, and integration, to evaluate how they align with scenario-based training for medics. I also evaluated how instructional design theory translates these overarching learning theories into actionable strategies, observing how blending behaviorist, cognitivist, and social learning approaches helps develop both technical proficiency and adaptive expertise.

In my **Short reflection and self-assessment of the product**, I concluded that Social Learning Theory (SLT) is the most applicable framework for my work. I found that Bandura's emphasis on modeling, attention, retention, and motivation perfectly mirrors the realities of mentoring junior Soldiers and designing peer-led simulations. Through this reflection, I recognized that while behaviorism is useful for procedural mastery, it falls short in preparing Soldiers for environments that require ethical reasoning, empathy, and judgment under pressure. Similarly, while cognitivism provides a solid organizational framework, it can sometimes limit the flexibility needed for dynamic problem-solving. Ultimately, completing this paper deepened my understanding of how to align theory with practice, reinforcing my commitment to modeling not just technical skills, but the professional judgment our learners need to thrive.