

A Grounded Theory Exploration of the Ambiguous Career Transition from Instructional
Systems Design to Performance Improvement

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Abstract

A Grounded Theory Exploration of the Ambiguous Career Transition from
Instructional Systems Design to Performance Improvement

Davina Davies

Instructional designers often navigate ambiguity in their professional journeys towards performance improvement. Although there are many similarities between the two professions, there are also important differences. Most notable is that instructional designers tend to focus on learning-based solutions, while performance improvement practitioners take a broader approach that may include training as just one aspect of their proposal in solving a business problem. This study explores the experiences of professionals who successfully adopted this broader approach and, through their stories, seeks to understand what made the transition successful. Their journeys were captured using an adapted version of Robert Atkinson's life story interview technique, and the data was analyzed using Kathy Charmaz's constructivist grounded methodology. The result was a selection of four emergent themes.

These emergent themes and their underlying categories led to a model that captured the ambiguous ID-to-PI transition. This model suggests three immediate actions that serve as a guidebook for instructional designers seeking to move into performance improvement. These actions are: (1) Build a collection of performance stories, (2) Be an active member in a performance-focused professional organization, such as the International Society of Performance Improvement, and (3) Find your performance lens to see the world.

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This model is then simplified to resemble Carl Binder's Performance Chain®. Finally, the ID-to-PI career transition is mapped out with Binder's Performance Chain® and Six Boxes® for business results, work outputs, behaviours and behaviour influences in hopes of making the journey from ID to PI less ambiguous.

Keywords: Performance Improvement, Instructional System Design, Instructional Design, ID-to-PI career transition, ISPI, Charmaz, and Constructivist Grounded Theory

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My participants, the insights I've gained through their career stories have provided me with a depth of wisdom that feels like living multiple lifetimes.

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The International Society of Performance Improvement (ISPI).

All the giants of this profession, on whose shoulders we stand.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to:

My life partner, Oliver, whose love, patience, and understanding have made this academic journey possible. Your unwavering support has been a constant source of strength and inspiration, and I am forever grateful for your presence in my life.

My mother, who is the most resilient person I know. You've taught me to always look on the bright side, fight for those I love, and start every day with a smile. Thank you for the sunny disposition you've given me.

My father, who was my rock, my hero, and my lifelong cheerleader. You gave me the courage to take on the world and embrace life. Thank you for always believing in me, even when you didn't understand me. You are very much alive in my memories. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think of our weekend adventures exploring the outdoors and your consistently solid advice. I will always cherish those precious years when our roles were reversed, and I had the great honour of caring for you.

Dr. David Davies 1933-2011

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List of Symbols and Acronyms

®	
®: <i>Registered Trademark</i>	6
6	
<i>6-box analysis: Carl Binder's Six Boxes®</i>	127
A	
<i>ADDIE: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation</i>	23
<i>AECT: Association for Educational Communications and Technology</i>	12
<i>ASTD: American Society of Training and Development</i>	9
<i>ATD: Association for Talent Development</i>	9
B	
<i>BEM: Gilbert's Behavioral Engineering Model</i>	2, 188
C	
<i>CAI: computer-assisted instruction</i>	13
<i>COVID-19: Coronavirus disease 2019</i>	187
<i>CPT: Certified Performance Technologist</i>	18
G	
<i>GT: Grounded Theory</i>	2
<i>GTM: Grounded Theory Methodology</i>	44
H	
<i>HPT: Human Performance Technology</i>	10
I	
<i>IBM: International Business Machines</i>	13
<i>ID: Instructional Designer</i>	1
<i>IDs: Instructional Designers</i>	11
<i>ID-to-PI: Instructional Design to Performance Improvement</i>	1
<i>ISD: Instructional Systems Designer</i>	5
<i>ISPI: International Society of Performance Improvement</i>	10

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N

<i>NDEA: National Defense Education Act</i>	14
<i>NSPI: National Society for Programmed Instruction</i>	17

P

<i>PBS: Public Broadcasting Service</i>	13
<i>PDF: Portable Document Format</i>	71
<i>PI: Performance Improvement</i>	1
<i>PI Lens: Performance Improvement Lens</i>	132
<i>PIs: Performance Improvement Professionals</i>	11

Q

<i>QDA: Qualitative Data Analysis</i>	85
---------------------------------------	----

R

<i>ROI: Return-on-investment</i>	29
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T

<i>training box: 'Skills and Knowledge' from Carl Binder's Six Boxes®</i>	36
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U

<i>UCSF: University of California, San Francisco</i>	45
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Introduction

This study explores the ambiguous career transition of instructional designers (IDs) as they become performance improvement (PI) professionals. In this introduction, I will summarize the structure of my thesis, touch on some of the challenges of its production, and examine how my personal experience influenced the study.

As a practicing instructional designer my job is to partner with subject matter experts to build learning experiences that add value. I approached my research as I would any work problem - by seeking out experts. I consider myself very fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from the six participants that volunteered for this study. Their generosity and willingness to share their career stories made describing and analyzing the ID-to-PI transition possible. This model led to three immediate actions that an ID should undertake to begin their journey, and creates the foundation of a detailed map of the ID-to-PI career transition. This project would never have come to fruition without the thoughtful and patient guidance of my thesis supervisor, Dr. Richard Schmid.

A Journey in Five Chapters

This thesis is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides background, formally introduces the problem I hope to address, and describes the basics of how I set out to do so. Chapter 2 is the literature review. Parsing the mountains of potentially relevant academic writing that touches on my topic was challenging; instructional design and performance improvement are fields rich in both high-level scholarship and thoughtful self-reflection. To focus in on the ID-to-PI transition, I decided to limit this chapter to three main topics. First, I survey the history of the two professions, examine their origin stories, and explore their similarities and differences. Next, I look into the broadening of an instructional designer scope from just training to the

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performance system using Gilbert's Behavioral Engineering Model (BEM), and subsequently Carl Binder's Performance Chain® and Six Boxes® Model. Finally, the literature review covers the research methodology I used to conduct the study: Kathy Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory. I survey the parent methodology, Grounded Theory (GT), and then explain why the constructivist approach's ability to leverage the active participation and influence of the researcher in the construction of their research made it the perfect choice for my work.

Chapter 3 delves into everything leading up to and including the collection of data. I begin with a recap of the study's purpose, followed by an explanation of the rationale behind my methodology and interview tool choices. Next, I catalog the materials needed, tell the recruitment story, explain the data collection process, and close the chapter with a summary of interactions I had with the participants before, during, and after the interview process.

Chapter 4 picks up the study's narrative where chapter 3 left off, moving from data collection to data handling and analysis. I begin cataloging and processing the study's results with a description of perhaps the most challenging phase of the entire project: interview transcription. Once the transcripts were loaded into a tool to facilitate analysis, line-by-line coding began, which eventually resulted in theoretical categories and themes. This chapter ends with a map documenting those categories and themes that I use to draw my conclusions.

The journey toward a complete description of the ID-to-PI transition comes to a close in chapter 5. My discussion begins with revisiting the map of categories and themes, and then moves into the selection of the four most important emergent themes that came to light during the study. Next, I examine how these themes can be fitted together into a model that describes the ambiguous career transition undertaken by IDs as they become performance improvement professionals. This model reveals three immediate actions available to an ID seeking to begin the

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journey, and these actions form the foundation of a detailed map of the ID-to-PI career transition.

To check the strength of my findings, I discuss its transparency, reliability, bias, and rigour.

Next, I simplify the model for practical use, and note its resemblance to Carl Binder's

Performance Chain®. With this set-up complete, I answer my research questions, mapping out

the ID-to-PI career transition and using Binder's Performance Chain® and Six Boxes® to

reinforce my own framework. Finally, I make recommendations for future research and close

with some final thoughts.

