Reflection on Developing Expertise

EDCI 672-007

Randy Brooks

Purdue University

December 11, 2017

Dr. David Paredes

Reflection on Developing Expertise

Following is a retrospective review of my development as we progressed through the four case studies in this course. The learning goal was to use the studies to improve my ability to “apply foundational principles to problem-solving situations…and adapt (my) knowledge to devise effective strategies to fit each particular situation.” (Ertmer & Stepich, 2005, p. 42).

Case #1 – Beth Owens

I was scored an 8/10 on this initial foray in documenting my analysis work with an overall ranking of ‘medium’. Through my 23 years in telecom I built a sense of how to look beyond the documented facts and determine motives and expected responses to actions. This helped me lay solid foundations of problem-finding from which to launch my recommendations. I was adept at ‘reading’ the players and then projecting their responses to particular actions that I suggested. I tend to follow my problem-solving process to find a solid solution, but struggle with developing a reasonable plan ‘B’.

Identifying Chef Reiner as the crux of the challenge by stating that “although he is initially approached as the SME with an impressive culinary resume, he will later function as a member of the audience in his position as department director and instructor” (Brooks, 2016) was key to setting the tone regarding the complexity of managing the Chef Reiner perspective.

I synthesized effectively by identifying ‘several related challenges’ (Ertmer & Stepich, 2005) for Beth to address, yet was ineffective at clearly prioritizing these items. Once the groundwork was laid, I moved on to the design view and began identifying ‘principles that are relevant to understanding the situation.” (Ertmer & Stepich, 2005)

Though I mentioned additional data elements to gather, I did not directly and clearly incorporate their impact as a major step in the process. I depicted this data as key support for Beth’s case for change. I proposed sharing the information as part of Beth’s presentation of the data suggesting that “a convincing case can be made using the historical enrollment, retention and placement statistics for the culinary arts courses, so Beth needs to spend some significant time gathering and organizing this data.” (Brooks, 2016).

My key takeaway from the Beth Owens case, which was subsequently reinforced during each of the remaining case studies, was to linger longer in the analysis area and take the time to view the project from multiple perspectives. Documenting the relationships which I see among the issues and subsequently, the solutions, will provide the support that I need later when making recommendations.

Case #2 – Jack Waterkamp

I was scored a 9/10 on this case with an overall ranking of 'medium-well'. The case study involved a messy major project at a software development firm. My project management background provided some keen insights on this project as I effectively described roles and expected actions. Though I referenced the Sales organization multiple times, I perceived them to be an indirect customer, yet they were actually a very involved party based on commission/competition impacts. Intuition and political acumen play key roles in project management activities. The hook was placed nicely as "Jack Waterkamp was seeing himself on the easy road to being a high level executive at CDS, but his whole world changed in a moment." (Brooks, 2016)

I showed some confusion regarding ID challenges and constraints on this project as I grouped them together in my list of issues that needed to be tackled. The overarching challenge of this study was that the whole timeline was depicted, including issues that came up along the way. Consequently, our proposed solutions needed to use that long line of issues as a foundation for creating a path moving forward.

Considering the information and relationships that we had to sift through, I was proud of my depiction of key 'next steps'. "The next step is to identify the overtime funding needed to bring the product to market successfully and on time. Jack has led the teams to contribute their best efforts to product construction. He has a finishing path mapped, but it requires additional funding. His role now is to present scenarios to upper management for additional direction." (Brooks, 2016) This followed some key intuitional aspects clearly communicated in the following paragraph.

"As the digitization project has progressed, Jack has uncovered new information that highlights addition reasons for CDS executives to dictate the web-based training addition. As there are now competition elements at play and interest in growing training revenue, there will surely be some freedom to contribute additional capital to the project to ensure that the CDS reputation is secure. Jack will need to ensure that upper management understands that neither delivering a skeletal product on time, or a better product late are desirable alternatives."

My takeaway from this case study is to better delineate better challenges and constraints. The important driver is that an ID has different techniques, tools, and options for addressing these two separate types of issues. Again, I built a very solid plan 'A', but plan 'B' was lacking. I need to be aware of my tunnel vision blinding me from other reasonable options.

Case #3 – Tina Sears

I scored a 10/10 on this case study with an overall ranking of 'high'. The case study situation is one that I discuss regularly with my peer groups. At the heart of this study is the ongoing question of, 'are standardized tests a reasonable measure of progress?' I continue to make the case that the tests are a reasonable measure until vertical industry agreement is obtained regarding an alternate method. When I need hard facts to compare, I am going to use some well-built standardized tests.

This case was heavily focused on the evaluation opportunities so it gave us occasion to dig out the Kirkpatricks' Four-Levels of Evaluation book and help Tina prepare for what is ahead.

I was in a minority in my strong support of Mr. Cook's position of being very frustrated with the lack of tangible progress to show for a year of technology deployment. Cook is a tough businessman and dependable benefactor. The benefactor actions are part of a larger business marketing position of being 'there' for the community, supporting the offspring of workers, and preparing the next generation to become highly educated employees of Hillendale Textiles. This is America, and this is how it works.

I methodically uncovered all the issues, challenges, and constraints and documented them separately. I also had the benefit of experiencing both sides of this debate in my current position in a high school, so building a reasonable plan 'A' and a comparable plan 'B' was not a difficult task. The challenge for me in this case was to avoid assigning too many attributes to those involved based on my personal experiences.

