Chapter 6

An Intrinsic, Quantitative Case Study of WebCT Developers

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Learning Objectives

1. Describe the research question or problem in the introduction.
2. Summarize in your own words orally or in writing the gist of the literature review, including the theoretical framework to support the questions, problem, or need.
3. Describe the gist of the methodology, including:
   a. The participants [e.g., level, prerequisites, prior knowledge of the dependent variable under consideration, motivation to learn (intrinsic better job, etc.)]
   b. The materials in depth [e.g., online, tools, software utilities, workbooks, writing materials, verbal instructions, etc.]
   c. The research design [e.g., hypotheses, sampling method] variables [e.g., dependent, independent]
   d. The instrumentation [e.g., written test, time stamping, dribble files, interview questions, written work, method of segmentating protocols, etc.]
   e. The procedure [e.g., “the procedure in this study followed those suggested in previous studies of this kind (reference),” and summary]
4. Describe the gist of the results, including:
   a. The methods used in collecting the data
   b. The methods used in analyzing the data
   c. Pre-test results of prior knowledge
   d. Predisposition to study style or modality
   e. Post-test results of treatment effects
   f. Delayed or retention test results

5. Write a brief statement:
   a. Linking previous research to the results arising from the analyses of the data
   b. Conclusions of the study
   c. Contributing factors
   d. Implications of the study
   e. Limitations of the study
   f. Recommendations, and a summary

6. State whether or not the references in text and in the list follow the current APA standard.

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**Abstract**

An intrinsic case study investigated the claim that distance educators at an Eastern Canadian college (n = 17) with some knowledge of instructional design but a limited technical knowledge could, without human support, use Web-course management tools to create sophisticated online educational environments. Results of the study showed that these participants needed more assistance in both technical and design aspects of Web-course management than currently offered in the tools and help in the Web management systems. Phase theory was introduced as a teleological taxonomy that describes Web-course management based on the educators’ intuition, personal preferences and prior educational experiences with Web-course tools (Mann, 1999a, 1999b, 2000). The principles and underlying assumptions of the theory are discussed in the light of current capabilities and recent research.

**Background and Statement of the Problem**

At the time, there was a range of Web-course management tools used by colleges, universities and training organizations around the world that aspire to offer students a comprehensive online distance education. These included LearningSpace (Lotus Corporation, 1998), Virtual-U (Harasim & Calvert, 1997), TopClass (WBT Systems, 1997), eWeb (ECT, 1997), and WebCT (Goldberg, 1997). Such systems provided a marking