The Accidental Instructional Designer
Learning Design for the Digital Age
Cammy Bean

Book Group Discussion Guide
chapter 1: On Instructional Design and E-Learning Pie

1. How did you get into the field? Was it by accident?

2. Cammy states that well-rounded e-learning professionals need to be versant in the four pieces of the e-learning pie: learning, creativity, technology, and business.
   - What goes into each of these pieces from a skills and competency perspective?
   - Which piece of the pie is your strongest? Why?
   - Which piece is your weakest?
   - What are you going to do to strengthen your weakest piece? Do you think that’s even necessary? Why or why not?

chapter 2: Why Design Matters

1. Describe the key qualities of something that has been well designed.

2. How can you apply those qualities to your instructional design and e-learning projects?

chapter 3: Working With Subject Matter Experts

1. What challenges have you had when working with subject matter experts (SMEs)?

2. What tips can you share about getting the most out of an SME’s time?

3. How can you make sure that your vision is aligned with your SME’s vision?

chapter 4: What’s Your Design Approach?

1. Cammy says that the three main reasons we create training content are to inform or raise awareness, improve knowledge and skill, and solve complex problems and change attitudes or behaviors. Think about the training content you create. Into which bucket does most of your content fall?

2. Do you have a favorite design model that you like to use when designing training? For which of the three main reasons does that model work best?

3. Cammy outlined many different instructional design models in this chapter. What other design models do you use?
chapter 5: Finding Your Hook

1. Describe a memorable training experience (online or classroom). What pulled you into the experience and kept your attention?
2. What hooks have you used in your own design work?
3. Can you give any examples of hooks that didn't work at all? Do you know why?

chapter 6: Interactivity That Counts

1. Cammy coined the term “clicky-clicky bling-bling” (CCBB) to describe meaningless flash and glitz. CCBB is often used to spice up online courses in the hopes of making them more engaging. Have you ever seen CCBB in the wild?
2. How do you define CCBB?
3. What can you do to avoid CCBB?

chapter 7: Writing Better E-Learning

1. Think about an online program that you've taken or even helped design that might have been a bit boring.
   • What made it boring?
   • What's one thing you could have done to make it more interesting or engaging?
2. Consider the tips for writing that Cammy covered in this chapter. What's one thing you could do better in your own e-learning scripts?

chapter 8: It's All in the Story

1. Do you think using stories makes a difference in the quality of training programs?
   • What types of stories work best?
   • Are there any downsides to using stories?
2. Tell a story about the best training experience you've ever had. What can you learn from your own training story?
3. How do you get the best stories for your content? How do you try to make content that is more memorable and engaging?
chapter 9: Looking Good

1. Do you agree with the notion that looks really do matter in online learning programs?
2. Are you happy with the look and feel of the programs your organization currently creates?
3. Does the look and feel of your organization's online programs align to your brand and overall culture? Why or why not?
4. What barriers and hurdles do you need to overcome to create more visually engaging online content?

chapter 10: Mixing It Up

1. Technology changes so quickly. What new technologies and opportunities have you seen recently that could be applied to the work you do in learning and development?
2. Think about some of the apps and tools you use in your personal life. Could they somehow be a part of a blended program that supports long-term learning and real behavioral change?
3. Do you think it’s important to stay on top of tech trends? How do you stay current with so many shiny objects out there?

chapter 11: Secret Handshakes

1. Let’s talk learning theory and learning theorists. List all the learning theories and theorists that you have ever heard of. (Feel free to name drop.)
2. Now, show what you know. Can you explain each theory? (You may want to assign team members to do a little research on different theories and then report back.)
3. What theories do you want to explore more?
4. Do you have a favorite theory that you like to describe when you’re talking to other people about instructional design work to prove that you know your stuff? (It’s OK—we all do this!)

chapter 12: Taking It Forward

1. What have you been doing to keep your skills and knowledge up to date? Do you have any favorite books, websites, people, conferences, or organizations that you always turn to?
2. Describe one thing that you want to do differently to create more compelling and engaging content and programs.
3. Describe one thing that you want to do to create more intention in your practice and profession.