

Synthesis and final prototype

I started this study with one goal in mind: developing an instructional design prototype model adapted to the needs of faculty working at a dual-mode university. It began with the normal stages of instructional design as found in the literature and combined current course planning practices among faculty. Out of this combination, an initial prototype model was elaborated and implemented in Case 1. This first case was fairly typical of distance education courses that are developed in organisations where there is low-level infrastructure for doing so and where such courses often have to be designed and developed in a hurry for almost immediate delivery. In Case 1, the professor was a new professor, he had little knowledge of either design or of distance education and he was required to develop his course for distance delivery because of an existing department obligation *vis-à-vis* off-campus students.

As the study moved forward to Cases 2 and 3, a pattern began to emerge with regard to how the design work was being accomplished: there was only a short delay between course design and course delivery and the professors did not seem entirely committed to the process. At times, they seemed even hostile to it, undoubtedly because of the organisational constraints under which they were working. The result of these constraints (such as administration-set deadlines for course delivery) was the emergence of a rapid instructional design model prototype. Making

matters significantly more difficult was the fact that for most of these professors, this was the first time they had ever worked with an ID and a technical support team to develop their course for distance delivery. Having little or no idea of what to expect and being required to prepare for something they had never done, several faculty members experienced high levels of stress. They therefore saw the entire process as one which was in addition to their normal tasks. These factors combined to create what might accurately be termed as an “agitated design conditions.”

It was during these first cases that the limits of the initial prototype became obvious and that it underwent several rapid evolutions after being tested and retested in rapid sequence in conditions that required prompt action and subsequent prototype adjustment. This interactive, design research approach resulted rather quickly in a viable prototype emerging by case 3 and being implemented in case 4, a prototype which increasingly reflected professor needs and limits. The prototype would continue to undergo changes between Case 4 to 10 but they were only minor in nature. Indeed, Case 3 was pivotal in that the lessons learned during it set the stage for major changes to the prototype and applied during Case 4. It was thus during Cases 3 and 4 that the prototype began reflecting various levels of design depending on the institutional constraints imposed upon it, namely the amount of time available for design and the amount of effort professors were able to expend.

Case 5 was another example of the ID and professor working furiously to redesign a course which resulted in their applying only part of the prototype out a lack of time. Case 6 was unique unto itself in that the professor did not fit the usual professor profile as seen thus far. His personal characteristics such as his background and experience were such that they set him apart from his colleagues. For these reasons, this case was seen as being atypical yet, nevertheless, it did allow the ID to test various aspects of the prototype which may not have been tested had not this particular professor profile emerged at this particular time. Indeed, the difference in profile allowed the ID to establish what was absolutely essential in the prototype and what could be removed.

Case 7 was timely in that, given the professor’s characteristics and the ardour with which he applied himself to his work, it brought new elements to the prototype as well as allowing the ID to work in an unfettered fashion, being unhindered by time or other limits, and fully

apply the prototype and verify the principles by which it worked. Case 8 once again propelled the prototype forward under ideal conditions, namely time to work systematically and Case 9 reminded the ID of the importance of not only making sure that the course was adequately designed and developed but that it was also properly delivered. Case 10 showed signs of data saturation in that no further changes were made to the prototype. Finally, Figure 8 presents the evolving design of the prototype, from its creation before Case 1 to its earliest changes in Cases 3 and 4, from its emerging final form in Case 4 and 5 to the last changes made to it in Case 9.

