

Reflection on Developing ID Expertise

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INTRODUCTION

As I reflect on my learning experience in this course and this program and review the assigned readings on the attributes of an expert, I see that this is a never-ending learning process. Despite many years of experience in educational technology, I do not consider myself to be an expert in instructional design. This course has further identified that I might just be scratching the surface of my ID competency. However through this course, I have made progress and helped craft my action plan for continued improvement. I based this reflective analysis on the structure of the Ertmer and Stepich (2005) article and the dimensions that they propose indicate the expertise of instructional designers. My perspective has definitely been influenced by all of the articles, case study analyses and defining the journey from novice to expert.

Case 1 – Michael Bishop

PROBLEM FINDING

Synthesizing vs. Summarizing

In my initial analysis of the Bishop case I stated the key design issues as:

1. Rigglesfish game goes in depth on a set of topics (and takes a lot of time to complete) rather than covering a wider array of topics, as the learning consultants mentioned as a necessary goal.
2. The game is already written and so it would require a great deal of rework and redesigning to change it for new specifications for a variety of objectives.

Ertmer and Stepich state, “experts develop a coherent picture of the situation in which the identified issues are linked together in terms of relationships, such as cause and effect, hierarchy, chronology, and/or operational priorities, whereas the novice just lists several issues (2005, p.40). My initial assessment of the Bishop case did not separate the design issues from the case specific issues, thus my failure was to determine the appropriate and separate chronology of issues.

“The biggest challenge from my perspective was that the game goes in depth on a set of topics (and takes a lot of time to complete) rather than covering a wider array of topics, as the learning consultants mentioned as a necessary goal. This is a very difficult challenge because each school has different objectives and would place emphasis on different items. Another hurdle is to overcome the fact that the game is already written and so it would require a great deal of rework and redesigning to change it for new specifications

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for a variety of objectives. To further complicate, the game has bugs and without actual users to help identify them, this can lead to poor results because teachers are not prepared to take over the facilitation. There is also the dilemma that Michael does not have established relationships with the curriculum specialists in the school districts and so he will have to blind pitch the program and work through the issues alone.”

This example shows that I summarized all the issues into one paragraph in the case study (novice example), instead of breaking them out into design challenges and case specific challenges. Reflecting back on the analysis, I should have spent more time explaining the different issues as defined in the rubric. In other words, I should have expanded my explanation of the issues showcasing the design problems and case specific issues and how they needed to be resolved.

Principles vs. Features

I feel as though I was able to address this section with an elevated level of expertise. According to Ertmer and Stepich (2005) experts interpret information while novices take information at face value. I feel a good example of my understanding comes from a section in my Michael Bishop analysis where I state:

“From my overall perspective, the main design issue is in the design and development. For Michael to incorporate the advice from the advisory committee, the project team will need to go back and find ways to make the game better for implementations for teachers and gain acceptance by administrators. From my instructional designer perspective, to completely redesign the game does not seem to be efficient or economical at this point in the project. From my marketing perspective, sometimes we are able to anticipate the needs of the client/customer before the fires start. If we had the luxury of being ahead of the curve and act proactively, this project could be helped with a better marketing approach. Michael is offering a solution to a problem that the school administrators and teachers do not realize they have. Therefore, he needs a marketing solution.”

I could have simply stated that Michael needed to perform a learner analysis, explaining in broad terms all that is required to conduct such an analysis. However, I was able to recognize the true needs from various perspectives pulling from my experience. This indicates implementing a more robust analysis that goes beyond merely redesigning components to the existing game. My analysis addresses the relevant needs of teachers and state-wide standards.

Relationships Among Issues

Reflections on Developing ID Expertise

I feel as though I missed a major connection in the case analysis by not separating the design challenges and the case specific challenges. While I was able to make the prioritizations, they were too broad by lumping them together. Therefore, this was a novice mistake.

“Isolating and prioritizing the challenges will help tackle getting this project back on track. The advisory committee made some strong recommendations which Michael should take into consideration.

1. The length of time it takes to play the game. This constraint was mentioned by Tara Jones, Bailey Richards, Daniel Brown and Jim Harrington. Rice (2007) suggested that video games should be designed to play in 30-40 minutes increments with short learning objectives.

