

Component Display Theory (Dave Merrill)

Component display theory is one of the [cognitive theories](#) of instructional design introduced by [Dave Merrill](#) in the 1980s. The original intention of it's creator was to **separate content from instructional strategy**.

Component display theory **analyzes content (in terms of facts, concepts, procedures and principles)** and **performance (in terms of remember, use and find)** as two categories of learning outcomes graphically organized into [component display theory matrix](#).

Merrill also **believed that different learning outcomes require different learning strategies**, and that most efficiently designed instruction contains multiple forms of presented information.

Merrill distinguishes between primary and secondary presentation forms. **Primary presentation forms** are:

- expository presentation of a generality - **rules**
- expository presentation of instances - **examples**
- inquisitory generalities - **recall**
- inquisitory instances - **practice**.

The term “expository” can here roughly be explained as “talk”, “inquisitory” as “ask”, “generality” as “general concept” and “instance” as “specific example”.

Merrill's **secondary presentation forms** include **prerequisites objectives, helps, mnemonics** and **feedback**.

A successful **instructional design should include primary and secondary presentation forms, depending on content/performance goal**. The learner should also be provided with a **number of examples he wants**.

Bibliography

[“Component display theory - eLearning snippets.”](#).

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