

Foreword

The transformation of a traditional learning institution into a dual-mode institution offering courses on-campus as well as online is not a task for the faint at heart. What has to be appreciated is that subject matter experts, used to teaching in a classroom, face a daunting challenge when requested to teach at a distance or online. Indeed, only a few have ever systematically planned their courses. Yet systematic planning is just what is needed to be a successful teacher.

To implement online learning in a traditional institution, we have to adopt a design model which is both easy to understand and easy to use, namely because faculty generally do not have a lot of time to dedicate to this task. In this book, the course design model proposed by Dr. Power is flexible and represents an important step in making course design both doable and affordable.

There are a lot of course design models out there but I have to admit that there are very few that are as easy to use as that presented by the author. What makes this model truly original is that it involves close interaction between the subject matter expert (professor) and the instructional designer (ID). What I find of particular interest is that it involves the ID planning a course directly online with the professor at his/her side and implementing existing and relevant elements of the professor's on-campus course. The ten case studies presented in Dr.

Power's book amply demonstrate this "faculty-based practices" approach indicative of his model.

Books dealing with instructional design usually propose a theoretical model and include a few examples to demonstrate applicability. Dr. Power, however, has chosen to present actual case studies demonstrating practices that work, and then adds theoretical underpinnings. That is, I believe, what is of greatest interest in this book. The cases presented, being very detailed, actually walk us through just what happened and how it happened. That is why I think that this book will be exceptionally useful to anyone working in this area. In this regard, the contribution the author has made to the general field of instructional design is important.

Instructional designer culture is not limited to theoretical knowledge or design-related skills alone. They must acquire and demonstrate mastery of specific and requisite interpersonal skills and attitudes that many of us tend to gloss over. This is yet another strong point of this book; I am particularly impressed by the flexibility shown by the author in dealing with the various professors he encountered. Possessing such skills and attitudes or not can often make all the difference between the success of the failure of an instructional design project for online learning. By reading this book, I'm confident that both practicing and future instructional designers will understand the importance of tact and attitudes de tolerance and tenacity, attributes which are so important when dealing with subject matter experts.

Moreover, I'm convinced that these case studies presented by Dr. Power will not only be useful to instructional designers who use his model to design online courses but to all instructional designers in whatever they design. As a matter of fact, I observed that several of the cases described by the author refer to many frequently encountered problems in instructional design.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I recommend Dr. Power's book to all those who are interested in course design and, particularly, in online course design in dual-mode universities.

Dr. Robert Brien
Laval University
Quebec City