

Source: Diamond, R. M. (1989). *Designing and improving courses and curricula in higher education: A systematic approach*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. [pp. 89, 93, 96-100]

### ***Case Study: Instructional Design, Development, and Evaluation***

This graduate department, within the School of Education at Syracuse University, serves an extremely diverse student population that includes a number of international students, students who are returning to higher education after a number of years in business, industry, and education, and some who are entering the field directly after completing undergraduate degrees. In addition, the program that was to be developed needed to serve the needs of both full- and part-time students. While the faculty wished to rethink both their master's and doctoral programs, a decision was made to focus first on the master's degree since many of the elements of this program would become prerequisites for the more advanced degree. The small department of six faculty members decided not to begin work on the curriculum until everyone could participate, and as a result, plans were made to begin the project during the summer. By September, the design was ready for presentation to students and other faculty in the school.

To assist in the design process, a survey was developed and administered to alumni. A special insert for recent graduates and present students focused on the present program (see Exhibit 2, pp. 96–97). Whereas the basic instrument included questions on the importance of major program areas, on practical experiences that contributed to their education, and on their ratings of the importance of a number of professional and personal traits, the insert focused on advisement, admission procedures, placement, and assessment.

As faculty reviewed the data and discussed their own concerns about the existing program, several key issues evolved. These ranged from the need to provide exemption from certain elements of the program for those students who entered with related on-the-job experiences to the desire to develop a program that provided all students with basic discipline-related competencies in a manner that was both sequential and logical. For these reasons, the major focus of the initial effort was on the design of the core program, identifying what would be in it, in what order elements would be offered, and how it would relate to the areas of specialization that were necessary.

The sequence that was developed was interesting in a number of ways (Figure 16, pp. 98–99).

- A weekend retreat would be used to introduce the program, the major elements within it (development and evaluation), and the specific process or model upon which both would be based. It would also serve as an opportunity for the new students to meet the faculty and each other in a somewhat informal setting (A).
- One course, *Learning Theory*, would be taken before all others and serve as a base for what would follow (B).
- A number of skills would be developed within the core courses (C), and students having deficiencies in these areas would, at the conclusion of the introductory course, be required to take skill-building courses to improve these skills. In addition, the inclusion of these skills in the core courses would not be left to chance. Specific skills would be assigned for use on a course-by-course basis; that is, students would be required to use computers in certain courses and make formal presentations in others, and so on.
- The basic development model would be reinforced throughout the program by the use of case studies with the appropriate areas of learning theory and evaluation built into these same exercises (D).
- Running concurrently with the development core for full-time students and available sequentially for part-time students would be courses providing an overview of the field (E) and of instructional evaluation (F).

Several other courses are offered later in the core but are not shown in this figure. In addition, tracks of specialization were developed, and a preliminary assignment of credits was completed by the end of this phase, as shown in the lower left-hand corner of the figure.

**Exhibit 2. Questionnaire Insert for Recent Graduates.**

Instructional Design, Development, and Evaluation (IDD&E) || Recent Graduates Insert—Program Elements

A. How would you rate the *advisement* you received during your IDD&E program? (Circle the appropriate response and comment; give examples of effective and ineffective procedures.) (1-4)

	<i>Very Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	
1. Academic (courses, program) comments and examples:	1	2	3	4	5	(5) (6-8)
2. Career comment and examples:	1	2	3	4	5	(9) (10-12)
3. Dissertation comments and examples:	1	2	3	4	5	(13) (14-16)

B. 1. How would you rate the *admissions procedures* (including communications) at IDD&E? (Circle the appropriate response)

	<i>Very Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	
	1	2	3	4	5	(17)
2. Suggestions for improvement:						(18-20)

C. 1. How would you rate the *orientation* you received upon entering the IDD&E program? (Circle the appropriate response)

	<i>Very Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	
	1	2	3	4	5	(21)
2. Suggestions for improvement:						(22-24)

D. 1. How would you rate the *placement assistance* offered by IDD&E? (Circle the appropriate response)

	<i>Very Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	
	1	2	3	4	5	(25)
2. Suggestions for improvement:						(26-28)

E. 1. Please rate the effectiveness of the following assessment and appraisal methods used in IDD&E. (VI = Very Ineffective, N = Neutral, VE = Very Effective, NA = Not Applicable; Circle the appropriate response.)

	VI		N		VE	NA	
a. Master's comprehensiveness/intensives	1	2	3	4	5	NA	(29)
b. Portfolio (doctoral preliminary)	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
c. Doctoral qualifying exams	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
d. Dissertation proposal defense	1	2	3	4	5	NA	
e. Dissertation defense	1	2	3	4	5	NA	(33)

2. Please make any comments or suggestions on how we may improve assessment and appraisal methods at IDD&E. (34-37)

F. 1. How would you rate the general quality of the IDD&E program in terms of: (VP = Very Poor, P = Poor, F = Fair, G = Good, VG = Very Good; Circle the appropriate response.)

	VP	P	F	G	VG	
a. Intellectual stimulation	1	2	3	4	5	(38)
b. Academic/Intellectual freedom	1	2	3	4	5	
c. Collegiality with faculty	1	2	3	4	5	
d. Friendliness of support staff	1	2	3	4	5	
e. Camaraderie with other graduate students	1	2	3	4	5	
f. Opportunity to explore outside interests	1	2	3	4	5	(43)

2. Please make any comments or suggestions on how we may improve the general quality of the IDD&E program. (44-47)

**Thank you for your assistance!**