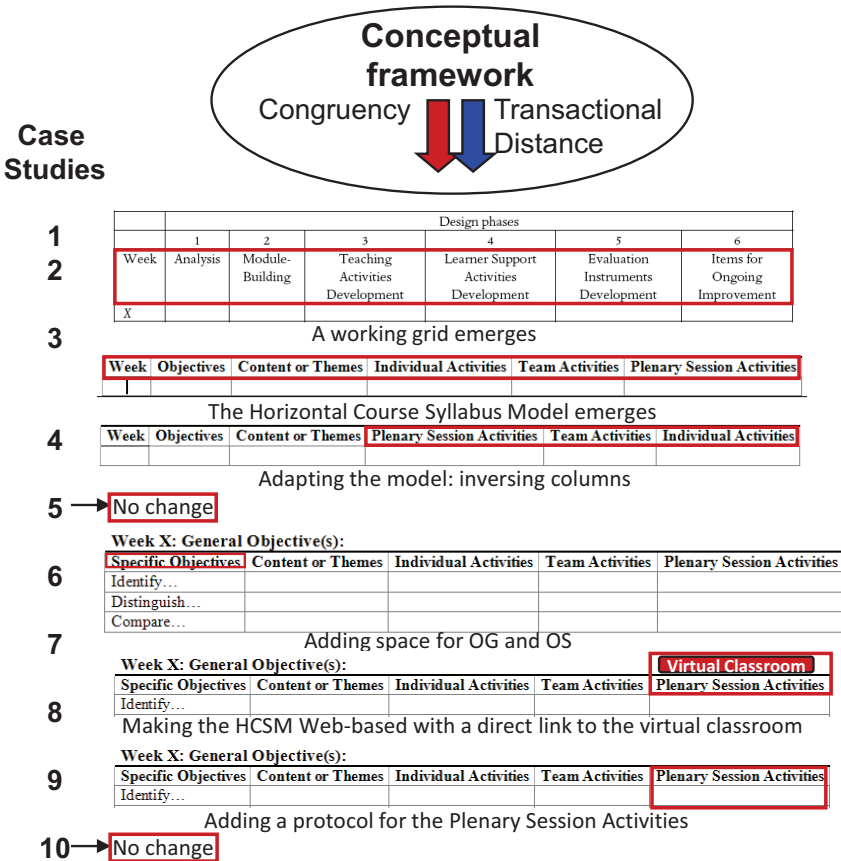



Figure 8: The design model prototype and its transformation throughout the ten case studies

Figure 9 presents the most recent version of the prototype which is the final result of this study. Just as the varied and specific needs of faculty emerged and the prototype evolved and was articulated in response to such, it is expected that the design models instructional designers use will also vary in nature and degree. The contrary would be disastrous for the development of online learning for it is the IDs whose job it is to identify design-related problems and, by reflecting on their practice, to develop relevant and effective educational solutions. As IDs play this vital role, we can expect a real flowering of online learning and of the online learner.

Faculté des sciences de l'éducation
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Course title: **Your Education Course title**
 Course number: **XYZ-00000**

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Course Information

Faculty: [Faculté des sciences de l'éducation](#) ⓘ
 Department: **Department**
 Program: **Your program**
 Calendar: Starts: Septembre 5th 2006
 End: Decembre 21th 2006
 Website: www.yourcoursesite.edu ⓘ
 Virtual Classroom site: www.yourvirtualu.edu ⓘ
 Weekly classes on: Monday
 From 8:30 to 11:30



Course Description

WEEK:
2 - From September 10th to September 16th 2006 ▼

MAIN OBJECTIVE(S):

- ▶ [Understand the terminology and concepts dealing with...](#)
- ▼ **Apply the concepts to real-life situations.**

Specific Objectives	Content or Themes	Individual Activities	Team Activities	Weekly Class
Define...	Terminology and concepts...	Read Taylor (2005) View Richey PPT (2006)	--	Link to Virtual Classroom
Identify...	Roles and responsibilities...	Complete Assignment 1A	--	--
▶ Explain the concepts using examples from real-life situations.	Main concepts used in instructional design systems	--	1. Participate in the online forum ⓘ 2. Complete Assignment 1B ⓘ	--
Summarise...	Overview... Main issues...	--	--	Present your findings

Figure 9: The current version of the design prototype (Power, 2008a)