2. Lack of alignment with state standards and administrative buy-in. The voice of all administrators were leery of implementing the project based on there was no clear findings to prove the game will increase student performance on state-mandated assessments.”

Reflective vs. Reflexive

In Ertmer and Stepich (2005) article, the authors describe reflective over reflexive as a distinction between a focused suggestion and a more general and broad one. In facing the challenges of improving the Rigglefish game, one of my suggestions was:

1. Add and redesign components to the existing game that will make them more relevant to needs of teachers and state-wide standards.

PROS	CONS
Address more stakeholders issues and needs	Will take additional development time and cost
Testing will identify if the game is meeting the needs of teachers and can be measured with quantifiable results.	Re-pilot to teachers and administrators that might have formed biases.
Customization will be more enticing for the school administration and teachers	More design work for individual school needs
Work to fix existing bugs.	Might not find all bugs until the game is “live”.

I feel as though I really excelled in this area with my use of tables and explanations. This demonstrated my ability to identify the pros and cons and relate them together to recommend a solid solution.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Relationships Among Solutions

In the first case analysis in this course, Michael Bishop, I recommended the following solution:

“I think it will address the majority of the hurdles Michael has been presented and meets the needs of the teachers which could actually increase funding. Building new excitement will go a long way in the fight to find the game’s acceptance into the middle school classroom. In addition, the second solution addresses other barriers that will be eliminated by a fresh new approach. Each previous barrier will ideally be overcome by the redesign and working out the bugs. The combination of new components with strong relevant instructional content, along with alignment to state standards, should result in promising success for Michael.”

In my final recommendation, I related the solutions to one cohesive recommendation, which shows that I am thinking beyond the novice level but is certainly not at the expert. By addressing the majority of the hurdles in my conclusion, I demonstrate the ability to connect the relationship between the issues and the solution.

Consideration of Implications

I feel confident that I did a good job making recommendations that solved the problems for Michael and teachers. Ertmer and Stepich (2005) use is much more adept in the recommendations of actual technologies that can be utilized. I’m recommending a redesign that will be a better use of the gaming technology. This shows that I am not an expert in the big picture of instructional design or gaming technology, but it shows a level of competence in my own comfort zone.

Flexible vs. Rigid

The solutions that I recommended were not done in a rigid way and were realistic. While not an expert, I may have reached close to proficient but only in my comfort zone. I did reflect on a few alternatives before suggesting the one I settled upon. According to Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) considering alternatives in a “detached, deliberate, and sometimes agonizing selection among alternatives” (p. 28) falls into their classification of proficiency.

Overall Rating: High, medium, low

Reflections on Developing ID Expertise

I believe I identified the important problems in the case and provided a solution that addressed what I identified. I did not offer many alternatives though I did offer some different perspectives. By the examples of Ertmer and Stepich (2005), I think I would rate myself as competent in this case.

Therefore, I think my overall understanding of this case study analysis based on identifying core ID problem and provided a suitable solution was **High**.

Case 2 – Lynn Dixon

PROBLEM FINDING

Synthesizing vs. Summarizing

I feel as though I thought like an expert in this section by addressing the whole picture and not just summarizing. I was very clear about identifying the stakeholders and their key concerns.

“Lynn has been put in a situation where the expectations and scope have been predetermined in a large part and she has had no active voice in the direction or scope of the project. Currently, the only deliverable (a basic design map of concepts) is being challenged and spurred questions and expressed wants outside of the basic things she has planned. In addition, Lynn has not had time to analyze how to use a touch screen format including resources that she might need or a working knowledge of how to incorporate this. Finally, Lynn has been asked to design a sky-level bird animation that Ben is insistent upon.”

However, I think I was still unclear about how to synthesize information in case analysis and I think my novice was in not understanding and applying the direct sections of the rubric.

Principles vs. Features

While I certainly do not think I am working at an expert level in this dimension, I do think I was able to think through the concepts of this section. My understanding of Lynn’s position demonstrates my ability to recognize her analysis (features) and report her findings (principles) to the key stakeholders. I wrote, “Lynn is a strong designer and enthusiastic about putting together the kiosks’ software. However, she is in a position that she is taking orders from both her sales team and her clients and she can’t force the puzzle pieces together because of prior conversations and commitments from her sales team to her client.”