This study originates with my desire to learn more about what performance improvement professionals do, and what steps I could take to move my career towards that realm. That desire and curiosity are the driving motivations behind this research; I was an instructional designer who wanted to embark on the ambiguous career transition towards performance improvement. I didn't know where to start, so it seemed only natural to use my graduate degree research to find out. Working on this study has taught me that every career story is unique: there is no one path for instructional designers to follow as they transition toward performance improvement, but there are guiding principles that can improve the odds. This Master's thesis is designed to draw that map, and make the journey from ID-to-PI less ambiguous for instructional designers as fascinated by the transition as I am.

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Chapter 1: Background

Imagine having the opportunity to meet with an industry leader and simply listen as they recount their career journey. Over the course of this research study I was fortunate to be in this very privileged position not just once, but six times.

This Master's thesis is the culmination of a six-year deep dive into the ambiguous process that instructional designers undertake as they strive to become performance improvement professionals. Over the course of participant interviews, a literature review, extensive analysis, and unexpected challenges like the advent of a global pandemic, I have sought to make an original contribution to the scholarly body of knowledge that describes this complex career transition.

My thesis begins here, with a brief description of my goals and intentions. I first address the problem my work seeks to solve, then examine the purpose of the research, including the research questions that I will address. I also provide a glimpse of what is already known about the problem, and how this study will address that prior knowledge. Lastly, I describe how this all will unfold.

The Problem

This study started with a very personal problem: I was an instructional designer interested in performance improvement, and unsure how to navigate towards it. From my point of view, the ID-to-PI career transition was a mystery. The process was ambiguous, hard to chart, and even harder to explain. This realization forms the core of my master's thesis: I wondered if it was possible to systematically examine the career transition from instructional design into performance improvement and map out the process in a way that might be useful for others embarking on the journey. The problem this research seeks to solve is the identification and

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categorization of the often ambiguous, complex, and interlinked behaviours of instructional designers (IDs) who successfully transitioned to performance improvement (PI).

The Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the ambiguous career transition of instructional designers as they become performance improvement practitioners. The research sets out to look at the experiences, or “career stories,” of professionals who successfully made this transition, and through them understand the influences and behaviours that made the process successful.

The Research Questions

My study was guided by the overriding research question, “what are some immediate actions that instructional designers can take to begin their career transition from instructional designer to performance improvement?” Additional research questions, designed to further clarify the process, are:

- ii. What are the results of an ID-to-PI transition?
- iii. What are the outputs instructional designers produce that contribute to the overall result?
- iv. What are some common behaviours that successful Performance Improvement consultants took to transition from ID-to-PI?
- v. What are the most common influences of behaviour?

What is Known

Previous research in ISD and PI looks at many elements related to this topic, but do not specifically focus on the transitional experience of individual instructional designers as they make the change. For example, in research that explored an organization or department, authors usually looked at individual instructional designers in the context of a team or organization’s

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shift from training to performance (Fuller & Farrington, 1999; Gilbert et al., 2014; Phillips, 1999; Robinson & Robinson, 1995, 2006). Other research explored the schemata differences between novice and expert instructional designers in great detail, but without reference to singular experiences (Ertmer et al., 2008; Fortney & Yamagata-Lynch, 2013; Le Maistre, 1998; Perez & Emery, 1995; Rowland, 1992). In their book chapter *Cousins but Not Twins: Instructional Design and Human Performance Technology in the Workplace*, Foshay et al. do a wonderful job comparing the two fields (2013). Though illuminating in many ways, none of these studies set out to specifically describe the steps or actions that an individual practitioner could take when transitioning from instructional design to performance improvement.

Addressing the Problem

In order to shine a light directly onto the ID-to-PI career transition and map the journey, I recruited study participants who had successfully navigated the process. Using an adapted “life story interview” technique I collected and sorted through the commonalities in their experiences. Armed with a grounded constructivist methodology based on the work of Kathy Charmaz, I took into account both the participants’ experiences and my own influence on the research. Categories and their overarching themes emerged, and I encapsulated a selection of key themes into a model. This model is a systems view of the ambiguous career transition from ID to PI and, among other things, it answers my first research question by identifying the immediate actions an instructional designer can take to propel their career towards performance improvement.

It turns out that my model resembles the work of giants in the field who came before me, most notably Carl Binder. Simple modifications to my model overlap it with Carl Binder’s Performance Chain® and Six Boxes®. Using these tools, I answer the remaining research questions and thereby propose an overall description of the ID-to-PI transition.

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How This Study Unfolds

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature that already exists on this topic, and navigates the history of both professional fields. With a historical viewpoint secured, I review the similarities and differences of both professions and explore some popular frameworks that the disciplines use. I also explain the theoretical approach I chose for analysis. Chapter 3 details the practical design of my study, and how I went about the interviews. Chapter 4 describes what I did with the mountain of data I collected, both in the form of participant stories and the challenges I met along the way. Chapter 5 pulls it all together, starting with insights gained from my participants' stories and a discussion of my selection of emerging themes. Next, I introduce a fully-conceptualized model that explains the entirety of the ambiguous career transition process. I then answer the study's research questions by applying a well-known set of tools. Many challenges presented themselves over the course of the study, and my final step is to identify them not just as limitations, but as exciting avenues of possible future research.

Conclusion: Background

There are some fundamental pieces at the core of my thesis. First, the underlying motivation to embark on a research study in the first place, and the fortitude to continue through unexpected challenges. The driving force behind this was my genuine interest in exploring how I, and people like me, could navigate from instructional design to performance improvement. Next, the giants upon whose shoulders I stand. These are the researchers, authors and practitioners that contributed to the field thus far. I've spent six years immersing myself in their thoughts and ideas, and I've just barely scratched the surface. Thirdly, my methodology and interview tools. Both provided a solid foundation as I stumbled through the research process. At the same time, they also gave me the space to make them my own. Finally, the people; my

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generous participants and patient supervisor. Having performance improvement leaders candidly share their career stories was an unbelievable privilege that was not only the ground in which this study's seeds grew, but has also greatly influenced my own professional path. There would be no data without my participants, and there would be no study without my supervisor's patience and guidance.

Completing this thesis has been a journey all on its own, and I am excited to present its findings, beginning with the literature review. There is no better place to begin delving into the ambiguous career transition between ID and PI than in the conflict and rapid historical changes that gave birth to the two professions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the literature relevant to the three elements that underpin the entire study; definitions of instructional design (ID) and performance improvement (PI), the ambiguity inherent to the transition from the former profession to the latter, and an introduction to my chosen research methodology. In the hope of better understanding the professions being studied, I begin by providing an overview of the current definitions of instructional design and performance improvement, and examine their history. With a historical perspective established, I next discuss the similarities and differences between the professions and review some frameworks that support the real-world transition from ID to PI. Lastly, I introduce Grounded Theory research methodology in general, and take a closer look at the specific version this study uses to examine the ambiguous ID-to-PI transition; Charmaz's Constructivist Grounded Theory.

ID and PI: What are they?

Before studying the transition from instructional design to performance improvement, it is useful to understand the professions themselves. This section of the literature review begins with the definitions current at the time of writing, followed by a high-level historical overview of both professions, and a comparison of their most salient traits.

Current Definitions

Making sense of the ambiguity between ID and PI first requires an understanding of what they are. The most logical place to begin is the definitions published on the websites of the American-based membership organizations that support the two professions: the Association for Talent Development (ATD, formerly known as ASTD - American Society of Training and Development), and the International Society of Performance Improvement (ISPI). ATD defines

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an Instructional Systems Designer as: “An individual who applies a systematic methodology based on instructional theory to create content for learning” (*ATD Glossary*, n.d.). ISPI defines Performance Improvement as:

Performance Improvement (PI), initially called Human Performance Technology (HPT), is the systematic approach to improving productivity and competence – the key to global competitiveness. Although training and education are critical to increasing competitiveness, meeting the educational challenge is only part of the answer. An effective human resource system requires a focus on performance aligned with an outstanding learning system. To improve performance, we must manage the human performance improvement system. That system must be the core of an organization's human resource efforts if it is to maintain its competitiveness in the long run. (*Our Profession*, n.d.)

