



*The
Instructional
Designer's*

GUIDE to
**PROJECT
MANAGEMENT**

DR. GUIESWENDE ROUAMBA

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Veronique Rouamba: Thank you for your unwavering love and belief in me. Your encouragement gave me the confidence to dream big and pursue what once seemed impossible.

To mothers everywhere who give selflessly every day, this is for you.

And to my father: Your example of creativity, perseverance, and love for learning continues to inspire me.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	vii
Foreword.....	ix
Introduction.....	xiii
What This Book Offers.....	xvii
PART ONE.....	1
Chapter 1. The Fog of Instructional Design	3
Chapter 2. Leveraging Psychology for Instructional Design Success.....	7
Chapter 3. Improving Communication with the Transactional Analysis Framework	15
Chapter 4. Applying Positive Psychology to Instructional Design Projects	23
Chapter 5. Managing Conflict and Tensions in Instructional Design Projects	31
Chapter 6. Part One Conclusion	41

PART TWO 43

About this Part. 45

Chapter 7. The Joy of Being Hired 47

Chapter 8. The Reality of the Position 50

Chapter 9. Week One - Project Initiation 58

Chapter 10. Week Two - Project Planning 71

Chapter 11. Week Three - Execute 84

Chapter 12. Week Four - Monitor 92

Chapter 13. Week Five - Technologies. 101

Chapter 14. Week Six - Closing 110

Chapter 15. What Really Matters 117

Chapter 16. Where Instructional Design Meets
Project Management. 123

References and Resources 127

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FOREWORD

In the rapidly evolving landscape of learning design, the role of instructional designers has never been more critical. As learning environments become increasingly complex and expectations for digital education continue to rise, those responsible for creating engaging educational experiences face mounting challenges. Whether designing university courses or developing learning solutions for corporate environments, instructional designers are at the forefront of educational innovation. While many university and certificate programs focus on teaching instructional design through learning theories, technological tools, and pedagogical strategies, they often neglect a crucial component: project management.

When Guieswende Rouamba first approached me about reviewing his manuscript, I was immediately struck by how he had identified a significant gap in instructional design education and practice. As someone who has spent my career working with and mentoring instructional designers, I've witnessed firsthand the struggles that

arise when strong design skills aren't paired with equally strong project management capabilities. I've seen brilliant instructional concepts falter in execution, not because of flawed design, but because of challenges in coordination, communication, and scope management.

What makes Rouamba's approach particularly valuable is his recognition that project management in instructional design isn't merely about timelines and task lists, although these are certainly important. Rather, it's fundamentally about people and relationships. The psychology of team dynamics, the neuroscience behind motivation, the art of communication, and the power of positive leadership are all woven throughout this book, offering a rich tapestry of insights that extend far beyond traditional project management techniques. This human-centered approach is equally relevant whether you're designing an online course for a university or developing a comprehensive training program for a corporation.

I particularly appreciate the book's narrative structure, which follows Bob, a newly appointed leader tasked with managing multiple instructional design projects simultaneously. Through Bob's journey, readers witness the transformation that occurs when project management principles are applied to course design processes. The story resonates because it reflects challenges that so many of us have faced: navigating team dynamics, managing

stakeholder expectations, addressing scope creep, and finding ways to maintain quality despite tight timelines.

Rouamba doesn't shy away from the realities of instructional design work, the political tensions that can arise within teams, the resistance to new processes, and the constant pressure to deliver more with less. Instead, he offers practical strategies for navigating these challenges while maintaining focus on what truly matters: creating impactful learning experiences.

The integration of psychological frameworks like the SCARF model and transactional analysis provides a deeper understanding of why projects sometimes stall and how to move them forward. Meanwhile, the structured approach to project phases, from initiation to closing, offers clear guidance on implementing effective processes without becoming overwhelmed by complexity.

As we look to the future of instructional design, it's clear that technology, particularly artificial intelligence, will play an increasingly prominent role in our work. Rouamba acknowledges this reality, exploring how AI can enhance project management capabilities while reminding us that technology should serve as a partner to human creativity and expertise, not a replacement.

Whether you're an instructional design student, faculty developing course content, instructional design staff in higher education, a learning experience designer in the

corporate sector, or a leader responsible for guiding design teams, this book offers valuable insights that will help you approach projects with greater confidence and effectiveness. It bridges theory and practice, combining educational principles with project management fundamentals in a way that is both accessible and actionable across diverse learning contexts.

In an era where educational innovation is constantly accelerating, the ability to manage complex instructional design projects efficiently and effectively is no longer optional; it's essential.

