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EDCI 672 – Dr. Paredes

Reflection on Developing ID Expertise

I. Case 1 – Beth Owens

Problem Finding

Summarize vs Synthesize

In identifying the ID challenges for this case, I primarily synthesized rather than summarized. For example, I noted that, "a large component of what Ms. Owens has been asked to do is bring in new students, and these potential new students are not part of the present learner profile. Little is known about the characteristics or needs of people who are not currently enrolled but may be enticed to join the program." This is a restatement of the details from the case, as this point is never stated. Instead, it is a conclusion drawn by synthesizing these details.

Principles vs Features

My analysis of this case focused more on abstract principles than specific features, such as the problem of incomplete learner analysis and the problem of identifying and incorporating elements of the program that are already successful. For example, I characterized another problem by explaining, "Ms. Owens is entering the project with preconceptions about different theoretical perspectives on learning and strong biases about instructional approaches."

Relationships among Issues

In prioritizing the design challenges, I attempted to specify the relationships between the issues, although the way I organized my priorities did not make this obvious. For example, to justify the last-priority issue, I wrote, "Ms. Owens is not being asked to improve this quality, just to keep it at its present level. Although it is important that she not make the program worse with

her recommendations, she cannot design based on this task. She will need to make decisions based on the constraints of the previous two challenges, ensuring that those decisions do not result in failure to meet this one,” making reference to the dependency between the challenges.

Reflective vs Reflexive

My problem finding in this case was somewhere between reflective and reflexive. I repeatedly mention the lack of information about potential students and what might attract them. I still feel that this unknown is profound, but I showed reflexivity rather than reflectivity in not proposing specific sources of information to gather to fill this gap. Despite this, I did manage to make some general hypotheses, such as, "Students may not be attracted to the program specifically because they do not want to work in a restrictive kitchen environment. However, some students may be interested in learning to cook for other purposes (e.g., opening a food truck, starting a cooking blog, etc.).”

Problem Solving

Relationships among Solutions

The solution I recommended in this case was simple but coherent. It based on what I saw to be the central issues, and connected the solution to the challenges directly, as in, "This solution is likely to improve retention by directly addressing the only clear cause for dissatisfaction with the program, the strict demands of the environment (particularly under Chef Reiner). It may attract new students who may have been previously turned off by the reputation of the program. This solution is also very feasible for the college to implement and is likely to be well-received by the faculty."

Consideration of Implications

I attempted to identify implications but my list was not exhaustive and I was not very specific about how they would be addressed. For example, I state, "Further, this is a very modest change compared to others that might be proposed. Potential resistance from the faculty is likely to be greater with most other solutions, such as Solution 2, which while it might be more effective at growing the program, would be so much harder to implement and face so much more resistance that it is not the recommended solution," which offers no plan for addressing the very serious possibility that the solution would not achieve one of its primary goals.

Rigid vs Flexible

My proposed solutions were flexible and did consider unknowns and unpredictable outcomes, although they were too general at times. For instance, I acknowledged that, "A more significant downside is that this solution may not grow the program to the degree desired. Some growth may occur based on the fact that students who previously would have been scared off may feel welcome. Since it does not change the nature or focus of the program in any radical way, it is unlikely to appeal to entirely new student populations."

Overall Rating - Medium. I identified what I still believe are the core ID problems. My solution was reasonable but only partially addressed these problems. More detail about the implications and possible ways to approach unknown variables would have made the solution stronger.

II. Case 2 – Jack Waterkamp

Problem Finding

Summarize vs Synthesize

My discussion of the challenges in this case relied heavily on summarization. For example, I wrote, "The pilot tested was supposed to be conducted simultaneously with the beta-testing of the software itself, but the software development is now behind schedule. Issues with the software are being discovered and modified, requiring changes to the curriculum during the period that it is supposed to be in testing." This is largely a restatement of details rather than a true synthesis.

Principles vs Features

Consistent with the emphasis on summary, the principles I attempted to identify were only partially abstract. For instance, I conclude that there "does not seem to be a plan for addressing late-stage changes to the curriculum," and that "there have been repeated communication problems," which are generalizations more so than theoretical principles.

Relationships among Issues

Although the issues themselves were not always articulated well, I did attempt to explain the relationships between them. For example, I described the connections between the first and second priorities and other contextual factors such: "Marketing has been advertising the new web-based training and creating expectations among clients, increasing the necessity of accomplishing this goal. In order to achieve this goal, some issues with project management will need to be addressed, making this second priority. It may be too late to make major changes to the plans but without some improved communication channels, it is unlikely that the team will be able to respond to challenges during the last month and a half of the project."

