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Book Review

A Designer's Log: Case Studies in Instructional Design

Author: Michael Power (2009). [A Designer's Log: Case Studies in Instructional Design](#). Athabasca, Alberta, Canada: AU Press. ISBN 978-1-897425-61-9 (Print). ISBN 978-1-897425-46-6 (Electronic). Available for download under a Creative Commons License.

Reviewer: Airina Volungevičienė, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

When instructional designers and teachers think of Donald A. Schön's ideas about "reflective practitioners," we should read Michael Power's *A Designer's Log*. I admire the way in which Power, as a "reflective practitioner," records his analysis of his practice as a responsible professional: what he *can* do, what he *is* doing, and what he *should* do in order to assist teachers and faculty members at a dual-mode university to apply instructional design to online and blended learning.

The book is organized into three major areas: Introduction, The Case Studies, and Synthesis and Final Prototype.

In the introduction, the author describes principles embodied in the instructional design model that he uses in practice, challenges he encounters at his dual-mode institution, and the prototype development process. These become the milestones for the 10 case studies that form the central focus of the book.

The author reports on his experiences, recorded in a logbook over a three-year period, as he assisted 10 faculty members to implement the "proposed instructional design model prototype" for distance education. To implement this instructional-design model, Power explains the importance of providing a careful and individualized approach to each case, of expressing confidence in advice and decision-making, and of showing respect for both the tradition and the culture of the dual-mode institution in order to promote faculty members' movement from an on-campus teaching paradigm to an online teaching paradigm.

The second part of the book presents 10 case studies that detail the experience of working with professors to adapt instructional design to their teaching practice. Using a simple log-narrative

style, Michael Power raises hot issues, recounting how tradition is “losing ground with regard to what is taught.” The reader becomes aware of certain dimensions of the process of principle-based design: Interpersonal communications and continuous reflection on action are maintained to preserve “good” instructional practice, and decisions are postponed until collaborative discussions lead to shared understanding and until both the instructional designer and the teacher find their own improvement paths. Following a meta-reflective approach, each case study reports on the different sessions between the instructional designer and the faculty member and concludes with the results of an ex post facto interview or mutual reflection.

The third part, which might be considered most important for the author and for readers, is entitled “Synthesis and Final Prototype.” Here, the readers can find Power’s purpose: “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.” Although it is unusual to find the purpose of the study at the end of the book, this only underlines the consistent approach of the author: to accompany faculty members through a process of professional development as they apply principles of instructional design to online and blended learning; to improve a tool to ease or facilitate such learning; and to conduct research intended to support instructional design.

Plunging into the case studies was so fascinating that it was difficult to come to the end of the story. Readers may be happy to receive the author’s affirmations that his study demonstrated not only that the “online design process is endless,” but also that “for a successful design prototype to be successfully implemented in a traditional university setting, it had to be based on ‘low structure’ and high ‘dialog’ (Moore, 1993) and must emulate traditional university practices and operations.”

What I admire most about this book are the principles of instructional design embodied in the online-learning (OL) deployment model, which is described at the beginning of the book, and which was subsequently improved following the book’s first printing in French. The recommendations suggested in the epilogue are applicable to all our institutions around the world! Because they address our everyday activities, we must read these lessons and learn from them.

I encourage all faculty members who seek to improve their professional practice of blended and online learning, as well as instructional designers who accompany faculty members in that endeavor, to read Michael Power’s *A Designer’s Log: Case Studies in Instructional Design*.

Thank you, Michael Power, for taking the time to share this with us.

References

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