ISPI's definition is thorough, but somewhat lengthy. James Pershing offers a more succinct definition in the *Handbook of Human Performance Technology: Principles, Practices, and Potential*: “The study and ethical practice of improving productivity in organizations by designing and developing effective interventions that are results-oriented, comprehensive, and systemic” (2006, p. 6). Dana and James Robinson offer an even more accessible definition: “The science of improving human performance in the workplace through the analysis and design, selection, and implementation of appropriate interventions” (1998, p. 5-6).

ISD and PI share behavioural roots and a systems approach, but differ in their methodology and frameworks (Foshay et al., 2013). These commonalities may facilitate the transition that some instructional designers make into performance improvement, and the differences could likewise explain the ambiguity of this career transition. These current

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definitions provide an overview of the two professions at the core of this study, but a historical point of view is a necessary first step in defining the transition from one to the other.

ID and PI: Origin Stories

Throughout their history human beings have been sharing information, and teaching one another skills. According to Hodell, “life is learning” (2021, p. 4), and if people are learning, they are performing. Successful performance of key survival tasks is quantifiable, and humans have always sought methods that might improve that performance. In their timeline, Sleezer et al. (2015) chronicle learning, training, and performance starting in the stone age, where technical skills passed from one generation to the next were examples of learning, and the development of tools was an example of performance improvement. Present-day IDs and PIs are a natural evolution of this process in both the literal and metaphorical senses of the word.

The History of Instructional Design. Paul Saettler and Robert Reiser broadly divide the history of instructional design as a specific style of human performance improvement into two parts; “instructional media” and “instructional design” (2001a, 2001b). This distinction chronicles the independent development of these two main facets, and does much to explain how instructional design eventually became a unified field of study (Reiser, 2001a, 2001b).

Instructional Media. Reiser defines instructional media as “physical means, other than the teacher, chalkboard, and textbook, via which instruction is presented to learners” (2001a, p. 55). According to Reiser, the first use of instructional media in the US occurred in Missouri circa 1905, taking the form of portable exhibitions of school museums that supplemented their curriculum (Reiser, 2001a; Saettler, 1998). Five years later, New York State implemented instructional films as part of their curriculum. These steps kick-started a visual instructional movement that morphed, along with the subsequent development of sound and radio technology,

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into the audiovisual instructional movement (Reiser, 2001a). While the world grappled with the Great Depression, instructional media took another big step forward when three professional organizations merged into what we now know as the AECT (Association for Educational Communications and Technology). The impetus for this merger was a new central focus on “educating pre-service and in-service teachers to integrate the new media into their instruction” (*AECT In the 20th Century: A Brief History*, n.d.).

Instructional media was used heavily in World War II, and although research was not a priority, anecdotal records show that it reduced training time without sacrificing effectiveness (Reiser, 2001a). An example of this anecdotal evidence can be found in a quote from William Kietel, German Chief of General Staff, following the German surrender in 1945: "We had everything calculated perfectly except the speed with which America was able to train its people. Our major miscalculation was in underestimating their quick and complete mastery of film education" (Olsen & Bass, 1982, p. 33).

With wartime pressure removed, this success prompted formal research into audiovisual learning principles (Reiser, 2001a). In the 1950s and 60s instructional television became a prominent feature in both school systems and among the general public. The technology was new to many, but most segments were delivered primarily by instructors on a chalkboard (Reiser, 2001a). Although the popularity of television instruction diminished rather quickly, it left long-lasting benefits: (i) understaffed schools were empowered by bringing in expertise - for example in math and science - via television, and (ii) public broadcasting channels, such as PBS, survived even after the television instruction age of the mid 20th century (Reiser, 2001a). Today these channels are an open classroom for the public instead of a specific curriculum. According to its

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website, PBS is “America’s largest classroom, the nation’s largest stage for the arts and a trusted window to the world” (*About PBS | PBS About*, n.d.).

Audiovisual learning tools led in turn to computer-assisted instruction (CAI). Pioneered in the 1950s by IBM researchers, this practice became prevalent in schools with programs like Logo in the 1980s (Reiser, 2001a). Some visionaries predicted computer-assisted instruction much earlier, but their ideas were often ridiculed; the first statement of Logo founder Seymour Papert’s website once read; “People laughed at [me] in the sixties when I talked about children using computers as instruments for learning and for enhancing creativity” (Papert, n.d.). The ideas of the original proponents of instructional media would eventually be vindicated by technology’s rise to total ubiquity today.

Instructional Design. Instructional design began in the United States with the end of World War II. At this point, soldiers who were experienced in audiovisual “mass-training” returned home eager to learn the skills needed to enter the workforce (Molenda, 2009). At the same time, those who designed and developed mass audiovisual training for these soldiers likewise entered the workforce, creating a flood of innovation that boosted education and training as a key part of developing job competence (Molenda, 2009).

By mid-century, this momentum resulted not just in the increased use of instructional media, but in a new approach to systematic instructional design focusing on behavioural learning psychology and systems theory (Foshay et al., 2013). Several other factors influenced this cultural shift, with the main two being:

- i. The school system had to grow to meet the needs of a rapidly-growing baby boomer population. This growth demanded new, modern schools, and caused

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frequent shortages of qualified teachers (Molenda, 2009). Mass training practices were perfectly positioned to both teach students and train teachers.

- ii. In 1957 the world was shocked when the Soviet Union beat the United States into space by launching Sputnik, the first orbiting satellite (Reiser, 2001b). This event ignited a crisis in math, science, and language education in the United States. New legislation called the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was passed, earmarking hundreds of millions of dollars for the education of young Americans by “creating the infrastructure, people and hardware for a systems approach to the design and implementation of instruction” (Molenda, 2009, p. 56).

Together, these factors resulted in a series of forward leaps in the theory underpinning instructional design toward the modern form we know today.

The Merger of Instructional Media and Design. This modern form of instructional design comprises the application of “a systematic methodology based on instructional theory to create content for learning” (*ATD Glossary*, n.d.). The resulting learning experience may include or omit the use of various technologies.

Modern instructional design is a merger of instructional media and design. Today, instructional design is just one element among many that fall under the umbrella of improving human performance. To get a deeper understanding of the ambiguous career transition from instructional design to performance improvement, it is useful to look at the history of performance improvement.

The History of Performance Improvement. With the history of instructional media and instructional design as context, the rise of Performance Improvement can be brought into focus. An understanding of PI’s historical development and examination of its most popular theories

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also serve to frame the rationale for this study's examination of the transition from one to the other.

Thomas Gilbert is often referenced as the “father of HPT” (Brock, 2019, p. 21; Dean, 2008, p. 83; Farrington, 2012, p. 27; Tosti & Kaufman, 2007, p. 5), as well as an early “pioneer of our performance improvement profession” (Brock, 2019, p. 21). This is a fair characterization; many of his ideas, most notably the Behaviour Engineering Model (BEM) “enable us to look at the range of factors that help improve performance” (Dean, 2008, p. 83), and have widely influenced subsequent academics and industry professionals, causing a piggy-backing effect that ushered forward the advancement of the PI profession (Dean, 2008). As one of the founders of the precursor to the International Society of Performance Improvement (ISPI), and through professional partnerships with the likes of B.F. Skinner and Geary Rummler (Dean, 2016), Thomas Gilbert “took us far beyond training toward a rigorous, observation-based approach to improving performance” (Dean, 2016, p. 30).

Though very influential, Gilbert is not the only pioneer present in the early history of performance improvement. Tosti and Kaufman highlight this oversimplification of the origins of PI in an article titled “Who is the ‘real’ father of HPT?” by stating that they “respectfully disagree - and think he [Gilbert] would have too” (2007, p. 5). This article is the first of three, published in 2007 and 2008 in *Performance Improvement*, exploring the history of Human Performance Technology (HPT), which this study treats as synonymous with performance improvement. By sharing different historical perspectives, the articles sought to capture an image of the industry as a whole, rather than as the brainchild of one man. In the final article, Roger Chevalier quotes Isaac Newton; “If I have seen further it is by standing up on the shoulders of giants” (2008, p. 6).