Reflective vs Reflexive

In this case, my analysis was reflective, not reflexive. Although I found the details of the case complicated, I focused on what was known and on moving forward from that point rather

than on unknowns. For example, I state that, "Jack has exercised some elements of project management, such as creating a charter and a communication plan for the project. However, communication issues have emerged that suggest that these plans are not being followed." Why the plans were not followed was unknown but I did not dwell on this as necessary for understanding the issues.

Problem Solving

Relationships among Solutions

My proposed solutions were cohesive and explicitly connected to the issues they address. The relationships between parts of each solution were also explained: "At this late stage, Jack does not have the time or resources to radically change procedures. However, in order to have an accurate curriculum ready at the time of product launch, Jack's team must be able to respond nimbly to any remaining changes to the product. To do so, changes must be communicated quickly to the relevant stakeholders, and establishing even a simple plan for communication will help ensure that this occurs. It will be particularly necessary for Jack to brief Melissa on how to frame the pilot-testing to her trainers."

Consideration of Implications

In this case, my analysis of the implications was fairly thorough and was used to distinguish between optimal and less optimal solutions, as since in my statement that, "Solution 2 is less ideal because it introduces additional complications, such as rescheduling and being less prepared for the pre-launch orientation, while still leaving open the possibility that there will be inaccuracies during pilot-testing."

Rigid vs Flexible

My recommendations are flexible, recognizing that outcomes were uncertain. For example, I acknowledge, "This will not be a particularly satisfying solution for his team, who will still have to redo their work under pressure, but if Jack can show his ability to improve communication between stakeholders, it may improve their outlook for future projects."

Overall Rating – Medium. I struggled with problem finding and although I recognized the major issues, I did not categorize them correctly and my descriptions were fairly low-level. However, my solutions addressed the problems directly and the consequences of the solutions were analyzed in thorough detail.

III. Case 3 - Peer Case 1 – Tina Sears

Problem Finding

Summarize vs Synthesize

In this case, my description of the problems synthesizes more than summarizes. Rather than repeat details from the case, I focused on the issues they represent. For example, I characterize problems with conclusions as, "stakeholder concerns were not initially clear," and "Tina either underestimates the importance of the evaluation, lacks experience with program evaluation, or both."

Principles vs Features

Similarly, I identified abstract principles rather than relying on the details of the case. For example, I described one issue with the case by explaining, "While it is possible that the program will start boosting scores now that the teachers are more familiar with it, it seems more likely that the ITBS scores will continue to disappoint. The laptops are being used to engage students in

complex problem-solving, to support student writing and other product creation, and to build technology proficiency, but these are not skills that are required on a pen-and-paper standardized test of basic reading and math skills.”

Relationships among Issues

My analysis mentioned relationship between issues, but these relationships were not described in great detail: "If this goal is not met, the program will be defunded. In order to achieve this goal, Tina and Dr. Colm will likely need to address the issue of viewing standardized test scores as the ultimate measure of student achievement, since there is a strong likelihood that test scores will not differ in the second evaluation due to poor alignment with the learning outcomes of laptop use."

Reflective vs Reflexive

Although gathering information about stakeholder concerns is a suggestion I made, I was specific about what kinds of information to seek. Reflectively, I did not let lack of information prevent me from describing and approaching the problem concretely, as illustrated in this suggestion: "Prior studies and program evaluations have found these to be major sources of learning from laptop programs, so Tina may be able to demonstrate improvement by measuring change in these domains."

Problem Solving

Relationships among Solutions

My proposed solutions are described in terms of how the various components work together, including chronological and causal relationships. For example, I outline, "By collecting as much data as possible on how the laptops are being used and how they have changed teaching

and learning, Tina and Dr. Colm's team can address as many of these concerns as possible. This could garner wider public support of the laptop program, which may persuade Mr. Cook to expand the program even if the test scores do not show significant improvement."

Consideration of Implications

I identified a number of implications for both solutions and attempted to address them when possible. For instance, I acknowledged the potentially less apparent concern that, "A final possibility is that Tina will not find evidence of student learning even with more diverse measurements. This could signify that the program is not actually effective, despite perceptions, in which case the defunding would not be a major loss."

Rigid vs Flexible

My solutions are flexible, acknowledging possible obstacles and suggesting multiple paths for addressing them: "The biggest risk with this solution is that Mr. Cook will continue to emphasize the ITBS, especially since the ITBS is unlikely to show significant change. Given the emphasis that policy makers generally give to standardized testing, this is a distinct possibility. However, his initial intention in funding the program was to improve student learning, not to improve test scores. If Tina can gather evidence from other concrete performance measures, she can assure him that students are benefitting. Evidence that last year's students are now excelling in 6th grade would be particularly powerful."

