

Rapid Training Development

Developing Training Courses
Fast and Right

George M. Piskurich



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If you would like to download and print a copy of the Instructor's Manual, please visit **www.wiley.com/college/piskurich**



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Preface

..... **T**he purpose of this volume is to pick up where *Rapid Instructional Design* left off by helping you to more efficiently and effectively develop training programs once you have completed, or sort of completed, the design phase of instructional systems design. This book does this by providing you with course development thoughts, hints, and shortcuts of a general nature that could be useful for almost any design and then continuing this approach with techniques that are specific to each major delivery process. Many of these thoughts, hints, and shortcuts are further illuminated by actual examples, checklists, and case studies.

The book is divided into chapters based on delivery systems to make it easier for you to find the information you need for the design you are developing and to create a certain synergy among the techniques as you can see how they work together in a singular design.

This doesn't mean that you won't find many of the rapid development techniques useful for deliveries other than the one they appear with; it was simply an easier way to structure the information without becoming too redundant.

After the first chapter, which is on general rapid development techniques that can be useful for a number of deliveries, the other chapters are focused on single delivery processes, starting with the most common, the classroom, and finishing with the most different, and possibly most overlooked, performance aids. In some cases the

chapters not only consider rapid development techniques for the delivery system, but also how the system itself can be a rapid development shortcut for other types of deliveries. For example, synchronous e-learning is a delivery system unto itself, with any number of rapid development shortcuts, but by using it in lieu of some parts of an asynchronous e-learning package it becomes a rapid development technique for the asynchronous delivery. I hope this won't confuse the issue too much, as it is an important aspect of rapid development.

The last chapter looks at some delivery processes, such as mobile learning, that have not been around long enough to have a lot of rapid development shortcuts and some processes that aren't really considered delivery systems, but can certainly be rapid development shortcuts, such as knowledge management and reusable content objects.

For our colleagues in academia, this book can be used as a teaching tool, giving students a reference source for all of the major delivery systems and professors a single development text to teach from in any type of training- or learning-oriented class.

In the end it is the wise developer who chooses the right development techniques for his or her environment and personal skills, but I hope that this book can provide some other possibilities and help make that choosing a little easier.

Introduction: What Course Development Is and Is Not

.....*T*here is a singular disadvantage to training that probably outweighs all the other disadvantages combined: *Training takes time*. Time spent by trainers planning for and then implementing training programs. Time spent by the trainees in training instead of doing what they normally do to contribute to the company's goals. Time spent traveling to and from training opportunities. Time for managers to determine individual and group training needs and then follow up on the training to make sure it is being used. Time for re-training when the training wasn't successful, or when something changes. All of this time is part of the cost of doing business, and with a few exceptions there is little that can be done to eliminate or even decrease training time significantly. One of those exceptions is course development.

It takes time to develop training programs as well, usually much more time that it does to deliver them. How much time depends a great deal on how effective you want your program to be. If what you require is training for the simple purpose of saying that the workers have been trained, then effectiveness is not much of an issue. You can institute training that is basically an experienced employee, in

training jargon we call them subject-matter experts or SMEs, talking at the trainees about how to do their jobs. When this occurs one-on-one at the job site, it is often termed on-the-job training (OJT). When it happens with the subject-matter expert standing up before a group of trainees in a classroom, it is usually termed a training class. Either way, development time is minimal, although the training it is usually less than adequate and these training delivery techniques belong to the “well, at least we got it done” philosophy of training.

With most training processes, you get out of it what you put into it, which in the above examples isn’t much. And please don’t think I’m only talking about delivering skills building training for new employees here. How many leadership development programs have been developed and implemented that are basically just a series of internal or external “experts” talking at new leaders and telling them what they should do based solely on what they “think” works, or the current philosophy de jour?

To develop an effective training intervention, one that can lead to real learning and skills mastery by the participants, takes time. That doesn’t mean you can’t shorten the process considerably though. That’s the purpose of this book, to explain how to do training program development right, and as efficiently as possible, using proven techniques and shortcuts that really work.

To achieve this we’ll revisit and expand on some of the concepts introduced in this book’s companion volume, *Rapid Instructional Design*, and explore a number of new ideas that together will cover the development aspect of various training delivery processes in detail. As you can’t talk development without talking training design, some of what we discuss will sound a bit familiar to those of you who have read *Rapid Instructional Design*, but hang in there and we’ll get to some stuff that will be new, and hopefully exciting.

**WHAT THIS
BOOK IS ABOUT**

This book is about one phase of the instructional systems design (ISD) model, the one usually labeled “development.” If you have some knowledge of ISD, you probably know that the development phase is where you create the course materials that will be used in the next phase, which is usually termed “implementation” or sometimes “delivery.” Just in case you aren’t familiar with instructional systems design though, or simply to remind you, Figure I.1 shows one of the accepted ISD models.

