

The Case Studies

Introduction to the case studies

The following ten case studies represent the first professors (also called subject matter experts or SMEs), out of a total of forty-four faculty members, to have implemented the instructional design model prototype (hereafter simply called the “model”) at the university where the study was conducted. As the design work took place over a period of roughly three years, lessons learned during the design process of the first courses served to gradually transform the model as other professors participated in the design (or redesign) process of their courses. The model was thereby validated through actual user experience in the field. Modifications were made to anchor the model in the current and complex realities of academic life in an emerging dual-mode university.

NB. As I advance through each case study, I stop to reflect on various “critical incidents” (Flanagan, 1954) as they occur. Entitled *Meta-reflections*, you will find them in the order they arose during my working sessions for that case, in boxes such as the one below.

Meta-reflections

The content in these sections are in *italics*, drawn from entries I made in my logbook during the progress of my work with professors. Immediately

after each session, I'd write up a report on items covered, decisions made, and so on, and expand on any notes I'd jotted down.

The demographic and professional characteristics of individual faculty members

Sample selection and faculty characteristics

Sample selection was based on faculty meeting the following criteria:

- they were full-time professors at an emerging dual-mode university;
- they were all in Humanities (Education, Music, Languages, Law);
- they were preparing one of their courses for off-campus delivery and
- they agreed to implement the proposed instructional design model prototype (henceforth, the “model”).

Various characteristics of the ten faculty members who participated in this study were identified as being highly descriptive of the context of this study (see Table 1). They were of several types: demographic (gender), career-related (professorial rank), participant-related (motivation), circumstance-related (time-to-delivery, i.e. time allotted for course design before course delivery) and knowledge-related (degree of familiarity with instructional design principles and distance education practices) and finally course-related (current general and specific objectives development level). (See Table 1)

Table 1. Characteristics of the population sample

1. **Gender:** M / F

2. **Academic Rank:**

AST = Assistant

ASC = Associate

FP = Full professor

3. **Reason for participating in the design process:**

O = organizational

P = personal

4. **Time-to-delivery:**

1 = course already begun or is about to begin

2 = beginning in between 2 and 4 months

3 = beginning in more than 4 months

5. **Availability:** Total faculty availability in hours
 1 = between 1 and 15 hours
 2 = between 16 and 30 hours
 3 = between 31 and 45 hours
 4 = more than 46 hours
6. **Number of sessions:** Number of working sessions between designer and faculty member (between 1 and 8+)
7. **Knowledge of Instructional Design:** Faculty knowledge levels
 1 = novice level
 2 = intermediate level
 3 = advanced level
8. **Knowledge of Distance Education:** Faculty knowledge levels
 1 = no knowledge of DE
 2 = taught one or two DE courses
 3 = taught three or more DE courses
9. **General Objectives & Specific Objectives** development level
 1 = no objectives
 2 = only GOs
 3 = GOs + SOs (limited number of SOs) taught three or more DE courses

Table 2. Synthesis of population sample characteristics on a case-by-case basis

Characteristics	Cases									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Gender	M	F	F	F	F	M	M	M	M	F
2 Academic Rank	AST	AST	AST	ASC	ASC	FP	FP	FP	ASC	ASC
3 Reason	0	0	0	0	0	0	P	P	0	P
4 Time-to-delivery	2	1	2	1	1	2	3	3	3	3
5 Availability	1	1	1	1	1	3	4	3	3	2
6 Number of sessions	6	4	7	5	6	8+	8	8+	8+	7
7 Knowledge of Design	1	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	1
8 Knowledge of DE	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1
9 Objectives (GO/SO)	2	2	3	2	3	1	3	2	2	3

In a nutshell, actual faculty characteristics broke down in the following ways:

1. *Gender*: Five males and five females
2. *Academic rank*: Three Assistant, four Associate and three Full Professors
3. *Reason (for becoming involved)*: Seven were organizationally motivated, three were personally motivated
4. *Availability*: Five were minimally available (1–15 hours), one was slightly more available (16–30 hours), three were relatively available (31–45 hours) and one was very available (more than 46 hours)
5. *Number of (working) sessions*: An average of 6.7 per faculty member
6. *Time-to-delivery*: Three had a month or less to prepare their courses; three had 2–4 months and four had more than 4 months
7. *Knowledge of instructional design (ID) principles*: Seven knew little of ID
8. *Knowledge of distance education (DE)*: Eight had no experience with DE
9. *Objectives development level*: only one had no objectives whatsoever; five had main objectives only.