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To get a robust overview of the history of PI, it is necessary to examine a variety of innovators. In subsequent sections, I will explore the work of some of these “giants” in order to get a deeper historical understanding of what makes PI a unique field. I start with behaviourism, then look at the interconnectedness of academia and industry, proceed to measurement and evaluation, standards, codes of ethics and certification, and close with some giants of recent history. The conversation begins with a giant: B.F. Skinner.

Behavioural Psychology. A common thread in research about PI is the importance of American psychologist and behaviourist B.F. Skinner. Tosti and Kaufman summarizes the origin of PI as follows; “If we were forced to point to a single initiator of HPT, it would probably be B. F. Skinner, with the publication of *The Science of Learning and the Art of Teaching* in 1954. But the development of the basic principles that Skinner articulated into a far-reaching technology was the work of many” (2007, p. 5). Skinner, together with his colleagues and students, studied applications of behavioural psychology in the improvement of learning, and his discoveries eventually grew to influence attempts at improving workplace performance (Day, 2016). Tosti and Kaufman define all HPT pioneers as “working with a fundamental set of behavioural and system principles and struggling to expand and apply them to all aspects of human performance” (2007, p. 8).

Interconnectedness. Tosti and Kaufman echo many historical accounts of performance improvement, agreeing that it was a system in itself, where many people were “working at the same time on similar issues within the field” (2007, p. 6). As people moved on from a handful of university programs they “found themselves crossing paths again as academic colleagues, business partners, or competitors, not infrequently encountering the same people in all three roles” (2007, p. 6). This interconnectedness accelerated both the learning and performance fields,

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with advancements stemming from sources as varied as avant-garde university programs, and forward leaps in military systems and computer-assisted instruction (2007). Geary Rummler elucidates the theme of interconnectedness in his personal account, *The Past is Prologue: An eyewitness Account of HPT* (2007). Through his thirty-year journey, Rummler conceptualizes the birth of PI as a sort of renaissance of people all moving in the same direction from different points of origin. Rummler estimates the frame for the discovery of HPT as between 1958 and 1969, after which “the rest of the world has been learning and applying the important notions developed in the 1960s as they were slowly made public through various publications, presentations, and workshops” (2007, p. 5). He postulates that this lag between discovery and adoption existed because, unlike the culture of the hard sciences where progress was abundantly documented and published, “capturing an accurate history of HPT is difficult because so much of the critical history of the field is buried deep in the relatively unpublished activities of the 1960s” (Rummler, 2007, p. 5). Regardless, the interconnectedness of academia and industry led to the birth of the ISPI’s forerunner, the National Society for Programmed Instruction (NSPI).

Does Performance Improve if it is Not Measured? As the opening of this origin stories section suggests, both learning and performance improvement have been around a lot longer than B.F. Skinner. Roger Chevalier explores the origins of performance improvement by going further back in history in his article “A Brief History of Performance Improvement”, quoting William Tompson (1824-1907) as saying “if you can't measure it, you cannot improve it” (2008, p. 6). This aligns with Lloyd Homme, a colleague of Skinner, whose focus on results helped build the “foundation of our culture of change work” (2007, p. 6). Carl Binder describes today’s application of measurement and evaluation in workplace culture as a driver for decision making: “We measure and monitor performance over time to determine whether our goals are being

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achieved and at what rate. And we decide, based on feedback provided by measurement, whether (and sometimes how) to change conditions when our goals are not being met” (Binder, 2009, p. 3). Evaluation and measurement will be touched on again later in this chapter when comparing the two professions.

Standards, Code of Ethics, and Certification. A final important innovation has been the recent advent within the performance improvement field of formalized standards, certification, and ethical expectations. Chevalier identifies the introduction of the Standards of Performance and Code of Ethics at ISPI’s THE Performance Improvement Conference in 2001 as a watershed moment in this process (Chevalier, 2008). Certification as a “Certified Performance Technologist” (CPT) was first offered by ISPI the year after standards and codes of ethics were introduced (Chevalier, 2008), and added a layer of codified legitimacy to the PI job title. The certification requires practitioners to commit to the code of ethics and demonstrate the application of its standards (ISPI’s Certified Performance Technologist, n.d.).

More Recent Giants. The giants upon whose shoulder performance improvement innovators stand are not all historical figures. More recent innovators include Tom Gilbert, who is often referred to as the founder of HPT, and best known for his book *Human Competence: Engineering Worthy Performance*. Some of his most notable contributions will be discussed later in this chapter. According to Tosti and Kaufman, Gilbert believed that people had “all or most of the necessary responses for many performances in their behavioral repertoires” (2007, p. 7) and therefore performance improvement was not necessarily about learning something new, but “increasing the likelihood of selected behaviors or establishing a particular sequence of actions” (2007, p. 7). Gilbert was less focused on competency, and more interested in “fluency of

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performance” (2007, p. 7), a foundational concept for the PIs that transitioned from ID in this study.

There are too many recent giants to list, but as will become obvious in chapter 5, all of my participants were touched in some way by recent thought leaders via academic study, industry experience, and through a professional organization where the two intersect; the International Society of Performance Improvement. Some of these influences were developed entirely through the consumption of content, with articles and books being the most common mediums. Other forms of influence developed in a similar way to the mid-century interconnectedness described by Kaufman and Rummier (2007). Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the recent giants influenced emerging generations of professionals through collaboration and mentorship. Gilbert, along with some of the authors most referenced in this section; Donald Tosti, Roger Kaufman, Geary Rummier, and Roger Chevalier, are unfortunately no longer with us. Their commitment to the community, however, ensures that a new generation of giants will emerge to continue to elevate the field as it enters the next phase of its history.

ID and PI: Cousins, Not Twins

ID and PI professionals approach their tasks in different ways, but this does not mean the two fields should be regarded as entirely separate. In the *Handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology*, Foshay and his co-authors define the relationship as “cousins but not twins.” As “cousins,” ID and PI “share a common analytical framework drawn from operations research and common origins in behavioral psychology” (Foshay et al., 2013, p. 40). Foshay et al. (2013) summarize these similarities as: evidence-based practices, standards and codes of ethics, certification, systemic and systematic approaches, and the practice of evaluation (although the strategy with which evaluation is measured differs).

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Performance Improvement stands as a separate field from instructional design, however, because although commonalities exist between the professions, there are also definitive differences. The differences that make ID and PI cousins rather than twins are found when comparing their frameworks and methods (Foshay et al., 2013). As shown in *Table 1*, reproduced from Foshay et al. distinguishes ID and HPT frameworks and methods by research base, systems view, core processes, performance analysis, cause analysis, intervention selection, and measuring results (2013).

Table 1 *Foshay et al.'s Summary of Comparing ID and HPT Frameworks and Methods.*

	ID	HPT
	Frameworks	
Research base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDs employ behaviorist, cognitive, and constructivist approaches, with behaviorism largely eclipsed. • Evolution includes ID theory, methodology, and project management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HPT practitioners employ largely behavioral approaches, with exceptions lying in the use of cognitive psychology in the area of performance support for knowledge work. • Evolution influenced by both ID and other non-training fields. • Performance systems comprised of interacting components operating at multiple levels: individual, team, organization, enterprise, and society.
Systems view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional systems comprised of learners, objectives, methods, and evaluation (Morrison et al., 2007). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance systems may include instructional subsystems.
	Methods	
Core processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDs use different variations of the ADDIE model to create instructional systems. • IDs may choose to use rapid prototyping and participative design to decrease development time while improving quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HPT practitioners use the HPT model to close gaps between actual and desired performance. • Aside from the development of performance support systems and eLearning, HPT practitioners typically do not employ rapid prototyping.

