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Chapter I

Teacher-Designers: How Teachers Use Instructional Design in Real Classrooms

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INTRODUCTION

If you are a practicing teacher at any level—primary, secondary, or higher education—you already know quite a lot about designing instruction. Your work, prior to teaching a course, includes finding out what your students already know when they walk into the first day of class and determining what knowledge you hope they will gain by the end of the course. You design activities that enhance their new knowledge and allow them to practice with it. You plan tests that help the students demonstrate their newfound understanding. Every time you teach the course, and even at some points during the course, you make changes based on "how things are going" and later on you think about "what happened" throughout the course. The next time you teach the course, it is (hopefully!) much improved.

That is, in essence, exactly what instructional design is all about. But instructional design practices proceed from a more formal and systematic way of thinking about the teaching and learning process. Such systematic thinking helps designers focus on each component of the design process that ensures a successful design for learning.

Of course, if you have any experience with instructional design you know that the field and the various models of design associated with it seem most appropriate for teams of people working on the course materials together. Once in a while, some of us are fortunate enough to have instructional designers, subject matter experts, graphic artists, programmers and so on available on our campus or in our school district to assist us with our technology-enhanced course. But most often, it the teacher alone who must rethink and redesign his or her course for technology-enhanced learning. And very often it is the teacher who must also prepare the materials for the Internet, interactive television, or some other delivery medium. They often do not have any background in instructional design theory or practices and have only just mastered the skills for using the delivery medium. These are the people I call "teacher-designers."

This book is intended to provide teacher-designers with models, examples, and ideas for the practical application of instructional design for technology-enhanced classrooms. Those teachers with more background in instructional design or those who are working on staff development projects in this area will find the book useful as a resource for designing at all levels of education. This chapter is an introduction to the background of the field of instructional design, offers insight into how people become comfortable with technology, and presents a design model adapted for teacher-designers that may help you think about how to design for technology-enhanced courses as you read through this book.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS CHAPTER

By the end of the chapter, readers will be able to:

- Compare and contrast formal instructional design and the teacher-designer approach
- Select appropriate media and teaching strategies for technology-enhanced instruction based on intended learner outcomes
- Apply a modified design model for designing materials for technology-enhanced instruction

LEVELS OF TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

What is it about technology that makes some teachers run away in fear and others embrace every new instructional medium that comes along? Why have some teachers become "technology gurus" and others are still struggling