Reflections on Developing ID Expertise

I was able to successfully identify the issues facing Lynn but it was novice to focus more on the issues in this analysis and not enough on the principles. I needed to think more on the granular level for this case analysis

Relationships Among Issues

In this case, I was not clear how much detail I should go into the identification of the problems. Therefore, the issues overwhelmed the solutions. While I did a good job identifying and prioritizing the design issue and case specific issues, I was not able to present good solutions to address the design issues. So, it was a novice approach to list all the issues without offering real solutions.

Reflective vs. Reflexive

Upon reflection, I realize that I needed to delve deeper in the resources available to Lynn. While I stated it articulately below, I was not clear in identifying them for this case analysis.

“In addition, a large part of an instructional designer’s role is not only to be present at the table but also manage everyone’s wants and must-haves against available resources. In this way, instructional designers are also parallel to project managers. Project management skills are more often than a listed requirement in instructional design jobs.

This would indicate a novice approach as I did a nice job of detailing the information, but could have done a better job of explaining why this information is important to the analysis.

This example also clearly demonstrates my ability to use my experience, and what I knew from the case to prioritize the issues in a way that efficiently address issues within the case.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Relationships Among Solutions

While I certainly do not think I am working at an expert level in this dimension, I do think I was able to think through alternative solutions and create some independent solutions for Lynn. I believe I displayed some proficiency in this one.

I offered a solution that could address the challenges in a timeframe that may have been workable.

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However, my solutions were strongly focused on the planning stages of the design which is important but does not address the major issues of the design itself - how to collect user data, touch-screen functionality, the wide variety of content, and a culturally sensitive environment. I think I demonstrated a measure of competence in this dimension, but by no means proficiency of expertise.

Consideration of Implications

The identified challenges were included only as issues with the planning phase of this project and did not address the key design challenges. There were a number of cons presented but no discussion as to how these cons would be addressed in the final solution. Therefore, I felt my recommendations were well detailed, which is characteristic of an expert, but again, failing to address the how and why has kept me at the novice end of the spectrum.

This is apparent when I wrote in my final recommendation, "Between the two potential solutions, I believe the first solution is the best recommendation. After doing some additional research, Lynn should redo her Design Document to provide more details and rationales. A phase for Ben's desire for some "bells and whistles" could be included which includes resources options such as the university, company connections or someone in the graphics department at Telopea. Lynn needs to create kiosk sections that are more engaging than what is currently in her design; they need to follow the guidelines for multimedia learning and the advantages it offers." This shows that the cons were not clearly addressed as specifically detailed in the rubric. I need to do a better job in the future to discuss both pros and cons in final recommendation.

Flexible vs. Rigid

I felt like I did a mediocre job in this section. I would give myself points for taking all information in before presenting any recommendation. However, I did lose points for not making a stronger final recommendation. It was novice to not consider the implications of the recommendation and not offer explanations to address the cons. It is rigid in portraying that one design solves all the issues.

Overall Rating: High, medium, low

Reflections on Developing ID Expertise

I believe I identified the important problems in the case and provided a solution that addressed what I identified. However, I think my overall understanding of this case study analysis would be improved by identifying core ID problems and provide more suitable solutions. I think my overall rating is **Medium**.

Case 3 – Peer Case 1 – Natalie Morales

PROBLEM FINDING

Synthesizing vs. Summarizing

I believe that I did a decent job at synthesizing in this case. Instead of looking at individual problems, I looked at all of the problems when considering the design issues in an expert-like manner. I was under the impression that a larger overhaul of the Chipex training was a feasible plan.

“At this point, I think Natalie needs to work as a change agent, instructional designer, and liaison for communication within the company for this project. She will need to create, develop and implement the whole certification process with clear guidelines and best practices. First, she will need to bring HR and the supervisors to the table to get support and buy-in to the new program. Without getting this under control, all future efforts may be pointless due to no accountability or consistency.”

This shows that I still must work on developing customized strategies instead of sweeping changes that would need to involve leadership and not permissible in the timeframe proposed. I see how this unspecified plan could become hazardous to a real-world client.