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	ID	HPT
Performance analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis in ID presumes an instructional solution to a given problem or opportunity. • Analysis activities include the specification of broad learning goals, learner characteristics and workplace contexts, learning hierarchies, and job tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HPT practitioners begin with understanding the required performance and its organizational setting. They will analyze the organization and the larger environment. • They will specify a gap between existing and desired performance and make sure the gap is worth closing before proceeding further. • Having aligned a performance gap with organizational business goals and determined that the gap is worth closing, HPT practitioners will conduct a cause analysis to identify environmental and individual sources of the performance gap.
Cause analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In presuming an instructional solution to a given problem or opportunity, analysis in ID does not investigate causes of a performance gap. • The closest that IDs get to cause analysis lies in determining whether learners should be able to use job aids during their training and in the workplace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conducting cause analyses, HPT practitioners use a troubleshooting sequence that investigates environmental sources of the gap before investigating knowledge and other sources of the gap lying in the personal repertory. • Deliver workplace performance in ways that meet organizational missions and business goals. In workplace settings, HPTers will employ a solution-agnostic process to ensure they understand performance requirements and causes of performance gaps before they create solutions to close them.
Intervention selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create effective learning as learning is good, and more learning is better. In workplace settings, training serves this learning function. • Focuses on the selection of training media and perhaps job aids. • Training is viewed as the default solution to any gap between actual and desired performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HPT practitioners match the interventions they select to the sources of a performance gap arising from a cause analysis. • As interventions that address environmental sources of performance gaps tend to be less expensive and faster to create, HPT practitioners will use them in place

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	ID	HPT
		of interventions that address the personal repertory when they can.
Measuring results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If conducted, evaluation focuses on the extent to which the training delivered some sort of return on the organization’s investment. • Isolating effects of training is an important part of a credible evaluation report. • Often conducted contrary to Kirkpatrick’s and Phillip’s guidance to start at higher levels and work backwards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolating out the effects of training within a larger HPT intervention interests some HPT practitioners but not others. • May use a Kirkpatrick/Phillips model if decision-makers are interested in the return on their investment in training, but will do so in the order these authors recommend, beginning with higher levels and working backward. • Will use program evaluation approaches to investigate other questions decision-makers may have.

From “Cousins but Not Twins: Instructional Design and Human Performance Technology in the Workplace” by W. R. Foshay, S. W. Villachica and D. A. Stepich in J. Michael Spector, M. David Merrill, Jan Elen and M. J. Bishop (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology* (Vol. 1–Chapter 4, p. 41), 2013, Springer New York (https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3185-5_4).

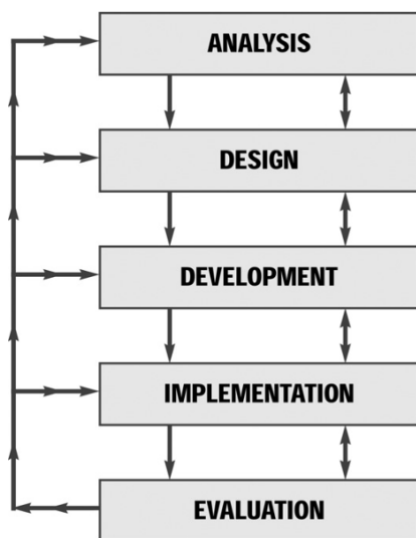
This section of the chapter will focus on three key differences that best explain the transition from ID to PI; the models behind the core process, a peek into what a systems view means for each profession, and how the two professional fields approach measuring results. The most foundational of these differences will be examined first: the use of the ADDIE model for instructional design, and the HPT model for PI practice.

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Core Processes: ADDIE and HPT Models. Instructional designers tend to use ADDIE or one of its many variants to deliver training-based solutions, while performance improvement consultants leverage the HPT model to distinguish between current state and ideal performance (Foshay et al., 2013). The differences between these specific systems are revealing of the overall distinctions that separate ID and PI.

ADDIE Model. ADDIE is a sequential and iterative model frequently used by instructional designers (Molenda, 2003). It is an acronym for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation (Tamez, 2016). Instructional designers use ADDIE to analyze and design learning experiences, and it serves as a guide to managing the development, implementation and maintenance of learning (Foshay et al., 2013). As shown in *Figure 1*, an instructional designer following ADDIE does an upfront analysis, designs and develops training based on that analysis, and then follows with formative and summative evaluation (Weersing, 2012).

Figure 1 *ADDIE Model*



From “In search of the elusive ADDIE model” by M. Molenda, 2003, *Performance Improvement*, 54(2), p 41 (<https://doi.org/10.1002/pfi.21461>).

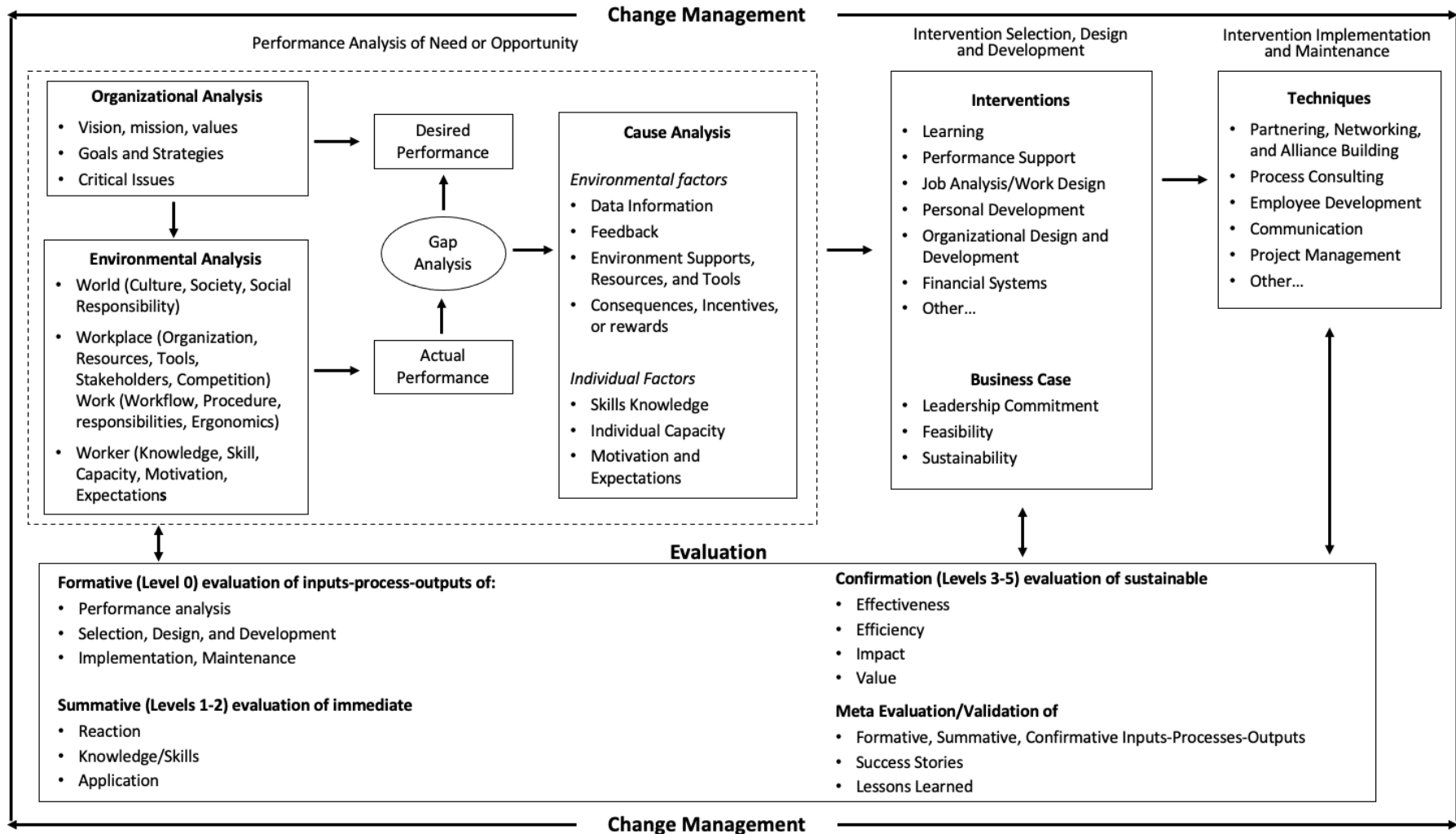
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In a fashion similar to other design-oriented professions, like software engineering and architecture, instructional designers adapted this once linear methodology to a cyclic process and agile way of working (Silber & Foshay, 2009). Though this model seems similar to how a PI might tackle a project on a surface level, important differences emerge when examining the alternative; the HPT Model.