This model shows the five phases of instructional systems design: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation, sometimes referred to as ADDIE, and indicates that the phase we will be discussing, development, comes after design and before implementation.

If you've read *Rapid Instructional Design* though, you might remember that ISD really looks a little more like the model shown in Figure I.2.

Each phase in what I term the Spider Web Model of ISD is interconnected with all other phases as you create your training, so that at any time you might jump back to a previously completed phase or jump ahead to do some thinking about a phase yet to come. This reality, rather than the sequential theory of the first diagram, is going to cause us a few problems as we discuss the development phase, but we'll work our way through them as best we can.

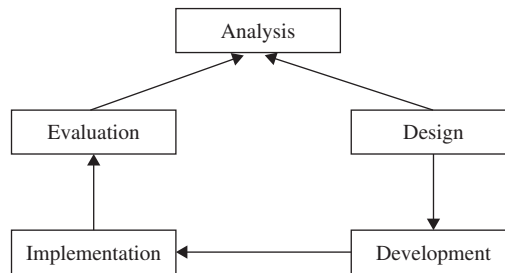


Figure I.1. Instructional Design Cyclic Model

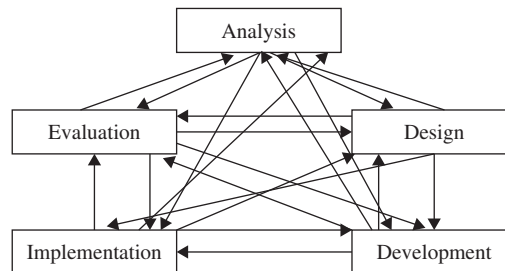


Figure I.2. Instructional Design Spider Web Model

**IMPLEMENTATION
VS. DELIVERY**

The first of these problems is that we will mostly be discussing delivery systems as we explore the rapid techniques of the development phase. Delivery systems are the various ways we get training to our learners. They include approaches such as classrooms, web-based learning, on-the-job training, self-directed learning, mobile learning, and even more esoteric processes such as knowledge management and electronic performance support systems.

If you didn't know a lot about instructional design, you might guess that such concepts would be explored and finalized during the implementation phase of ISD, when according to definition we "deliver" the training. If so, you'd have guessed wrong. (That's what you get for guessing.) How we develop materials, and the shortcuts we can utilize, are to a great extent dependent upon the delivery system that we will implement in the implementation phase, so the delivery decision must be made before you develop your training materials.

If you know a little more about instructional design, you might determine that we need to make the delivery decision sometime during the design phase, and in this case you'd be right (not a guess but some good deductive reasoning). When we begin the development phase, we must already have decided which delivery system we will be using.

We won't be discussing how we make a delivery decision in this book, as it is outside our scope. If you need more information on this topic, *Rapid Instructional Design* or any other good design book can supply it to you.

Another problem is that, while we know we need a delivery decision before we begin development, we aren't always sure exactly what else we may be starting the development process with. Some instructional systems design proponents suggest that writing the learner objectives is the first step in development. Others think this task belongs in the design phase. Some prefer to see learner evaluation (most often you can read that as "test questions") as part of development; others believe that the creation of learner evaluation measures belongs in design. And don't forget the spider web. No matter where you create anything in ISD, there is always a chance you will need to revise some or all of it as you work toward the completion of your program.

For the purpose of this book we will assume that, as you enter the development phase, you, or someone, has created both good learner-centered objectives and properly designed learner-evaluation items for the program. These learner-evaluation items might be criterion-based test questions or some type of performance checklists.

However, as we will soon see, one general and very useful rapid development technique is to begin by creating the learner evaluation, and then building in reverse, so you develop materials, and even the learner objectives based on the evaluation itself.

**START AND
STOP POINTS**

So where does that leave us? Actually, it really doesn't matter. If you subscribe to the spider web model of ISD, the boundaries between all of the phases are pretty fluid, and trying to set them specifically is like trying to decide who owns what part of a meandering and constantly changing river like the Mississippi, simply an exercise in futility.

So we will arbitrarily state for the purposes of this book that generally course development begins when you have a validated set of learner objectives and the learner evaluation items that reflect them. It ends when changes are made to the program and program materials based on the course pilot, and you are ready, we hope, to implement the program.

**HOW THIS
BOOK IS
ORGANIZED**

The organization of this book is somewhat different from its companion volume, *Rapid Instructional Design*. In that book we discussed the entire instructional design process and used icon-noted sidebars to provide hints for making each aspect more rapid. Because we covered the process of course development there in detail, we won't spend too much time on the basics here. Instead, the main focus of this volume is on the rapid development techniques themselves, and on how to use them effectively. There will be some review of development basics at the beginning of each chapter, but only enough to get you started and make the rapid development techniques clearer where required.

