

Project Management in Instructional Design - Reflection

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Reflection

My outlook towards project management

As a credentialed Project Management Professional (PMP), my attitude towards project management is highly favorable. And this course further reinforced my belief that project management is essential in any profession regardless of the size or type of the project. In Instructional Design (ID) projects, project management guides the activities in each phase of the ID process, ADDIE (<http://raleighway.com/addie/>) or other ID process, and ensures unification of those processes; i.e., nothing is overlooked. Project management brings awareness of the relevancy of the ID project to all stakeholders involved; thereby enables the project manager (PM) to gain support and cooperation towards successfully completing the project.

The blending of project management and instructional design

I view project management as the integration piece of the instructional design processes. Referring to the ADDIE process for instance, the Analysis stage of instructional design identifies and documents the instructional needs. This stage blends with the Project Scope component of the planning stage described in (Portny, Mantel, Meredith, Shafer, Sutton, & Kramer, 2008, p. 79) as the Define phase of project management. The Design, Develop, and Implement stages of the ID process create and deliver the instruction according to the defined needs of the client/user/stakeholders. This second set of stages blends with the executing and monitoring/controlling of project management. This stage, defined in (Portny, et al., 2008, p. 80) as the Perform phase entails implementing the work of the project and monitoring to ensure the work is done according to the project scope. The Evaluation stage of the ID process evaluates the

effectiveness of the instruction/training. This stage blends with the Closeout phase of project management, specifically the “post-project evaluation” (Portny, et al., 2008, p. 404) aspect of this phase. As I have realized from this course, in an instructional design project, the project management and the instructional design processes are very much intertwined. The instructional designer in many ways, without realizing it, is managing his/her own project.

Further developing my skills

As a project manager, the majority of my time will be spent on communication for various reasons, with numerous stakeholders and team members at various levels, from different backgrounds, and with different personalities. Therefore, effective communication becomes critical to managing a project successfully. Part of effective communication requires me to be a skilled negotiator as well as be able to manage conflicts – two aspects of project management skills I would like to develop further. In my negotiation skills, I strive to achieve a “principled negotiation” level of skill, the objective of which is “to achieve what one is entitled to and still be decent in the negotiation process.” (Verma, 1996, p. 148). The principled negotiation approach is “hard on merits and soft on people.” (p. 148). In my conflict resolution techniques, I want to achieve the ability to effectively apply Blake & Mouton’s five styles of conflict resolution discussed in (Verma, 1996, p. 123): forcing, smoothing, withdrawing, compromising, and collaborating/confronting/problem solving. The ability to differentiate among these styles and recognize the circumstances in which they apply will be an invaluable skill.

Practical application

Given the trend in cost reduction, and lean and efficient operations of organizations, my guess is that an ID project whether in the education sector or in other industries, will be managed by the Instructional Designer him/herself; i.e., most organizations will not hire a separate project manager for ID projects. And so, my project management skills become crucial in successfully completing my ID project(s). In addition to managing my own ID project, I can introduce and establish project management processes in the organizations I serve (if such processes do not exist). Furthermore, I can serve as a project management mentor to colleagues in my organization by offering basic PM methodologies workshops, or by allowing colleagues to “job shadow” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_shadow) – work with me or observe my project management activities.

References

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