HPT Model. The HPT model seems similar to ADDIE; there is an analysis of needs, design and development of a selected intervention, implementation and maintenance of it, and then evaluation strategies. Both ADDIE and the HPT model have a system view with similar steps, but “their language and focus are different” (Dessinger et al., 2012, p. 11). As illustrated in ***Figure 2***, reproduced from Kirkpatrick, 2017, page 7, the scope of the HPT model is much larger than ADDIE’s because “it is designed to meet the broader requirements of performance improvement practitioners and the organizations that seek their help” (Dessinger et al., 2012, p. 11), rather than adopting a training-oriented approach to all problems (2012).

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Figure 2 Performance Improvement / HPT Model



From “Understanding the Role of Vision, Mission, and Values in the HPT Model” by S.A. Kirkpatrick, 2017, Performance Improvement, 56(3), p.7 (<https://doi.org/10.1002/pfi.21689>).

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The HPT model is almost a living system, and is regularly updated to reflect changes in the performance improvement field (Dessinger et al., 2012). The purpose of the model is to “illustrate the steps needed to function as an HPT practitioner and accomplish performance improvement in the workplace” (Dessinger et al., 2012). Performance consultants leverage the HPT model in the analysis of organization and environment, identify gaps in the performance of workers, and propose interventions to address those gaps (Kirkpatrick, 2017).

Although the ADDIE and HPT models have similar categories and use a systems view, the way in which instructional designers and performance consultants use their models, and the resulting output, differ substantially.

Viewing Systems Differently. As discussed earlier, instructional design and performance improvement share a systems view. An ID’s systems view, however, concentrates on “the acquisition of specified knowledge or skills” (Foshay et al., 2013, p. 43), while a PI’s focus rests on “producing performance systems that promote the consistent performance of a specified job or task in ways that meet organizational expectations” (Foshay et al., 2013, p. 43). Given the broader scope of the system a performance consultant views, it is worth looking deeper into the outputs of those systems.

The Worthy Output of Having a Systems View. The differences in systems view output between IDs and PIs can be viewed in the scope of their work, particularly in the context of their foundational frameworks. One of Tom Gilbert’s major contributions as the “father of HPT” was his performance system, the Behaviour Engineering Model (BEM), a framework which positions six interdependent elements working together (Foshay et al., 2013) to achieve “consistent performance that meets organizational expectations” (Foshay et al., 2013). An instructional designers’ focus on *Skills and Knowledge* does reside within the BEM’s much wider scope of

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performance influencers but is limited to one of the six categories. In Gilbert's model, the key to performance improvement is managing performance (or work) effectively (Gilbert, 2007). This idea is echoed by Timm Esque, who writes, "steering clear of problems, identifying problems that do arise early on, and resolving them so they do not occur again is what managing work is about" (Esque, 2002, p. 8). The management of work proves to be a key factor in defining the increased output of the PI systems view, and how it positively distinguishes itself from the more narrow ID approach. A complete definition, therefore, requires an accurate understanding of how work is managed.

Managing Work: Distinguishing Between Behaviour and Accomplishments. Work is managed by focusing on accomplishments rather than maintaining a dogmatic focus on training as a one-size-fits-all problem solver. Performance improvement has separated itself from instructional design with its reliance on the understanding that training doesn't necessarily change the output of behaviour (Binder, 1998). *Knowledge and Skills* are one category of behaviour influences (Binder, 1998), but PI specialists recognize that a training intervention on its own may only change their subject's knowledge base, not what they are actually accomplishing on the job. In his leisurely theorems, Tom Gilbert defined accomplishment as the output of behaviour (Gilbert, 2007). This focus on "product of behaviour rather than the behaviour itself" (Binder, 1998, p. 48) was paramount to the performance field, and why Gilbert is often referred to as the "father of HPT" (Tosti & Kaufman, 2007). Gilbert's behaviour engineer model proposed that "nothing is more critical to creating competence than establishing clear, valuable and measurable goals, and determining the potential for accomplishing them" (2007, p. 73). This results-driven approach is a notable refinement of the instructional design focus on producing training products as ends in themselves.

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To manage performance three conditions must be present (Binder, 2009); “(1) clear, measurable goals; (2) measurement feedback provided to performers to facilitate decision-making; and (3) the ability to control resources and conditions if the measurement feedback indicates a need for a change” (Binder, 2009, p. 3). As an ID transitions to PI, this management of performance leads to looking at how and why the two professions measure and evaluate their interventions (Binder, 2009). I will look at a shared framework that both IDs and PIs use to measure results, although their strategies of application differ substantially.

Measuring Results. Both ID and PI professionals measure and evaluate results, but the frequency and approach differ between the fields (Foshay et al., 2013). In this section, I will examine the most common frameworks for evaluation in training and performance: Kirkpatrick’s four levels, and Phillips’ fifth level of evaluation. With this general framework discussed, the section closes with a look at how instructional designer and performance improvement professionals measure results.

Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation. Fifty years after Donald Kirkpatrick’s dissertation research explored evaluation, his framework is an established method for the evaluation of training programs (Guerra-López, 2017). A summary of Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation are as follows:

1. Reaction: how did a participant react, or feel, about an intervention?
2. Learning: what knowledge, skill or attitude was gained from an intervention?
3. Behaviour: how did a participant’s workplace performance, or behaviour change, from an intervention?
4. Results: how did the intervention impact the organization? (Guerra-López, 2017; Kirkpatrick, 2009)

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Learning projects that instructional designers deliver are often limited to the reaction and learning levels (Guerra-López, 2017), with metrics based on the experience and content of the learning experience often conducted at the end or soon after the intervention's implementation. Levels three and four of the Kirkpatrick method are challenging to conduct because there are many variables in what impacts job and organization performance (Guerra-López, 2017). Collecting or accessing this data is often outside the purview of instructional designers, so they frequently omit these steps. There is no singular approach for how these evaluations are conducted, nor are the tools used to gather the information standardized. However, it is essential to be open to adapt the metrics chosen at the beginning of an initiative to ensure that the practitioner is, "reliably measuring what you think you are measuring and that the data you collect are useful and help to inform good decisions, cost-effectively and practically" (Binder, 2009, p. 13). This focus on business results is more common among PIs.

Phillips' Fifth Level of Evaluation. Jack Phillips popularized measuring the return on investment of training and HPT programs, which added a fifth level to Kirkpatrick's evaluation framework (Guerra-López, 2017). This fifth level is as follows:

5. Return on investment (ROI): measuring the fiscal benefits of learning and performance interventions against cost (Guerra-López, 2017).

