

Situatedness in LDT #3

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As an instructional designer focused on creating online courses within online graduate programs at a research university, I try to make design choices based on educational theories and models. When I begin working with an instructor, we review the general steps and what to expect from the design process as outlined in the ADDIE approach (Branch, 2008, Branch & Kopcha, 2014), Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. I also consider the Dick and Carey (2022) Systematic Design Model as we collaborate to draft learning objectives, set criteria for success, create rubrics, select materials and media, and design formative and summative assessments. While both of these models and many others include careful consideration of context and expect instructional design to be an iterative process (Richey, et al., 2010), I have found that I'd like more theoretically based guidance on how to handle the temporary nature of the ID-Instructor collaboration period. While there will be future changes to the design in each iteration, I plan to research how to create sustainable courses that only need minor adjustments (or rather, updates that instructors are comfortable making on their own, after the design collaboration period is complete).

Research Question

How can instructional designers analyze the available inputs and context to make design decisions and recommendations that support the instructors' ability and willingness to maintain the course for long-term use?

Learning Theories that Resonate with my Research Interests

Instructional designers and their stakeholders collaborate with the goal of creating engaging, interactive, innovative, and accessible learning experiences. However, if an instructor is not able to maintain the product of the design process (whether due to a lack of technical tools,

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skills, time, etc.), adding bells and whistles to a course creates a burden instead of an asset. IDs must be careful to make the design process clearly visible to the instructors they work with, and must carefully examine the support that instructors are left with once their collaboration is complete.

Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory can provide a theoretical framework for supporting this issue. "A basic assumption of social cognitive theory is that learners draw out information from observing the behavior of others, and then make decisions about which of these behaviors to accept and perform" (Richey, Klein, & Tracey, 2010, p. 61). This theory includes aspects of behaviorism as well as self-regulation, both of which play a critical role in successful decision-making. Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory emphasized socially meaningful activity and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept also provides a framework for considering the current level of independent problem-solving, and the next level and individual could reach with assistance from a more experienced partner (Vygotsky, 1978, Reiser, 2017, Schunk, 2020). IDs cannot create a quality course without the instructor's expertly curated content, views, anecdotes, etc. Likewise, creating an accessible, engaging, and innovative online course may be out of reach for an instructor with subject-area, rather than pedagogical expertise.

Cognitive apprenticeships (Collins, 1988) and situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) also apply well to this research topic. In many ways, the relationship between an instructional designer and a faculty member resembles a cognitive apprenticeship as the two work closely on designing a course with the goal of the instructor taking complete ownership of the course upon completion of the design project. Hennessy (1993) explains that apprenticeships begin with "modeling effective strategies through demonstrating desirable ways of problem-solving in authentic activity" for the learner. Cognitive apprenticeships involve modeling, coaching,

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scaffolding, fading, articulation, and encouraging learners to reflect on their own problem-solving strategies (Collins, Brown, Newman, 1989). Hennessy (1993) also highlights the importance of the tutor carefully considering the learner's "current needs, knowledge structure and performance characteristics", as it is "necessary for generating feedback and devising situations appropriately tailored to the learner at any given point in task mastery". As learners become more experienced, fewer interventions are needed by the tutor, and the learner becomes more self-sufficient. Communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) could also be an effective means of supporting instructors past the collaboration period. I'd like to examine the literature relating to IDs supporting the creation of these communities.

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