

From Theory to Practice: Redesigning the Instructor Course

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IDD&E: Practical Application

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May 31, 2025

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Organization

I am currently employed as an instructional designer for the Noncommissioned Officer Leadership Center of Excellence (NCOLCoE) located at Fort Bliss, Texas, which serves as the enlisted leaders' premier institution that provides professional military training to Soldiers across the U.S Army. Within the NCOLCoE, is the Faculty and Staff Development Office (FSDO), which is responsible for preparing and supporting the future instructors assigned to the organization with the necessary training and ensuring that they meet the competencies needed to facilitate learning for Soldiers at all levels. One of the main courses within this section is the Instructor Course (IC) that introduces teaching strategies, adult learning, and classroom management techniques.

Scenario

After retiring from the military, I transitioned into an instructional designer where I currently design and redesign curriculum for the NCOLCoE. After working at the academy for a few months, I was approached by my supervisor with a performance problem he noticed amongst the new instructors. Data he collected showed that the instructors were not receiving new updated methods of teaching and they lacked core competencies that enabled them to effectively instruct the Soldiers. He proposed that I redesign the course to prepare the new and existing faculty to deliver current instruction methods across different platforms. After looking at the course in depth, I realized that the course was not up to standard and had fallen out of alignment with the changing demands of the instructional environment. Additionally, feedback from the faculty showed that the course did not provide inclusive teaching strategies, or a shift toward different learning formats such as hybrid or asynchronous. Many instructors found that they were still not prepared after taking the course and believed that the course should include tools such as artificial intelligence (AI) platforms and digital applications. The goal was to develop a modernized course that would close the gap and align with the Army's evolving educational environment.

Application of Instruction Design Development and Evaluation Principles

Analysis

Before completing the redesign process, I used the Joe Harless front-end analysis approach to validate the performance gaps of the Instructor Course. Using a mixed analysis approach that included surveys, faculty and staff interviews, and reviewing the curriculum of the course, provided me with the data needed to determine the gaps and the ability to move forward on the course redesign.

The surveys were distributed anonymously to the entire faculty and results indicated that the IC lacked real-world applications and student engagement. Additionally, many members indicated that the IC did not adequately prepare them for hybrid teaching, AI tools, learning management systems, and smartboards which are prevalent within the organization. Furthermore, I used diverse members of the faculty from different departments to conduct my

interview sessions. Their responses revealed that there was a disconnect between what the course covered versus that of practical applications. I noticed that there was a common theme among the results that emphasized the need to equip the faculty with the tools necessary to create a learner-centered experience. Lastly, I conducted an extensive analysis of the existing curriculum which indicated that some of the methods the IC provided were extremely outdated and not relevant to today's learners. This curriculum proved that there was a performance gap in faculty readiness in reference to the current teaching technologies, skills, and attitudes. Overall, these methods provided me with the necessary steps needed to begin the instructional design process.

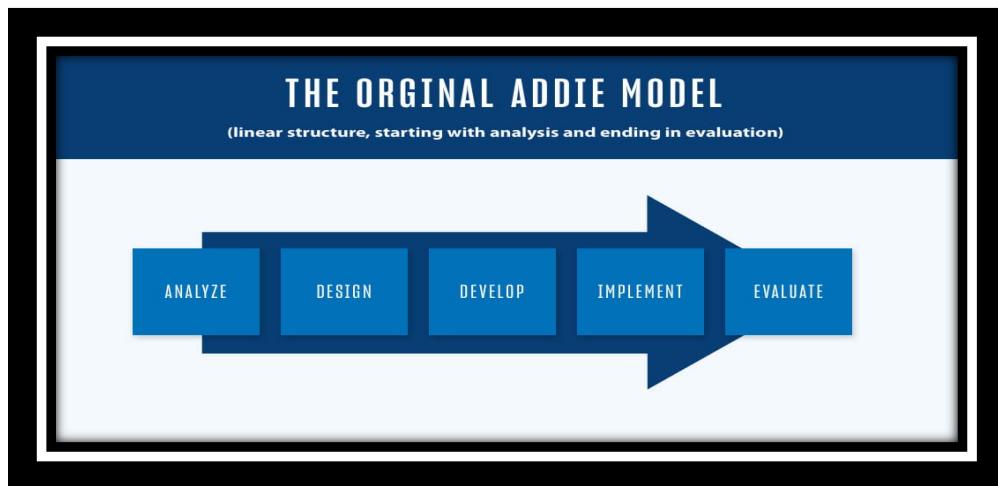
Design

During the design phase, I used the ADDIE model (Figure 1), to establish instructional goals by utilizing the data collected from the front-end analysis to address the gaps in the curriculum. My goal was to ensure that the instructor course provided the necessary pedagogical skills but also reflected the needs of the current and military learning environment. The following instructional goals included the following:

- Introduction to hybrid and asynchronous teaching methods
- Faculty training on digital applications, learning management systems, and AI tools
- Inclusive teaching practices for leaner engagement on multiple platforms
- Equipping instructors with learner-centered strategies for adult learning

The newly designed course modules will introduce both asynchronous and synchronous learning that will demonstrate peer collaboration and scenario-based teaching modules to enable instructors to replicate the training in similar environments. The redesigned course will allow both current and future instructors to obtain the necessary competencies needed to facilitate instruction and meet the demands of the 21st century.

