

# Introduction

Good instruction should not be left to chance and luck. Most of us in libraries get a very limited amount of time with our learners. Even though we might be making some breakthroughs in certain areas to infuse information literacy into the curriculum or the communities with which we work, these tend to be the exceptions, not the rule. Most libraries still have to live with the fifty-minute workshop, the one-shot stand-up routine where we are expected to teach learners everything they need to know. It's a far, far cry from the ideal, but "fifty minutes is better than nothing," we say and bravely go into that lab or classroom with the hope that we might be able to make some kind of difference. And who knows, a number of exceptional fifty-minute workshops sewn together may begin to build an instruction program. A strong instruction program that makes a difference in the learning and performance of our learners may help us develop the partnerships we need to build a true information literacy program.

Every minute, therefore, that we have with our learners in the one-shot workshop needs to be intentionally designed to increase learning and performance. How can we best accomplish this? By building our understanding about teaching and learning and by using a process to implement that understanding.

This book is intended to provide you with a deliberate process of instructional design and the essential background information to help ensure the resounding success of your library workshops. The process described in this book is best suited for those workshops that you teach frequently or that are taught by

*One thing about the instructional design process that's bizarre is that most of us like to start with thinking about how somebody is going to learn something. We would never write down objectives or do a task analysis because we already have it down in our minds. We think we understand the tasks that go into a particular skill. We just assume.*

—Van Houlson, Business Librarian,  
University of Minnesota Libraries–Twin Cities

more than one librarian. Having said that, however, aspects of the process can be easily adapted into the development of unique or infrequently offered workshops as well.

### Tip

What's a "one-shot" library workshop? It's a task-focused training session. A one-shot, for example, might focus on helping library users find a book in the catalog, locate primary source material, or evaluate websites. The library instructor's main contact with the learners generally begins and ends with the one-shot workshop.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN PROCESS

Take a moment to reflect on how you personally learned to plan in-class time as an instructor. Did you have a course in college or in graduate school? Did you go to development workshops on this topic?

Part of the problem faced by instruction librarians and staff is that few of us have ever learned effective instructional design. For those who have, much of it may have been focused on the delivery of the information, not on the design of the workshop. We may have learned some presentation techniques or learning theory, but unfortunately it's very uncommon to have actually learned how to design a workshop from beginning to end.

Take a moment to reflect on the ways you design your workshops. Do you

- Make an outline of content areas you'd like to cover?
- Have students ask you questions and then answer them as a way to shape your workshop time?
- Include a lecture and demonstration followed by hands-on time when the students can try it out for themselves?
- Use a colleague's outline on what to cover and then "wing it" when you get into the classroom or lab?
- Create a worksheet of exercises for the learners to work through during the session and build the workshop around these exercises?
- What else? \_\_\_\_\_

This list is fairly typical of what I hear in my instructional design workshops when I ask participants how they design their own workshops. Some participants say they may use one or two of these approaches most often and mix and match many of the others depending on a variety of factors.

But you might want to think about building a workshop as a process that looks more like that of building a house. If the builder skips the foundation, he might be able to build something that stands for a while, but only for a while. If the builder then decides that what he really likes are kitchens and spends most of the time building the kitchen at the expense of the other rooms, the rest of the house will reflect that choice. And if he throws on a cheap roof because he went over budget, eventually the roof will start leaking.

It's the same kind of thing when designing a library workshop. You could choose to focus on the content and end up pulling together the teaching meth-

ods at the last minute or even on the spot. You could decide to focus on just the section of the workshop you really enjoy, and gloss over the rest. Alternatively, you could follow a blueprint for the design that takes the mystery out of what seems like an elusive process—the design of a library workshop—and gives it structure and predictability.

Next we'll look at the instructional design model used in this book.

