Influencing the design outcome

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Published online: 8 February 2021

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Abstract

Bennett et al.'s (2017) work on teachers design practices addresses the exact activities that teachers had to complete in order to quickly shift to a digital form of delivery. The pandemic required teachers to modify their pedagogical designs and deliveries to reduce the risk of harm to themselves and those in their care. For many, switching from one mode of delivery (i.e., face to face) to a digital format meant that the appropriate designs had to be sacrificed to meet deadlines. Deadlines which were, in most cases difficult to achieve. The following summarizes eight essays from scholars, researchers and practitioners all providing much needed guidance to support this pivot to the digital space.

Keywords Instructor design practices · Novice designer · Instructional designer · Reflection · Humanizing pedagogy · Culturally responsive · Flexible pathways · Non-systematic designs

Bennett et al.'s (2017) work on teachers design practices addresses the exact activities that teachers had to complete in order to quickly shift to a digital form of delivery. The pandemic required teachers to modify their pedagogical designs and deliveries to reduce the risk of harm to themselves and those in their care. For many, switching from one mode of delivery (i.e., face to face) to a digital format meant that the appropriate designs had to be sacrificed to meet deadlines. Here, defining “appropriate” for a digital format requires knowledge, planning and expertise to produce a pedagogic solution suited to the educational context. Bennett et al.'s (2017) provides a lens of what is “appropriate” through the mapping of experienced teacher's design efforts. These efforts demonstrated iterative, reflective and elaborative activities which were used to produce learnings. The study illustrated a model with detailed paths used to action an instructional design process regardless of discipline for both new and existing curriculum, thus outlining the complexity of the process, the skill required to execute and thoughts needed to act as driver to achieve learning outcomes (Goodyear 2015; Jonassen 2008).

The responses to this study highlight opinions that are grouped into two categories. These responses stayed true to Goodyear's (2015) statement that “design is not a panacea”

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(p. 28) and that with more planning and capacity to design there will be benefits for all of the stakeholders. The two themes are:

1. Those who design for learning: Here, Kanjanapongpaisal and Antee (2020) discuss the characteristics of the study's population that was not included (i.e., novice teachers) by asking key questions surrounding novice teachers and their design practices. Additionally, Lohman's (2020) response focused on those who typically assist teachers with these design activities. In her response, she discusses how to resource the support for these activities with instructional/learning designers (IDs) with the understanding that different needs require different approaches.
2. The practice of designing for learning: The responses here suggested when pivoting quickly to the digital space, design practices should include the use of systematic models and tools to support teachers in their development processes (Connolly and Hall 2020); have teachers deliberately reflect as part of the design process (Hrastinski 2020), use non-systematic design cycles (Lee 2020), include humanizing pedagogical and/or pedagogy of care (Karakaya 2020), consider culturally responsive designs (Engerman and Otto 2020) and create flexible pathways for teachers to engage in the practice of design (Galyen et al. 2020).

These responses address some of the considerations that teachers in all sectors struggled with, during the pandemic. Additionally, there are gaps in the literature where more support can guide these transitions:

- Measuring intent versus actual design practices (Whitford 2020)
- Contributions of design practices from parts of the world where the current research/literature is in other languages or rarely found in English publications
- Learning designs that use contextual weakness and turn them into achievable outcomes (e.g., environments with limited ICT infrastructure or weather patterns such as hurricanes or earthquakes)
- Designs that change cognitive constructs (Individual differences literature)
- Policies that can promote more professional development education for the teaching profession

All of these and more can close some of the gaps in the literature which can support these and similar situations, like the pandemic, in the future.

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Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

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