To calculate ROI for a learning or performance intervention, the following questions must be answered: "What is that improvement worth?" and "How does that value compare to the cost of the program?" (Phillips & Phillips, 2019, p. 7). A positive ROI results when the fiscal value of the intervention surmounts its cost (Phillips & Phillips, 2019). This fifth level of evaluation can support the credibility of a learning or performance department, though ROI assessment requires know-how, time, and is a cost in and of itself (Guerra-López, 2017). Phillips

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recommends that project decision-makers be selective when identifying programs to evaluate at this level, and suggests making this selection early in the planning phase, rather than after the implementation of a training program (Guerra-López, 2017). Because of the effort and resources involved in an ROI assessment, it is recommended that the process should go only to the depth of analysis needed to make decisions - not further (Guerra-López, 2017). If an appropriate project is selected for ROI evaluation, and the analysis performed correctly, level 5 evaluation provides a useful perspective on the fiscal impact of a project. This could shift the attitude of decision-makers on the true value of a training or performance intervention, and help “prevent arbitrary or impulsive cutting of training budgets” (Guerra-López, 2017).

Guerra-López encourages organizations to adopt a process similar to that of American Express when determining which initiatives should be evaluated at the fifth level. The famous payment card company categorizes all training and performance initiatives into one of three categories: “strategic,” “required,” or “ROI” (Guerra-López, 2017). “Strategic” and “required” projects are not evaluated at a level 5 because:

- The benefits of a strategic project might not be recognized for a long time (Guerra-López, 2017).
- Projects required for the organization to operate (such as safety, security or compliance) do not merit an ROI evaluation because their benefits should be so obvious that no measurement is needed (Guerra-López, 2017).

Projects that do not fall into “strategic” or “required” are categorized as “ROI,” and must “undergo a thorough evaluation and require a resulting ROI of 30 percent prior to approval” (Guerra-López, 2017). ROI percentage is defined as net benefits divided by program costs

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(Guerra-López, 2017). This approach provides a useful heuristic for emerging PI practitioners as they seek to decide when this type of evaluation is warranted for their clients.

How do the Cousins Measure Results? Both instructional designers and performance improvement consultants strive to isolate the effects of training, but performance practitioners usually look at training as just one of a suite of interventions that form a broader performance strengthening approach. Performance improvement practitioners will also use evaluation “to investigate other questions decision-makers may have” (Foshay et al., 2013).

The typical strategy that instructional designers adopt toward evaluation starts with level 1 and, if the project timeline and budget allow, continues sequentially through levels 2, 3, 4, and 5. This process runs in the reverse order to that suggested by Kirkpatrick (Foshay et al., 2013). Performance improvement consultants, by contrast, measure results “beginning with higher levels and working backward” (Foshay et al., 2013, p. 43). Kirkpatrick recommends beginning “with desired results and then determine what behavior is needed to accomplish them. Then [...] determine the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are necessary to bring about the desired behavior(s). The final challenge is to present the training program in a way that enables the participants not only to learn what they need to know but also to react favorably to the program.” (Kirkpatrick, 2009, p. 3).

In summary, instructional designers don’t always measure results. When they do, their analysis is focused on completed training projects, and is “conducted contrary to Kirkpatrick and Phillips' guidance to start at higher levels and work backwards” (Foshay et al., 2013, p. 41). This results in metrics that don’t necessarily align with customer needs, or the collection of data that doesn’t adequately inform good decisions (Binder, 2009). Performance improvement consultants, on the other hand, focus on metrics that measure business impact, following

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Kirkpatrick and Phillips' guidance by “beginning with higher levels and working backward” (Foshay et al., 2013, p. 41).

Conclusion: ID and PI Share an Interest in Improving Workplace Performance

Although there is some overlap, ID and PI continue to be two unique fields (Foshay et al., 2013). Both instructional design and performance improvement professionals originate from “systems thinking and behavioural psychology” (Foshay et al., 2013, p. 39), but have diverged into “two fields [that] employ different research bases, system foci, and methods” (Foshay et al., 2013, p. 39). Performance improvement practitioners apply these at greater breadth and depth and with more procedural complexity than instructional designers. ID and PI are closely related professions; cousins who share an interest in improving workplace performance via analysis, planning, and practical implementation. They are not twins because their frameworks and methods differ substantially, as does their scope and how they measure results.

Navigating the Ambiguous Transition from ID to PI

One of the first things an instructional designer must do to move towards performance improvement is reach the understanding that training is not the only way to improve workplace performance. This transition is often a gradual one. As an ID shifts toward a performance improvement mindset they become “more attuned to the business results their clients seek to achieve” (The Performance Thinking Network, 2020a, 2:13). Performance improvement has separated itself from instructional design by looking at the larger system in which the performer resides; “to improve performance, it is usually necessary to do things that change behaviors of individuals or components in a workplace system” (Winiecki, 2015, p. 7). This nuanced approach allows performance improvement practitioners to see training as just one of several possible solutions, and that by approaching the problem with a performance lens, training might

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be just a single part of a more substantial system (Binder, 1998). This realization by practitioners comes in different ways. This section looks at possible performance interventions using Gilbert's Behavior Engineering Model and Carl Binder's Performance Chain® and Six Boxes® models and the principles that underpin them.

Gilbert's Behaviour Engineering Model (BEM)

Gilbert's behaviour engineering model (BEM) is a Skinner-influenced (Binder, 1998) tool that Gilbert used "to shift from theory to practice" (Winiiecki, 2015, p. 7), and is generally applied during a cause analysis of performers (Winiiecki, 2015) to identify how performance could be improved, as well as prioritize and plan interventions (Dean, 2016). In *Human Competence: Engineering Worthy Performance*, Gilbert states that most people want to perform well and that his model can be used as a diagnostic tool to identify what change will "yield the most worthy result" (2007, p. 89). The BEM can also uncover strategic changes that can be applied to a performance system to help decision-makers effectively balance the cost of an intervention with the impact of the change (Gilbert, 2007). The BEM examines six elements of a workplace system, arranged in three categories: *Information*, *Response* and *Motivation*; and considers those elements across two domains: the *Environment*, where the performance takes place, and within the *Individual* performer (Winiiecki, 2015). These are arranged as follows:

- Environmental supports: Data, Instruments, and Incentives.
- Individual: (a person's repertory of behaviour); Knowledge, Capacity, and Motives.

With these two overarching factors separated, the six individual cells are demonstrated in ***Figure 3***.

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Figure 3 *The Cells of Gilbert's Behaviour Engineering Model (BEM)*

	Information	Response	Motivation
Environmental support	<i>(Data)</i>	<i>(Instruments)</i>	<i>(Incentives)</i>
Behavior repertory	<i>(Knowledge)</i>	<i>(Capacity)</i>	<i>(Motives)</i>

From *Human Competence: Engineering Worthy Performance* (p.92), T. F. Gilbert, 2007, Pfeiffer (<https://www.wiley.com/en-us/Human+Competence%3A+Engineering+Worthy+Performance%2C+Tribute+Edition-p-9780787996154>).

The BEM distinguishes between the workplace environment and what a performer brings to the workplace that facilitates or hinders performance (Chevalier, 2003). **Figure 4** is an expansion of the individual cells. It begins with the information column, representing the information that a performer must identify to know what they need to do. This information can be external to the performer, such as a job aid or personal knowledge gained in prior training, that the worker then applies to interpret information provided by their environment (Winiecki, 2015). If the information was properly received and interpreted the next step is the performers' response, what they do "if the information was properly understood" (2015, p. 8). This can be the application of something available in the workplace, or a performer's skill (capability) in doing the work (2015). Finally, the motivation column describes reinforcement for both good and poor performance (2015). This can take the form of either workplace incentives or intrinsic motives. It is important to emphasize that the motivation column in the BEM encompasses both positive and negative outcomes, responding to poor performance with "some sort of stimulus should be received in the form of hints, coaching, correction, or something else that will, in turn, affect the performer's ability to improve on the next attempt" (2015, p. 8). This cyclic set of behaviour influences results in a performer producing value and worth (Gilbert, 2007; Winiecki, 2015).