## **OVERVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN**

The most widely used and respected instructional design methodology used in the training field is called instructional systems design, or ISD. For the most part, ISD is basically the application of educational psychology to teaching, development, and delivery. Training professionals are schooled in it, and it is the standard for training departments in companies around the world.

Instructional systems design methodology is a systematic approach to designing training that applies to many different learning environments. It includes analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. These stages in the design process are often referred to by the acronym ADDIE. There are numerous adaptations of the ISD ADDIE model in the training and education field (including models from Irwin Goldstein, Dugan Laird, Richard Swanson, Walter Dick and Lou Carey, Frederick Knirk and Kent Gustafson, John Campbell, and Richard Johnson). The ISD version used in this book comes largely from the self-proclaimed largest train-the-trainer company in the world, Langevin Learning Services (<http://www.langevin.com>).

In order to give a big-picture look at the design process described in this book, figure 1-1 breaks down the ISD process into the five “ADDIE” components which are explained in the next section.

## **THE PROCESS**

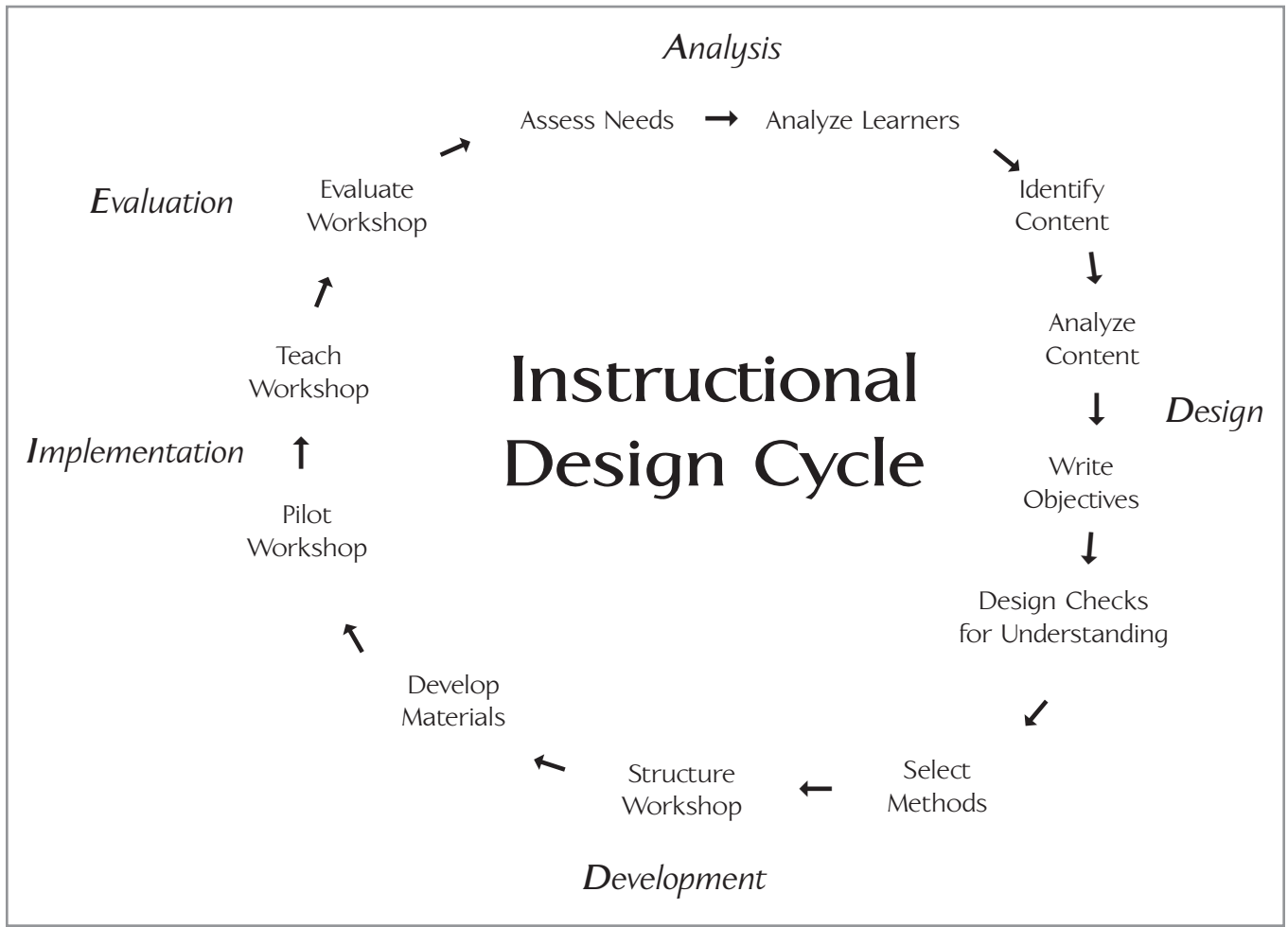
### **1. Analysis**

The instructional design process starts as any good process does—with background work. The designer investigates the needs of the agency or person who is either contracting the session or who might encourage or require learners to attend the session, if applicable. Then they turn to the needs, situation, and abilities of the expected learners in the workshop.

### **2. Design**

Once this background work has been done, the focus changes to what content will be covered. Using a rather rigorous and complete process, the instructional designer identifies these content areas down to the very specifics. Objectives for the workshop are articulated during this part of the design, as are the ways the instructor will be able to check that these objectives are being met.

FIGURE 1-1 Instructional Design Cycle



It is only then that the focus moves to *how* these objectives will be met. Teaching methods that fit the learner analysis completed earlier in the process and that complement the content are chosen and designed for the workshop.

### 3. Development

Then these methods are shaped into a workable lesson plan and other logistics are developed, such as instructor and learner materials.

### 4. Implementation

The workshop is tested and revised and is then officially offered and taught by the library.

