



EVOLUTION OF EXCELLENCE: THE LINCOLN EMPOWERED CURRICULUM JOURNEY



LINCOLN
LEARNING
SOLUTIONS



INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL CHALLENGES

Since launching Lincoln Empowered in 2015, Lincoln Learning Solutions has been a shining light and a great example of some really creative changes in online learning. How did we do this? By leaning on our team of education professionals who are truly dedicated to creating the best possible resources for student mastery and success.

This white paper aims to track the growth of Lincoln Empowered, examining the course detail in depth—from its simple beginnings to the planned steps that have shaped it to its current state. It also describes the long-term plan for increasing its growth in the fast-paced and ever-changing world of online learning.

THE PAST

In the early years before Lincoln Empowered, our team created a range of course offerings spanning the entire K-12 spectrum. These products were independently designed and developed over the prior decade, using the technology available at the time. But as time passed, they started showing their age. They needed a lot of upkeep, had issues working with newer technologies, and lacked a unified approach across the different grade levels.

These older materials were quite disconnected, as each group of grades worked separately and had little in common with the others. This made it hard for our partners to grow with our products.

In the beginning, our courses worked well for their time. However, as technology improved and the needs of education changed, it became evident that we needed to make a big change. This led to the creation of Lincoln Empowered. With the lessons we learned from the past and our desire to lead the way, we were ready to bring new ideas to shape the future of well-rounded learning.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The foundation of Lincoln Empowered's courses is built on well-known educational approaches. We carefully picked these methods and combined them to create an effective learning strategy. We use the ADDIE model to guide how we design our courses. This model provides a structured, systematic blueprint for creating transformative course content. It breaks down the process into five crucial steps:

1. **Analysis**
2. **Design**
3. **Development**
4. **Implementation**
5. **Evaluation**

These steps give you a detailed idea of how we plan and create our courses. Our goal is to make deep, relatable course content that fits with a student's learning journey. By following the ADDIE model's path step-by-step, we make sure to follow a careful, systematic process that results in a wide-ranging, inclusive curriculum.

In addition to the ADDIE model, we've also embraced the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The philosophy of UDL allows us to create an educational environment that is not only inclusive but also effective for a wide variety of learners. UDL recognizes and addresses the many different ways students engage with and understand information.

By incorporating the key elements of 21st Century Skills into our courses, we make sure our students are prepared for a quickly changing global society. We focus on improving critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and information literacy—crucial skills students need to succeed in today's world.

Our strategy is enhanced by using insights from respected education organizations like the Aurora Institute and Quality Matters. This gives our course design process extra levels of quality assurance and allows for the use of innovative teaching methods both virtually and in a classroom setting. The careful combination and alignment of these proven strategies have led to the current success of Lincoln Empowered and is shaping future curriculum design efforts.



THE “IT” FACTOR

The “It” factor holds the spotlight within the rich, interactive theater of Lincoln Empowered’s progressive curriculum. The “Its” are the vibrant core that underpins our curriculum design.

Far from being random pieces of digital content, these “Its” transform into versatile, adaptable, and empowering tools that meet educators’ needs. Whether used individually for focused instruction or in synergy to form a solid learning path, “Its” can adjust to match the teaching rhythm and the individual learning pace of each classroom.

Drawn directly from established educational standards, each “It” is crucial in achieving specific learning outcomes. Our agile team breaks down these standards, identifying and articulating the essential learning objectives for exhaustive exploration and mastery. Consequently, each objective serves as the

foundation for all “Its,” ensuring academic robustness alongside the ready accessibility of our curriculum.

Equipped with adaptability, the design of our “Its” facilitates ongoing updates and improvements, ensuring that the curriculum reflects the constantly changing global landscape and our students’ position within it. Loaded with precise metadata, these learning objects are effortlessly navigable and can seamlessly fit into any educational context, whether it be analog or digital, face-to-face or remote.

The dynamic nature of the “It” factor within the Lincoln Empowered curriculum exemplifies our steadfast commitment to educational excellence and flexibility. As a result, it ensures an engaging, comprehensive, and up-to-date learning experience for every student.

THE “IT” FACTOR

This tree diagram embodies the continuous, organic growth of the learning process, emphasizing the interconnectedness and dependency of the “It” on the broader structure of the educational standards, learning objectives, and lesson plans. It also reflects the myriad pathways a learner can take—much like the diverse routes water and nutrients take as they move up from the roots to the tip of each leaf, promoting growth and vitality.

4. Leaves: “Its”

Finally, the numerous leaves springing out from the branches symbolize the “Its.” This analogy emphasizes that each leaf (or “It”) forms an integral part of the overall tree (the curriculum).