This book provides a roadmap for developing that ability, offering a blend of practical wisdom, evidence-based strategies, and real-world applications that will serve readers well in their professional journeys, regardless of their specific educational context.

I'm honored to introduce this important contribution to the field of instructional design, and I believe it will help shape how we prepare and support the instructional designers of tomorrow.

Tawnya Means, Ph.D.

June 2025

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, I was on a search committee for hiring an instructional designer. One of the interview questions was: “Can you describe a time when you managed a complex instructional project from start to finish? What project management tools or methods did you use to keep the project on track, and how did you handle any unexpected challenges?”

Surprisingly, most candidates could not answer this question. Their résumés showed impressive experience; some even had more than ten years of experience. Yet, they couldn’t answer that question.

That moment made me reflect on my own journey as an instructional designer. I have a decade of experience as an instructional designer for public and private universities, hold a Ph.D. in Instructional Design and Technology, and have taught courses in instructional design. I have also published several papers and delivered many presentations about instructional design at various conferences. Yet,

despite my extensive experience and expertise, I seldom encounter information about project management and its applicability to instructional design. In fact, it wasn't taught in my master's or doctorate courses at all. Instead, these programs focused on learning theories and instructional technologies. Looking back, it seems like a grave disservice to ignore the program management aspect of instructional design.

Fortunately, early in my career, my friend Dr. Michel Tinguiri, who always had great insights, suggested I look into project management. Reluctantly, I did, and it was a game-changer. I quickly realized I could use project management principles to streamline my course design processes and improve my outcomes and my working relationships with subject matter experts (SMEs). In fact, project management theories and processes transformed not only how I approached instructional design but also every other project I tackled. Suddenly, what used to feel overwhelming became manageable. I began to stand out among my peers, and I was finishing instructional design projects ahead of schedule.

In his book, *What I Wish I Knew Before Becoming an Instructional Designer*, Dr. Luke Hobson emphasizes that instructional designers must be able to lead projects effectively. This idea is echoed in numerous research studies, which highlight the growing need for project management skills in the field. Yet, despite this, project management is

rarely explicitly taught to instructional designers. This book aims to bridge that gap by connecting project management to instructional designers in a practical, accessible way. In this book, you'll discover tools, techniques, and strategies to manage your projects more efficiently and effectively. By integrating project management principles into your design process, you'll be better prepared to navigate challenges, stay organized, and deliver impactful learning experiences.

WHAT THIS BOOK OFFERS

Project management can seem like a vast, complex field, but this book is your guide to navigating it with clarity. Whether you're managing your first instructional design project or looking to refine your approach, this book will help you work smarter and achieve better results. This book is short, practical, and immediately applicable. Each chapter is focused and to the point, with real-world examples to help you put theory into practice.

This book delivers two key benefits to help you become an effective and confident instructional designer project manager.

First, this book will help you save time and meet your deadlines. Managing instructional design projects can be time consuming, especially when you're juggling multiple courses and tight timelines. This book provides strategies to streamline your workflow so you can complete your course design projects on time.

Second, this book will help you build collaboration skills and navigate challenges more effectively. Project management is as much about working with people as it is about managing tasks. You'll learn to collaborate more effectively with subject matter experts, colleagues, and stakeholders. You'll also learn how to foster teamwork and manage yourself and others to ensure that your projects run smoothly.

You'll want to refer to this book often, especially when you're first learning to apply project management principles to your work. It offers actionable advice that will help you refine your processes and spark new ideas.

This book is divided into two parts.

- **Part One** highlights common challenges and the unpredictable nature of instructional design projects. It also explores ways to use psychology to manage the interpersonal aspects of your projects, navigate relationships, and resolve conflicts because yes, there will be conflicts.
- **Part Two** focuses on integrating project management strategies into instructional design. To bring these strategies to life, you'll meet Bob, a faculty member who's recently been promoted to a supervisory position on an instructional design team. Through Bob's journey, you'll encounter relatable scenarios and see the

practical applications of project management principles as they pertain to instructional design. This engaging narrative will help you see how the tools and techniques of project management can be seamlessly integrated into your work.

This book is for anyone involved in instructional design. Whether you're a student preparing to enter the field, a new instructional designer building foundational skills, or a seasoned professional looking to refresh your approach, this guide offers tools and strategies that will help you. While many of the examples in this book come from university settings, the principles are relevant across various settings, including corporate training, government, nonprofit, and K-12 education. Whether you're managing projects, collaborating with SMEs or leading course development initiatives, this book will help you streamline your processes, stay organized, and get projects done with less stress.



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