I was very comfortable developing the bigger view of the case and quickly saw to the heart of what needed to happen. This may have been heightened by my participation with the Texas A&M Computer Science Sketch Recognition Lab (TAMU SRL) regarding their Mechanix product. I helped prepare it for use in high school physics and engineering classrooms and found that when I deployed the tool, there was a TAMU SRL expectation to comply with numerous IRB guidelines while producing a paper documenting the research for an industry forum. While TAMU SRL was kind enough to allow me to deploy the tool to help my students, there was also the very real expectation that this would involve a scholarly research study. Thankfully the timing allowed me to produce this paper as my first product in the LDT program, and then present the study at CPTTE 2016 at Brown University in early April.

My takeaway from this case study was to believe in myself and know that the knowledge and skills that I bring and build are exponentially increasing in usefulness as I encounter new case studies. I felt that I was reaching elements of Expert-level ID work on this case study, and was proud of that as this situation was one that shows up regularly in my niche of the education industry.

Case #4 – Malcolm Gibson

I scored an 8.5/10 on this case with an overall ranking of 'medium'. The case involved producing digitized lessons and, as rigorous, online secondary courses is my vision, I got caught up in chasing that aspect and did not fully address the ID interests in the case. I reflected novice activity where I described stakeholder perspectives rather than their concerns. Though problem-finding is typically my forte, I was too eager to dig into the meat of the study and didn't adequately document my initial analysis work.

Once I got past the rocky start, the analysis of the landscape turned more expert as I gathered "a narrower range of information that is more specifically related to the situation." (Ertmer & Stepich, 2005, p. 41) I still displayed challenges in spending the needed time depicting my prioritization vision.

I became too personal with the case study and became frustrated with how this case was evolving and found it difficult to feel strongly about a solution within the proposed parameters. The delay in getting Malcolm involved really prevented quality work from occurring, regardless of the direction selected, so this became a ‘doing the best you can do’ task that doesn’t leave Malcolm with any good options.

On the other hand, I was very intrigued by this study as it somewhat reflects my current situation at the secondary level, as my peers are tried-and-true lecture-every-class instructors while I have flipped my classroom. I pulled in the following quote from Marks as support. “Online learning is here to stay and the question is not whether one should adopt an online program or not, but how can one produce an online program that reflects the quality of the traditional delivery system?” (Brooks, 2016)

I also secured some key tips for managing an online course from Eric Craig Sull’s article, “A 2014 Guide to Engaging Students: It’s Not Your Grandfather’s Online Classroom!” which I will use in all my industry presentations on this topic going forward (Brooks, 2016).

- Faculty maintains a regular presence in the online classroom,
- All responses within 24 hours,
- More feedback communicates valuable learning experiences and instructor commitment,
- Add humor while avoiding sarcasm,
- Link comments to professional world application,
- Discussions are the heartbeat of the course that takes the learning deeper and wider,
- Add other related and intriguing resources such as applets and relevant video/audio.

I interpreted from the narrative that Dr. Tsagas knew she was in trouble and needed Malcolm’s help, which is why I recommended that he build what he knew was really needed and task her with managing her staff’s expectations. With his knowledge base, this should secure him a role as a quality resource for digitized activity going forward. This was insight well beyond what was provided in the case study and was “articulating principles that are relevant to understanding the situation.” (Ertmer & Stepich, 2005)

Conversely, I may have overstepped the bounds of intuition by visualizing the study almost exclusively from Malcolm’s perspective and not viewing the situation more objectively. My perspective was that Malcolm was an ID consultant always on the look for work, and the situation at the college was seeing support only from the department head. What I read from the instructors was that they would minimally comply with the direction to move digital and would match that level of compliance when making attempts to deliver the courses as well. As I saw the situation, there was not a plan ‘B’, other than refusing the work. There was only Malcolm on his own, making this happen. Potentially myopic on my part. I am seeing a trend.

Overall Reflections and Moving Forward

I entered these case studies with a reasonable level of confidence based on my many years of situational analysis at Telecom firms. I was pleased to find new elements to add to my knowledge database during each case study. A key area of further development for me is clearly depicting the prioritization of issues to address. I tend to indirectly define these items using the following commentary, but I need to ensure that my reader is clear on the itemized importance levels before I begin delving into the support and extension information.

I also lacked in the area of building a reasonable or viable plan ‘B’. Though an activity that I need to address more effectively, I appear to believe that my time is better spent shoring up plan ‘A’. I find this odd as teaching often requires deploying a plan ‘B’ when a lesson does reach its expected learning levels, and the plan ‘B’ is always discussed during planning activities. I am going to need to investigate why my normal use of multi-option development is not making it into my written case studies.

Bibliography

Brooks, R. (2016) *Beth owens case study 16*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Education, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Brooks, R. (2016) *Jack waterkamp case study 30*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Education, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Brooks, R. (2016) *Malcomb gibson case study 9*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Education, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Brooks, R. (2016) *Tina sears case study 6*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Education, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Ertmer, P. A., Quinn, J., & Glazewski, K. (2014). *The ID casebook: Case studies in instructional design* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Ertmer, P. A., Stepich, D. A. (2005). Instructional design expertise: How will we know it when we see it? Educational Technology. November-December 2005, p. 38-43.