## 5. Evaluation

Finally, evaluation feedback is analyzed and the designer decides if a redesign process is merited for the next time the workshop is offered.

### WHY GO THROUGH ALL THIS?

At this point you may be looking at all these parts of the design process and flipping through this book thinking, “This is crazy! I’ll never have enough time to do all this!” And for most of us, that is very true. Every designer will have to weigh time costs against benefits and decide what part of the process they will focus on and what parts they can hasten through or even skip over. (See the section “Allotting Time and Money for the Process” in the next chapter to help you decide what projects and under what circumstances you might choose to move into a more “rapid” design process.) There are many reasons to dive into this process. Here are a few of the ones I have found most compelling.

#### Top Seven Reasons to Use This Design Process

##### 1. Long-Term Use

This design process gives the library an effective in-depth lesson plan that offers consistent content and teaching methods that can be delivered by multiple library instructors year after year.

##### 2. Plug-and-Play Content

This process provides modules that instructors can insert into other workshops, thereby reducing instructional preparation time and individual design. Handouts and worksheets are already created and can be easily customized.

##### 3. Stakeholder Input

This process allows a group of self-identified library stakeholders to take part in deciding the content of the library curriculum.

##### 4. Consistency

This process ensures consistent content and delivery for each individual workshop. You will be able to promise your constituents the same outcomes for each session offered.

##### 5. Training for New Instructors

This process provides a very clear lesson plan that includes objectives, teaching points, activities, worksheets, and instructor guides. This offers apprentice instructors an opportunity to focus on delivery instead of design.

### Tip

As instruction librarians we sometimes end up teaching content in the classroom or lab that should be addressed at the library’s website or in the physical library. Yes, we can create a fantastic segment in our workshops on finding appropriate indexes on the library’s website, but shouldn’t the website do that adequately? Do we need to outline and expand on the research and writing process if we can make an online tool that does just that? Instead of “fixing” what’s wrong when you get into the classroom, fix and improve as much of the problem as you can outside the classroom. This will free up your class time for instruction in higher-order information literacy skills.