3. Branches: Lesson Plans

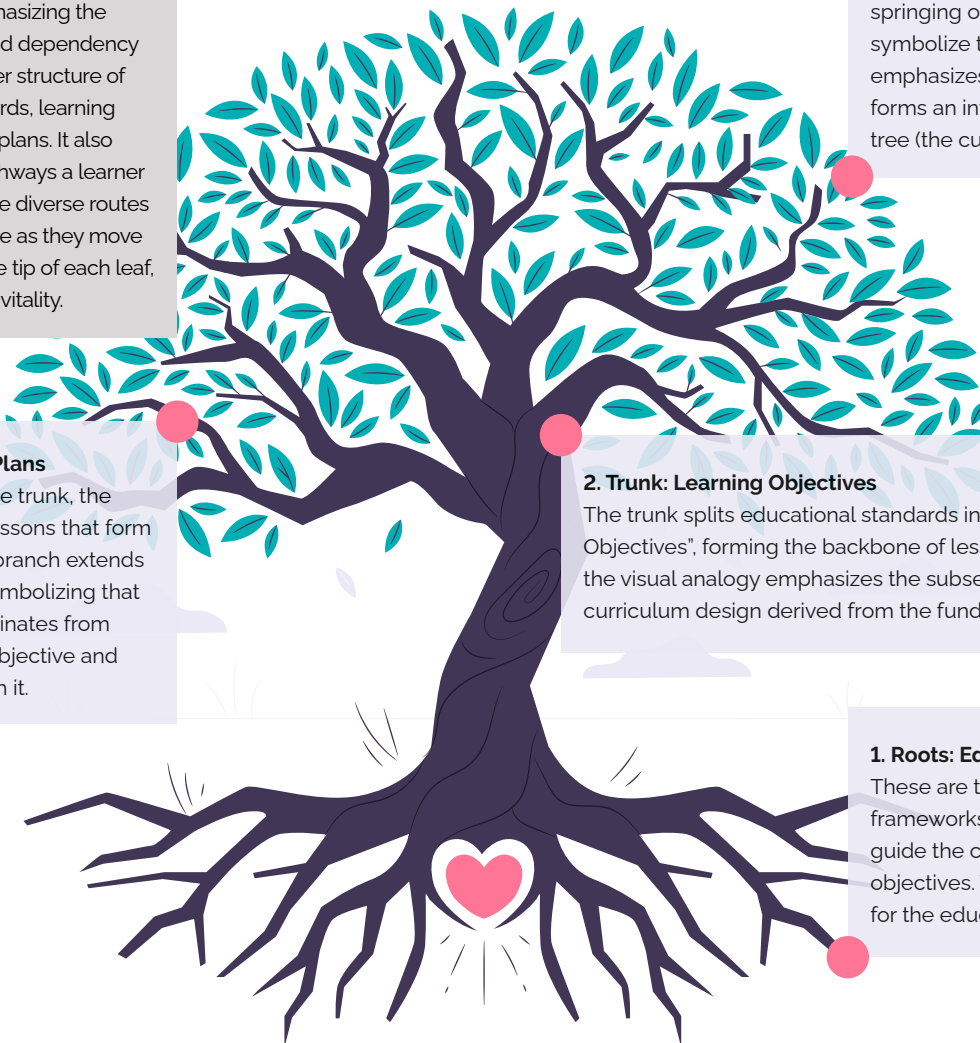
Stretching out from the trunk, the branches represent lessons that form the curriculum. Each branch extends from the tree body, symbolizing that every lesson plan originates from a particular learning objective and directly correlates with it.

2. Trunk: Learning Objectives

The trunk splits educational standards into specific “Learning Objectives”, forming the backbone of lessons. This portion of the visual analogy emphasizes the subsequent stages of the curriculum design derived from the fundamental standards.

1. Roots: Educational Standards

These are the underpinning frameworks of the curriculum that guide the creation of the learning objectives. They lay the foundation for the educational journey.



THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

As we stand at the crossroads between the present and the future, the Lincoln Empowered curriculum represents more than just an educational program—it signifies a groundbreaking movement toward academic excellence and innovation.

Our successes today are deeply rooted in a strong framework that enables the fast growth and improvement of our course offerings. This systematic approach removes the need to repeatedly start from scratch, allowing us to upgrade and adapt our existing modules to meet the growing demands of the educational industry.

Built on a solid foundation of around 160 unique courses, our educational collection has expanded to include over 800 customized courses. This library is supported by a strong collection of over 110,000 distinct learning objects and 85,000 assessment items, proving our unwavering commitment to refining our curriculum's evolution.

Our significant journey across untapped areas of educational innovation has strengthened our commitment to delivering top-notch courses. It has set a framework for ongoing growth, success, and expansion.

As we look forward to the future, we see a landscape full of opportunities for improvement, creativity, and innovation. We're excited to go beyond what our partners, educators, and students expect and lead the way in the continuously changing world of education.

We believe the success of Lincoln Empowered, as we see it today, is only the start. The focus is shifting towards the dynamic combination of teamwork, creativity, and technology, paving new routes for an extraordinary educational journey.