Overall Rating – High. Although some portions of the analysis could have been elaborated on further, I identified what I believe to be the major problems, described them appropriately, and proposed solutions designed to address those problems as fully as possible.

IV. Case 4 – Peer Case 2 - Iris Daniels

Problem Finding

Summarize vs Synthesize

In this analysis, I primarily synthesized the case into issues rather than listing the details. For example, I bring details together in concluding, "The international members of the consortium must agree to the design, so Iris must consider their needs both in the design of the web-based training and in how she communicates that design to the consortium."

Principles vs Features

The synthesis of the case was aided by emphasizing abstract principles over concrete features of the case, such as when I explained, "These issues were initially unanticipated, which slowed down the design process. Although Iris has now identified that differences exist, it is not clear that she fully understands what these differences are yet. This will make it harder for Iris to determine how to work successfully with this team."

Relationships among Issues

I noted the relationships between the issues in prioritizing them: "This relates to the second priority of figuring out how to communicate effectively with the international team, which will be especially necessary if she decides to put forth a design that will be very novel for them. The instructional design challenge is Iris's task, but the difficulty of this challenge comes from the case-specific issues. If she does not address them first, she will not be successful in getting approval for her design." As in this example, my statements about the relationships were fairly general.

Reflective vs Reflexive

My analysis shows some reflexivity in commenting on unknowns: "The members of the consortium have different perspectives on what is appropriate for the training, not all of which are known yet, and it is unlikely that Iris will be able to gain their consensus without recognizing this." I did not specify how information could be gathered but do make specific hypotheses despite the unknowns, for example, "Iris is still working with this international audience, so she must similarly consider that not everyone will be comfortable or familiar with common American models. Members may not agree to training that strays too far from what they are used to, and failure to recognize cultural differences may decrease the efficacy of the training for international learners."

Problem Solving

Relationships among Solutions

In this case, my proposed solutions were not developed in much detail. I made connections to the issues each solution addressed but there is a lack of specificity within the parts of each solution. As in this example, this was exacerbated by my focus on unknowns: "Given how little was agreed upon at the first meeting, developing a prototype might be premature. Presently, little is known about other members' vision for the training. . . . By making another attempt to gather information, Iris may be better prepared to address and anticipate concerns when she does present a prototype."

Consideration of Implications

I considered implications of the solutions, but the implications tended to be general, corresponding with the generalness of the solutions themselves. For instance, I propose, "This approach might be more effective with Jacqueline than discussing the prototype in a meeting,

since she may prefer to make decisions outside of a public meeting rather than within one. It also gives Iris the chance to get to know and better understand the positions of the other members before forging ahead with a design of her own.”

Rigid vs Flexible

My solutions are flexible and I discuss some possible outcomes, such as when I explain that, "Time does not seem to be a major factor in this project, since it has been going on for some time and there are no hard deadlines, but there may be some inconvenience involved, especially if more consortium meetings end up being required. Still, there is no guarantee that having a complete prototype would be quicker, since the team might react poorly to it. Iris can compensate for a less developed prototype with a prototype that requires fewer major revisions because input has already been given.” However, the solutions may at times border on too flexible, due to the perceived lack of information.

Overall Rating – Medium. My understanding of the core problems seems accurate in hindsight and I described these issues based on principles. However, the solutions, although appropriate, were less successful because they were not as specific as they could have been. My analysis of this case was rushed and I think this is reflected in my failure to develop the solutions further.

V. Action Plan for Moving Forward

My action plan for continuing to develop ID expertise revolves around gaining experience. One takeaway from our discussion about expertise was that there is only so much you can learn and so well you can master a skill without practicing it in context. I noticed the influence of my own experience, and lack thereof, when analyzing and then reflecting on these

cases. I felt more comfortable analyzing cases from familiar contexts. Fortunately, I do not think that context had a significant impact on my ability to problem-find, which is a sign of progress made so far. However, based on this reflection, I feel that the specificity and thoroughness of my problem solving was affected by experience. The best way to do this will be by gaining genuine experience through branching out in the types of projects I take on in an effort to become more well-rounded in my knowledge. This includes reading about ID in other settings than those I am currently working in; in addition to staying alert for compelling articles online, I plan to read more the other cases from our text, particularly those from the corporate ID section.

I also believe that taking on projects involving multiple stakeholders will help me develop my ability to understand and respond to stakeholder concerns, something which I consistently found challenging when analyzing these cases. So far, most of my ID experience has been self-initiated, with other stakeholders having only a slight interest. Studying these cases has emphasized to me how different it is to work in a context where stakeholder concerns other than your own are paramount (and may conflict with each other). I am really looking forward to my practicum next semester as an opportunity to hone these skills.