## 6. *Development for Existing Instructors*

This process provides an opportunity for library instructors to try some new ways of teaching that have already undergone trial and testing and are deemed successful.

## 7. *Quality*

This process creates a high-quality, effective workshop that can be used with confidence over and over again.

## OVERVIEW OF THIS BOOK

Now that you are hopefully convinced that trying out this process is a worthwhile endeavor, here is what is in store for you in this book. You will notice that instead of using the five components from the ADDIE model, I have broken down the process even further into more discrete steps. Each chapter covers one step in the process and includes only the most essential background information needed to complete the step. The intent is not to include everything that could be known about the topic, but rather just enough information for you to be successful.

At the end of each chapter, however, I've included a section that explores how the chapter content has played out in "real life" in the library where I work. It is my hope that these case studies will help you begin thinking about how to move from the theory and process discussed in each chapter to application in your own library.

Before moving directly into the process I have included the next chapter, called "Getting Started," which addresses some of the decisions you will need to make before embarking on your design journey. Good luck! May your trail be clear and the wind at your back!

### Tip

Although this book has some theory, it mostly focuses on the *process* of design. If you are looking for more theory to supplement the process, check out Walter Dick and Lou Carey's *The Systematic Design of Instruction* (HarperCollins, 1990). Another standard in the field is William Rothwell and H. C. Kazanas's *Mastering the Instructional Design Process* (Jossey-Bass, 1992). If you are looking for lighter fare, try George M. Piskurich's *Rapid Instructional Design: Learning ID Fast and Right* (Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 2000).

## SUMMARY

Most librarians are not trained in instructional design, even though effective instructional design can help librarians and staff have an even greater impact on their patrons. This book follows an ISD (instructional systems design) model that breaks the process down into five major parts that follow the acronym ADDIE (analyze, design, develop, implement, evaluate). These parts are broken even further into the steps used in this book.

A kind of teaching fatigue, coupled with extreme staffing shortages and many more instructional requests on campus than could be handled, motivated the University of Minnesota Libraries staff to use their preparation and class time more effectively. As a kickoff, a core group of librarians participated in a day-long training on instructional design. Upon their return they began to put their learning into practice as members of design teams focused on creating one workshop per team.

The products of these design teams are a series of “Unravel the Library” workshops that are designed to meet the often overwhelming need for library instruction generated by over seventy sections of English Composition each semester. English Composition instructors and other instructors in targeted departments send their students to these workshops either as a requirement or for extra credit. Students are directed to sign up for a session that fits into their schedules, and upon completion of the workshop they are given a certificate of completion as proof of attendance.

Because the workshops were designed by key stakeholders in the library and because the lesson plan is very detailed, we are able to distribute the teaching responsibility to about fifteen library staff instructors who teach over 100 sessions of the workshops each semester. These instructors are recruited from the entire library (librarians and non-librarians), including shelving, processing, and special collections staff. New recruits go through a standardized training process that includes a training session, observation, assisting, and then finally full teaching responsibilities. The instructors teach from a detailed lesson plan, and all of their handouts and worksheets are duplicated and made available for them.

Librarians who teach one-shot class sessions for specific faculty can choose to adapt a section or more of the Unravel workshops into their own sessions. Access to the handouts and lesson plans is available on the Web for them to customize relevant sections in a way that will work for their disciplines and instructional objectives.

The Unravel the Library workshop series consists of three workshops:

Unravel the Library 1: Orientation and Tour

Unravel the Library 2: The Research Process (the central workshop for English Composition)

Unravel the Library 3: Advanced Searching

A fourth workshop, Unravel the Library for Grads, was offered for several years and subsequently dropped from the series due to the increasing availability of alternative discipline-centered workshops offered by individual librarians.

These workshops will be discussed in some depth in subsequent case study sections in each chapter.

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