Figure 1
ADDIE Model



Note. This model was produced by University of San Diego Online

Development

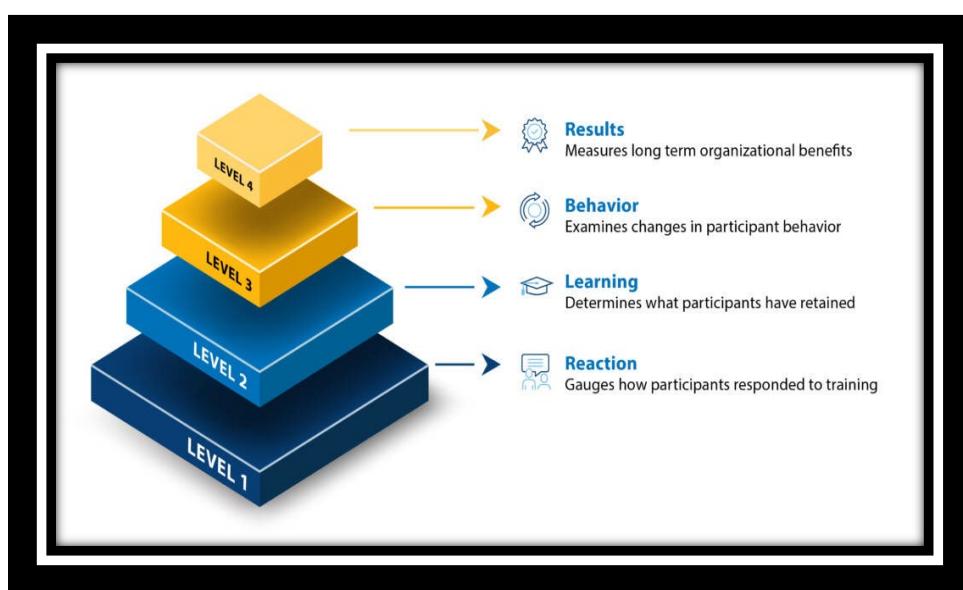
During the development phase the focus was geared towards creating instructional modules that addressed the adult learning principles using different technologies and tools. The scenarios and case studies developed during this process aimed at understanding common classroom challenges such as managing learner engagement. During this time, collaboration with other instructional designers, programmers, stakeholders, and experienced faculty members is crucial to ensure that the proposed curriculum was pedagogically sound, seamless, and included the course guidelines and all assessment materials.

Implementation and Evaluation

Through implementation, I was able to assess whether the redesigned curriculum aligned with the course's original objectives and addressed the identified performance gaps. Over a four-week period, the course was piloted with a diverse group of learners within the organization which allowed me to observe how different personnel interacted with the new materials and instructional strategies. This pilot revision included both synchronous and asynchronous sessions to mimic the revised version of the course. During this phase, I was able to collect data during midcourse feedback and post-module surveys. Additionally, the embedded formative evaluation phase allowed me to monitor the learner's progress and their engagement. The feedback from this evaluation provided essential data to readjust the curriculum to provide additional training on the learning management systems and AI platforms. The piloted training ended with a summative evaluation which measured observable outcomes. To ensure that the summative evaluation achieved its intended outcome, the ADDIE process and Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation (reaction, learning, behavior, and results) was used for a robust review (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

Figure 2

Kirkpatrick Four Levels of Evaluation



Note. This model was produced by University of San Diego Online

Summary of Knowledge Gains from Concentration

The knowledge gained through the IID&E program was instrumental in my ability to think strategically and consider multiple factors which enhance the learning environment. Courses such as Digital Media Introduction and Techniques in Educational Evaluation taught me how to create meaningful graphics, mini-courses, digital products, and align goals with measurable outcomes. Understanding the ADDIE, Joe Harless, and Kirkpatrick models trained me to determine the root causes of performance issues before designing and implementing solutions. Additionally, the group projects that I have worked on throughout this program augmented my skills in communication, planning, and critical thinking. Because of this program, I can effectively understand the methods behind course structure and understand the goal behind instructional design.

Self-Reflection

Reflecting on my journey throughout this program, I can now see myself as an instructional designer and strategic problem solver. This program has equipped me with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to design and redesign instruction that will be catered to learners and aligned with the organization's goals. After working as a previous instructor, I realized that I lacked the knowledge in the core competencies that is needed to understand and deliver effective instruction. I now know that instruction must be intentionally designed to solve performance problems. This scenario instilled in my creative and critical thinking and helped me understand that the instructional environment is constantly changing and designers must constantly adapt to the new tools, technologies, and learner needs to meet the current expectations of learners. Throughout this program, I have been challenged in every course to think critically how design impacts learners. I will take the knowledge I have gained from this program to shape my work into a professional setting and guide others that do not possess the same background with the knowledge I have gained.

References

Kirkpatrick, J. & Kirkpatrick, W. (2016). *Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation*. Association for Talent Development

Administrator. (2025, March 8). *The Kirkpatrick Training Evaluation Model [Benefits & faqs]*. University of San Diego Online Degrees. <https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/kirkpatrick-training-evaluation-model/>