

Can you describe the types of strategies you have used in your experiences when creating a time management plan when starting a new project?

Time management in projects, and budget control as a result, you know, because budget and time, same thing in many cases, it's really tricky. And it depends on what you want to do with it. It probably depends on the complexity of your project. I mean, you can get time management software, you can get team management software, you can get all kinds of stuff that will help you break down projects into infinite numbers of many tasks and subtasks. And then you can Gantt chart them out. And so how many weeks will be devoted to this? And how many hours to that? And by person? And what role they play? And then by person what they're doing and track that. I tried that early on with the less complex projects, but still dramatically important projects that we were doing with our classes. I had people filling out spreadsheets at one point. So every time you would do 15 minutes of work, I wanted you to track it, because I wanted them to get a sense of how much time it takes to do good instructional design, Nobody really realizes that it's one of those hidden things, doing good instructional design is expensive. And it's expensive, because it takes time. But I found that pretty quickly, to be an abysmal failure and a waste of time for me. I'm sure that my team members were going ahead and doing the work. And then at the end of the week, when they had to file their time reports, going in and filling them out, you know, quickly and trying to remember how much time. I'm sure they tried to do the best they could, but I wouldn't give you two cents for the accuracy of those things. And there are all kinds of political reasons why people would want to make their spreadsheets look puffier than other people. So I just found it to be an unnecessary thing in the kinds of things we were doing. I didn't need that kind of detail. But what I needed was that clear definition of roles. And within teams, I wanted people to say, "I'm going to do this, and this is my job, and I will deliver on it." And commit to that. And no excuses. There's no bailing out. If you commit to this, you've got to deliver. Everybody's depending on you, that's part of that intensity piece. I think getting hung up on models, whether it's an ID model, like ADDIE, or, you know, time management models, or project management models like Gantt that you can use, I think we can get hung up on those models. And I think that can impede the project as much as it can help it, because we'll try to fill in all the boxes. But sometimes you don't have to. Sometimes you know who those users are going to be and you know them well enough to know to get on with it without spending two weeks trying to sort it out doing detailed learner analysis. I know that I'm speaking sacrilege here in some areas. But I think that there are a lot of times when we do things because we think we have to, because models say that's an important thing. Well, it can be an important thing. But it isn't necessarily depending on the context you're in. You can do unnecessary things, you can miss things that are specific to this particular project, because it's not in the model. I go back to one where a particular kind of observation was used. This wasn't even a project I worked on, but I've read about. It was a museum project where they just observed people in museums for a while, (and wondered) "How do people use museums? How do they move through museums?" And they found out that they could classify them by three kinds of people; Studiers, strollers, and streakers. You know, people who would really study read every little thing. Strollers, who just kind of wandered through a museum and then some people who just motored through a museum from beginning to end. And you would want different kinds of experiences that would satisfy each of those different kinds of motivations that people have. Well, I thought that was fascinating, because I had never really thought about doing that. Now we could say that's part of a user analysis, and it could be, but I've never seen anything quite like that, you know. And I just

thought that's something we might miss if we get hung up on particular models and understandings of certain kinds of things. By the way, I am not arguing that these tools are not useful. They are useful. They're wonderful actually, and especially if you have complex projects with a lot of accountability, for budget, particularly to clients. So I'm not saying don't use them, I'm saying, judge where you need them and how you need them, and then use them intelligently.