Principles vs. Features

I should have spent less time focusing on the features in this analysis and more time on the principles. I did not stick to the rubric and incorporated more personal experience than was needed. In doing this, I did not identify the ID challenges properly. This case analysis was a failure.

Relationships Among Issues

This case was very complicated and had challenges from most of the stakeholders, and I did not think I connected these issues well. This point does illustrate my lack of expertise.

Reflective vs. Reflexive

Reflections on Developing ID Expertise

Not executing much reflection, I was able to connect more from my knowledge of working in organizations than any design experience. For example, I wrote, “Many of the challenges Chipex is facing has to do with corporate culture and leadership which is likely to have resulted in the inefficient certification program.”

I believe I was extremely competent in being reflective about the case and addressing the issues. I proposed that clear objectives, learner analysis, and evaluations are necessary, which I think is more reflective than reflexive from personal experience. I actually thought this was my strongest case analysis written. However, reflecting back, I realized that I did not craft this analysis using the strict rubric that we are being graded with.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Relationships Among Solutions

I did not relate the issues well in this case. However, I did try to tie the issues of the design of the training module with the overall “fragmented organizational culture.” I identified these as:

- Supervisors are not managing and scheduling the correct amount and appropriate levels of trained technicians on the floor
- Technician are not being tested or certified in the same way
- There is no standardization on testing or by approved technicians
- The certification process has no governance or accountability
- Leadership seems to be non-existence
- Language barriers

Consideration of Implications

Considering all of the implications for a training that needs to be rolled out for so many needs was a big challenge. I think I thought of a decent solution for the challenges of the scope of the design; however,

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in this dimension, I show my lack of experience. Perhaps a level of competency has been reached, but I am less confident in this dimension after this case analysis.

I believe Natalie should prioritize the project on the following topics:

1. Analyze and identify the current process
2. Design an updated process with checks and balances
3. Develop the communication plan, new process and the exact training needed
4. Involve and engage Chipex leadership and HR management
5. Implement the new process
6. Create an evaluation process for feedback, revisions and updates

However, this was not considered a realistic solution. I was not able to justify this as the best approach. Therefore, this case analysis was a failure.

Flexible vs. Rigid

I struggled a bit with this section. I firmly believe in my recommendation but clearly did not address the design challenges appropriately so I lost a lot of points. I felt my recommendation was very flexible in suggesting a complete redesign but rigid in that the current training was completely a broken process. This was not the best approach considering I was supposed to offer a realistic solution.

“In fact, the problems with certification are largely a byproduct of the ineffective corporate culture and leadership. In order for Natalie to be successful, she will need to be an amazing transformational leader acting in the roles as a change agent, instructional designer, and liaison for communication within the company. This is a very big “ask”. To be realistic, I am unsure whether or not it is really even possible for an Instructional Designer to “fix” this type of problem. Unfortunately, although Natalie could design an appropriate program, and perhaps, even implement it, it is unlikely the problems will be resolved. It is far more realistic that within a matter of months the process will revert to the status quo as if she had never been there.”

The above example reminded me that I need to keep the direct correlation of how the challenges impact the proposed solutions.

Overall Rating: High, medium, low

I believe I identified the important problems in the case and provided a solution that addressed what I identified. However, my recommendation lacked the structure of the rubric and has an overall ranking of **Low.**

Case 4 – Peer Case 2 – Scott Hunter

PROBLEM FINDING

Synthesizing vs. Summarizing

I think I have improved greatly in the synthesizing of information in this case. I've used the additional articles provided by Team 3 to support my opinion and did not summarize. I believe this case analysis was an expert synthesis.

Principles vs. Features

I feel as though I was able to address this section with an elevated level of expertise. According to Ertmer and Stepich (2005) experts interpret information while novices take information at face value. I feel a good example of my understanding comes from a section in this analysis where I state: "Therefore, the key design challenges that need to be resolved are the VDS analysis, content development and evaluations." I was very clear on the identifying the key design challenges and stuck strictly to the rubric.

Relationships Among Issues

I felt good about having a good command in this section as it relates to the Scott Hunter case. I made the connections between the issues and investigating how these issues play off each other.

"These issues surfaced in Kat's perceived communication styles, Antoine's use of a relative, and the differing ways the company hands off its luxury brand with a Vehicle Delivery Specialist in its larger markets. The last case-specific issue comes from project management problems. The greatest obstacle is the amount of time, money, and resources available to create the Vehicle Delivery Specialist certification. All these case-specific challenges are interrelated and affect the overall success and completion of the project."

