Chapter 15
What to Keep, What to Discard:
Remaking an Instructional Design Service Post Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

As humanity seems to be moving ahead from the novel SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 pandemic, people are reckoning with the changes adopted during the high-stress period, of unprecedented threats to lives and health, lockdowns and reopenings, social tensions, and political strife. Instructional design (ID) work at a university also underwent some seminal changes. This work explores what changes to keep and what to discard, based on a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis and a grounding of some 17 years of ID work and decades of prior college and university teaching work.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of SARS-CoV-2, as a human-transmissible pathogen, forced humanity into social distancing and lockdowns for the better part of two years from 2000 onwards. With varying outbreaks through the present and incomplete immunizations, the lockdowns have continued through the present. During the pandemic, some 1.5 billion students experienced learning disruptions, and a percentage of these shifted to online learning (where infrastructure was available). Teachers, too, had to shift to virtuality, along with administrators and staff. Instructional designers found their roles shifting.

Instructional design, broadly speaking, is defined as "the iterative, systematic design of effective learning experiences by following a coherent process that gives measurable results" (Bart & Shaffer, 2016, p. 240). In the SARS-CoV-2 / COVID-19 pandemic (2020 – present), instructional designers had to support the emergency remote teaching. One study found that "their role shift focused on building relationships within the university community" and "gathering, organizing, and distributing resources,

designing faculty course development workshops, providing technology support, and advocating for students and for their profession" (Xie & Rice, 2021, p. 70).

With advances in medicine and healthcare, government policies, workplace hygiene, humanity is moving slowly away from the pandemic and its restrictions. There is now more space to consider adaptations made during the acute phases of the pandemic (late-2019 to mid-2022) and to see what to keep and what to discard. The particular position, in the years leading up to the pandemic and through the pandemic, has been used to fulfill various needs for weekly trainings (on various office and research and online learning technologies), to support graduate students in their theses and dissertations, to support research, to support usage of a range of technologies, to pursue grant funds, and other endeavors. This work explores the remaking of an ID position "post-pandemic". Based on a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the larger world post-pandemic, the realm of higher education, and the particular university, what makes sense to strategically advance and to retract.

The interrelated research questions include the following:

- What was the state of instructional design services at the Midwestern university prior to the pandemic?
- How did the service menu change during the pandemic?
- What standards should be applied to assessing the instructional design service?
- What service menu changes are worth keeping, and which should be discarded? Why?

This work offers some initial insights.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Instructional design may be achieved through a range of different frameworks or theories. These methods may be applied to complete new learning builds or to existing ones (for further refinement). A training course was developed on how to plan and create courses for distance learning for quality, for use in multiple countries in a region (Neto, Nolan, & Mendes, 2021, p. 201). There are pedagogical frameworks and approaches shared transnationally (Granić, Mifsud, & Ćukušić, 2009, p. 1057).

Transcoding courses from face-to-face to online learning courses is no easy feat. One research work involves transcoding active-learning based courses into "e-active" courses online (Belcadhi & Ghannouchi, 2013, p. 119). Hybrid instruction, which combines face-to-face (F2F) and online learning, may be designed for higher quality learning outcomes (Wood, Bonakdarian, & Whittaker, 2012, p. 6). One research team suggests that a social constructivist approach to designing learning may be based on the ICAP (Identity, Community, Activity, and Personal) design framework (Chen & Hung, 2007, p. 127), for more effective communities of practice. One work explores a method for the design of learning in resource-constrained environments, through functional design. Here, the instructional designer applies various layers to the design, with each layer informed by their own theory; the layers enable a systematized orderliness in decision making. Here, "instructional conversations" are divided into various functions: representational, messaging, user control, content, strategic (in a pedagogic sense), data management, and "media-logic" functions (Gibbons, 2009, pp. 2 - 3). A more recent work suggests that design conflicts may be resolved in interactive learning environments (ILEs) by setting and following goal hierarchies,

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