

# ONLINE COURSE DESIGN THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT STUDIO



## OVERVIEW

Drawing upon two instructional design approaches — rapid prototyping (Brown & Green, 2015) and collaborative course development (Chao, Saj, & Hamilton, 2010) — this study tested a novel instructional design (ID) approach, the Rapid Development Studio. The goal of the studio was for a team of co-located lecturers and learning designers to design a course for online or blended delivery within a tight timeframe.

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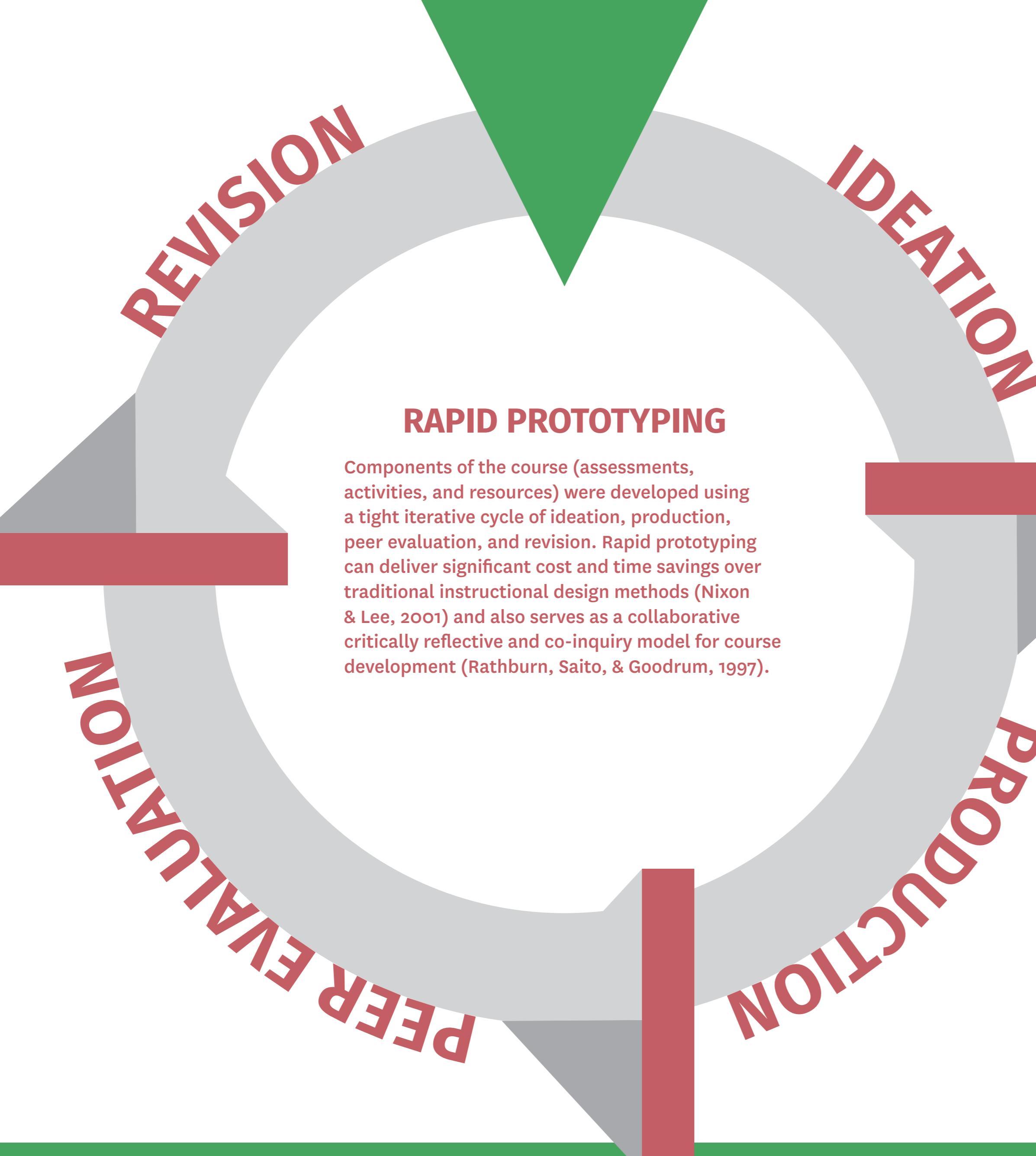
Day 1: All designers and teaching stakeholders (including faculty leadership) met to crowdsource needs, brainstorm potential directions, and roughly map the course structure.

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Days 2-10: Learning designers and teaching staff conducted agile prototyping of course components in semi-structured and fluid small teams. Regular all-team check-ins, milestone monitoring, and peer evaluations maintained overall course design cohesion.

3

Day 10+: Quality control and inclusive design checks were conducted and participants reflected on the overall process.



## METHOD

The Rapid Development Studio (RDS) was piloted with a postgraduate teacher education course, EDCURRIC 720: Teaching with Digital Pedagogies, aiming to take it from face-to-face to blended delivery within two weeks. Using a design-based research (Wang & Hannafin, 2005) and collaborative enquiry approach, we developed the course and conducted a thematic analysis of observations, field notes, and a post-studio participant survey of the RDS process.

### COLLABORATIVE & CO-LOCATED

The multidisciplinary team of learning designers and lecturers brought expertise, creativity, experimentation, and playfulness to the design process. In contrast to traditional instructional design, all participants were co-located in the same office space for the duration of the RDS.



The physical proximity between lecturers and designers from this “embedded” approach not only accelerated the course development but reconfigured teachers’ and designers’ perception of their roles in the creative process (Oliver & Dempster, 2003).

### PHYSICAL VISUALISATIONS

Two key physical tools / mediating artefacts (Conole, 2008) were used in RDS: a large scale course map visualisation and a shared task board. Features of the course map (such as its use of scale, colour, sequence, and spatial arrangement) facilitated the prototyping process and enabled collaboration at scale: it spread across the office space and enabled participants to “step into” the course, rearrange and configure the components quickly, and see the changes other participants and teams had made. The shared task board communicated progress, gaps, timelines, and upcoming tasks.



## CONCLUSIONS

Our research demonstrates that the Rapid Development Studio is a viable instructional design approach to combine rapid prototyping and collaborative course development in practice. Subsequent student evaluations of the online course were very favourable. Post-RDS questionnaire survey results show that it is positively perceived among both learning designers and teachers, particularly for its value in adapting a face-to-face course for online delivery in a tight timeframe.

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