In *Rapid Instructional Design* we also included icon-noted sidebars for hints that were more useful for occasional designers and techniques that should only be attempted by seasoned practitioners. In this volume there is no differentiation, as all of the rapid development shortcuts are quite usable by anyone, no matter how much development experience he or she has.

Chapter 1 considers various general rapid development techniques, that is, development shortcuts that can be used in almost any delivery system. Some of these are reconsidered in the following chapters when they are of particular value or efficiency in a specific delivery system.

Each of the rest of the chapters focuses on one particular delivery system, first reviewing the development entry and exit points for that system, and then discussing possible rapid development techniques as they relate to the end products of each delivery system's development process.

For example, Chapter 2 on face-to-face classroom deliveries is divided into rapid development hints for the development of Instructor Guides, Participant Packages, and Media, the three major end-products of classroom material development.

You will find that some of the rapid development techniques will appear in more than one delivery system, but we will try to clarify these situations for you when they occur.

Also, a few of the delivery systems themselves function as rapid development techniques, either alone or in conjunction with other deliveries. When this occurs we'll discuss these possibilities first, then consider the delivery systems' own internal rapid development shortcuts based on their end-products.

The final chapter discards this model in favor of brief discussions on concepts that are not major delivery processes, but still play significant roles in training and so require development. These include concepts such as knowledge management and mobile learning.

A colleague of mine once noted that development is the thing that anyone who teaches has to do before he can teach. Even if you can't spell analysis, don't know a learner-based objective (LBO) from an unidentified flying object (UFO), and think tests, like Trix, are for kids, if you instruct you invariably need to develop some type of learning materials, even if they are only lesson outlines in your head. I hope this book can help you to see the importance of getting those things out of your head and into a format in which your learners can use them as quickly and effectively as possible.

Chapter 1

General Rapid Development Techniques

.....As we've already said, most rapid development techniques depend on the type of delivery system you have determined will work best for your training. However, some are effective in a number of deliveries, or are just so darn basic to the development process that they are the good old "no brainers."

.....
**NEED TO KNOW
IS WHAT'S
NEEDED**

One of the most basic of these, although at times even the best course developers get off track and forget it, is the concept of "need to know" versus "nice to know." There is usually a great deal of content that might be covered as you develop your material, and usually not enough time to cover it all, particularly if you plan on adding some of those pesky but so important learner exercises and activities. Even if you did a good job of creating tight objectives back during the design phase, you still need to differentiate between what a learner must really know to be successful in meeting those objectives and what is interesting, but not critical.

Keeping your material development focused on only this "need to know" information means that you don't waste time developing material that you will delete later during the pilot stage when you find you have no time to teach it and realize that it really wasn't all that terribly important anyway. You couldn't ask for a better rapid development technique than simply not developing materials because there is no need to, and this works no matter what delivery process you are using. Stick to developing what the learner really needs to learn (and not what you think is "neat"). You'll never go far wrong, and you'll go right more rapidly.

**DON'T
REINVENT THE
WHEEL**

You've heard this old adage before, but it is a really effective rapid development technique. Before you develop your own materials, search around for best practices, for stuff that has already been developed and that you can appropriate (legally, of course). In these days of the web, communities of practice, and even blogs, there is a lot of good material already developed, just sitting out there waiting for you to make it your own. Some may require a little alteration, but that takes a lot less time than developing it yourself from scratch.

As an example, for a program I recently developed for a client on cultural sensitivity, which I knew very little about, my research led me to a website created by a wonderful expert on the topic. He had objectives, an expanded outline, and even a few activities that had been proven successful. I had my clients annotate the outline I retrieved from this website, indicating those areas they thought most important, revised the objectives to reflect their thoughts, and then used the revised objectives, outline, and activities to develop course materials specifically related to the clients' needs, in about one-quarter of the time I would have spent doing it in the usual way, with task analysis and subject-matter experts, followed by laborious material development.

There is plenty of good stuff (and unfortunately plenty of bad stuff as well) available out there that can help shorten your development time, if you only take a little time to search for it. Do a Google search, do an old-fashioned literature search, ask a blog or a community of practice. Forget the "not invented here" syndrome and use this material as a whole, or just pieces; but to take advantage of it, you have to look for it.

**WORKING
BACKWARD**

Another general rapid course development technique that can work in almost any situation is to start at the end, at least the end of the development phase, and work backward. In this case, the question you should ask yourself is, "What do I need to deliver when I implement my course?" There are a number of ways to answer this question, although the fullness of the answer will most often be based on the amount of design work, or at least design thinking, you have done. The answer might range from a brief (very brief) statement of the content, to a formal series of goals for the training, to simply a declaration of the title and the delivery system, for example; "A Web-Based Program on Leadership."

This answer, short as it is, provides you with the two most important things you need to know in the development process, what