The above quote demonstrates my ability to prioritize the issues relating to this case. Without addressing the above issues, the project will fail.

Reflective vs. Reflexive

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My analysis focused on what is known and listed the issues. I need to work on how to look deeper into what is known. “Experts focus on what they know. They make inferences based on given information and suggest possible scenarios...” (Ertmer & Stepich, 2005, p. 40). For example, I was able to incorporate some of my personal experience (reflective) while still adhering to the rubric when I wrote, “In the corporate world with ever changing management and ever changing needs, last minute demands that seem unreasonable are the rule rather than the exception in my experience. To combat this, I have learned to rely on more agile design methodology that can handle constant change.” Therefore, using this approach I think I was a lot more reflexive in this case study.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Relationships Among Solutions

Upon reflection, I feel as though I exhibited expert level thinking in this area. This is based on my ability to suggest recommendations that will either solve the ID problem for all the stakeholders or aide in the eventual solution to the problem. As I stated, “In the end, the second solution addresses TCM’s foremost concerns, and most of the obstacles to the program are resolved in the SC project.”

Consideration of Implications

I feel as though I did a good job making recommendations that solved the ID problem but upon reflection, I believe I would have done a better job explaining the impact of the recommendation on the design. I think I could have bullet pointed the prioritizations because they tended to be long explanations.

Flexible vs. Rigid

I believe that the solution offers viable alternatives for Scott to establish a workable design that meets the needs of all of the stakeholders. Yet, the alternatives were offered as well. By the explanation of proficiency in Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) and the examples of Ertmer and Stepich (2005) in this dimension, I see a level of proficiency in my flexibility.

Overall Rating: High, medium, low

Reflections on Developing ID Expertise

I believe I identified the important problems in the case and provided a solution that addressed what I identified. Therefore, I think my overall understanding of this case study analysis based on identifying core ID problem and provided a suitable solution was **High**.

CONCLUSION

There is some evidence to show that I am displaying a level of competence in areas of instructional design in which I am familiar; however, my recommendations do not show a depth and breadth of experience with technologies or design models other than ADDIE and D&C which are the ones I am most familiar. Also, my abilities in problem solving seem to be somewhat more advanced than in problem identifying. The key problem with this is that if I do not adeptly identify the problem and all of the challenges, then my solutions are not the most accurate. Therefore, the problem identifying skills need to be further developed in order for the problem solving to be effective.

PLAN OF ACTION

As I continue to progress from novice to expert, I will consider the following as a viable plan for a successful transition from student to practitioner within the field of instructional design. I will study more about alternative designs, technologies available, and learning environments outside of the learning management systems with which I am already familiar. In general, from the literature assigned, I have a better understanding that knowledge is just the foundation. I need experience applying this knowledge and practicing in order to achieve the fluidity by which an expert moves from analysis, problem identification, instinctual synthesis, and deriving a logical solution.

Stay Current

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As I continue to gain experience in the ID field, I realize that I will never know everything. I will rely on my peers, publications, professional organizations, and conferences to continue in my journey to becoming an expert.

Fail Forward

Now that I have completed four case analyses, I realize that many of my peers identified problems and offered recommendations that were very different than my own. In some instances this was good, as I feel that I made the proper recommendations. However, some of the time, I could have used a peer's recommendation as a fresh perspective on the case study. From this, I realize that I can celebrate my successes, but must always remember there are many things to be learned from failures. In the future, I will fail forward.

Play to My Strengths, Strengthen My Weaknesses

As I continue to gain experience as a professional instructional designer, I try to remember to be self-aware at all times, in all situations. I am becoming more aware of areas in which I excel, as well as areas that demand improvement.

Design, Design, Design

Perhaps the most important step in my action plan is to simply keep designing. Over the course of the LDT program, I have encountered many learning theories, but little time to practice what I have learned. An expert takes the principles along with their past experiences to produce quality designs for the task at hand. That said, the only real way to move forward in this field, and some day be considered an expert, is to keep growing as a professional, take challenging jobs, never become complacent, and simply keep designing!

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