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Figure 4 *Gilbert’s Behaviour Engineering Model (BEM)*

	Information	Instrumentation	Motivation
Environmental Supports	<p><i>Data</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Relevant and frequent feedback about the adequacy of performance.</i> 2. <i>Descriptions of what is expected of performance.</i> 3. <i>Clear and relevant guides to adequate performance.</i> 	<p><i>Resources</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Tools and materials of work designed scientifically to match human factors.</i> 	<p><i>Incentives 1.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Adequate financial incentives made contingent upon performance.</i> 2. <i>Non-monetary incentives made available.</i> 3. <i>Career-development opportunities.</i>
Person’s Repertory of Behaviour	<p><i>Knowledge</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Systematically designed training that matches the requirements of exemplary performance.</i> 2. <i>Placement.</i> 	<p><i>Capacity</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Flexible scheduling of performance to match peak capacity.</i> 2. <i>Prosthesis.</i> 3. <i>Physical shaping.</i> 4. <i>Adaptation.</i> 5. <i>Selection.</i> 	<p><i>Motives</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Assessment of people’s motives to work.</i> 2. <i>Recruitment of people to match the realities of the situation.</i>

From *Human Competence: Engineering Worthy Performance* (p.88), T. F. Gilbert, 2007, Pfeiffer (<https://www.wiley.com/en-us/Human+Competence%3A+Engineering+Worthy+Performance%2C+Tribute+Edition-p-9780787996154>).

With these categories defined, the BEM model further expands its cells to include the factors capable of influencing each area. Assessment of these factors “in terms of what he determined to be necessary to support desired performance” (Winiecki, 2015, p. 7) allows the model’s user to identify possible causes for poor performance (2015).

As an ID moves towards performance consulting, they start needing to understand workplace dynamics at a deeper level. Gilbert’s BEM is a key tool in this process, helping IDs

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realize that training is often just one factor in a performance solution, and often not the most important one. With this system view, an ID is positioned such that subsequent experience might begin to nudge them toward true performance work.

Binder: Two Things Needed to Become a PI

According to Carl Binder, two things need to happen for an ID to successfully transition from a focus on the training box to genuine performance consulting. First, aspiring performance consultants need opportunities with clients that allow them to look at the entire performance system, rather than focusing on training as a singular solution (The Performance Thinking Network, 2020b). Second, they need to learn concrete strategies that allow them to both examine and interact with performance systems on a practical level (2020b).

Finding and pursuing these opportunities can be very challenging for an ID who has started conceptualizing more efficient performance improvement-based solutions to their clients' needs. The nascent performance consultant needs to guide their clients to “see things differently and change their expectations” (The Performance Thinking Network, 2020b, 3:14), leading them to consider possibilities outside of familiar training solutions. Instead of a client asking about training, this influence should lead them to ask something more along the lines of; “we have a performance improvement opportunity here we’d like your help with” (The Performance Thinking Network, 2020b, 3:37). Binder considers this change in outlook so difficult that it might take a client more time to shift their thinking out of the training box than it takes the instructional designer to build the capabilities needed to accomplish a non-training solution (The Performance Thinking Network, 2020b).

Once this paradigm shift in outlook has happened practical concerns arise, for which Binder offers an alternative and extension to the BEM described in **Figure 4**. The BEM can be

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overwhelming, even for performance consultants familiar with its language. Business stakeholders need tools that are understandable without recourse to academic jargon. Binder suggests using tools with simple language that “drives understanding across all levels of an organization” (The Performance Thinking Network, 2018a, 5:10), and designed two models that “define performance very specifically and then to investigate what all the factors are that are supporting and getting in the way of performance. Then to configure plans or designs or interventions that configure the right set of factors to support and accelerate the desired performance” (The Performance Thinking Network, 2020b, 2:56). These tools are the Performance Chain® and the Six Boxes®.

The Performance Chain®. Binder’s first accessible and practical model is the Performance Chain®. This framework is used to understand and analyze performance by “depict[ing] how behavior produces organizational results and the behavior influences that make desired behavior likely to occur” (Binder, 2009, p. 14). The Performance Chain® shows how behaviour produces business results by following a logical sequence that is broadly applicable to almost any situation faced by the PI consultant. The model is described visually in *Figure 5*, and is best understood by examining its steps in reverse order to that in which they impact the client’s business.

Figure 5 *Binder’s Performance Chain®*



From “Measurement, Evaluation, and Research: Feedback for Decision Making” by C. Binder, in J.L. Moseley and J.C. Dessinger (Eds), *Handbook of Improving Performance in the Workplace: Measurement and Evaluation* (3, p.14), 2009, Pfeiffer (<https://www.wiley.com/en->

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[ca/Handbook+of+Improving+Performance+in+the+Workplace,+Volume+3,+Measurement+and+Evaluation-p-9780470190678](#)).

The Performance Chain® begins with *Business Results*, the rightmost link, in which the performance consultant identifies what result an intervention is trying to achieve. The client usually articulates an overall business objective, and it is then up to the consultant to devise an approach that will move the organization closer to their desired result (Binder, 2009).

The second factor is *Work Outputs*. Binder is a firm believer in the idea that Thomas Gilbert's most critical contribution to human performance theory was the suggestion that analysis should begin with identifying the outputs of behaviour, rather than behaviour itself (Binder, 2009). These work outputs are what the performers produce that contribute to overall business results. These outputs can be tangible, like deliverables and transactions, or intangible, like decisions and relationships (The Performance Thinking Network, 2018a). Identifying how these outputs align to business results is key for the model's subsequent step.

The next link in the Performance Chain® is the isolation of the *Behaviours* needed to produce the outputs identified in the second step (The Performance Thinking Network, 2018a). Task analysis and the observation of high-performers are examples of how a performance improvement professional might identify what kinds of behaviour are “actually needed to produce those valuable work outputs to contribute to business results” (The Performance Thinking Network, 2018a, 16:10). With these behaviours defined, the PI has a nearly complete picture of both their client's business and what it needs in order to effect positive change.

The final link, *Behaviour Influences*, is the leftmost side of the Performance Chain® and represents the environmental and human conditions that positively or negatively affect a performer's behaviour. The goal of the PI consultant is the alignment of these factors to the

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desired business results. Behaviour influences are “the many different conditions in the performer’s environment and technique, tools, or methods that we can arrange to influence behaviour” (Binder, 2009, p. 18). These influences can have a large impact on results and need to be taken into account.

Binder summarizes the totality of his procedure as follows; “the process of performance improvement is when we identify and attempt to design or manage the combination of behaviour influences needed to establish, support, or accelerate desired behaviour that will produce the work outputs that contribute to organizational results” (Binder, 2009, p. 14). In action, the Performance Chain® flows from left to right, but performance consultants start with the desired result, using it as an anchor, and work their way backwards in their analysis and execution. The Performance Chain® connects “behaviour with business results to engage employees and focus them on the most valuable activities and work products” (Binder, n.d.).

Binder accounts for behaviour influences by feeding a separate analysis into the Performance Chain® model. This is Binder’s second model, The Six Boxes®, which forms the last major component needed for IDs to undertake the kind of work that implies a transition toward PI.

The Six Boxes® Model: A Descendent of Gilbert’s Behavioural Engineering Model.

As a student of B.F. Skinner and mentee of Gilbert, Carl Binder was well-positioned to create a system capable of modeling behaviour influences. Gilbert’s model “increases the fluency of performance” (Tosti & Kaufman, 2007, p. 8), and progressed the PI field by postulating that, “outputs (or accomplishments), not behavior, should be the focus of our efforts and starting points for our analyses” (Binder, 2009, p. 15).

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By simply reformatting Gilbert’s model, Binder claims that his Six Boxes® model sets PIs up to have “more fluid conversations with clients” (Winiecki, 2015, p. 9). The Six Boxes® model is a useful HPT tool, often used by PI professionals to encourage ongoing conversation about performance improvement and facilitate the adoption of solutions, even by non-PI professionals (Winiecki, 2015). The accessibility of the Six Boxes® model also helps instructional designers to “get out of the training box, [and] look at all the factors that affect performance and work with and partner with their business clients” (The Performance Thinking Network, 2020a, 3:30).

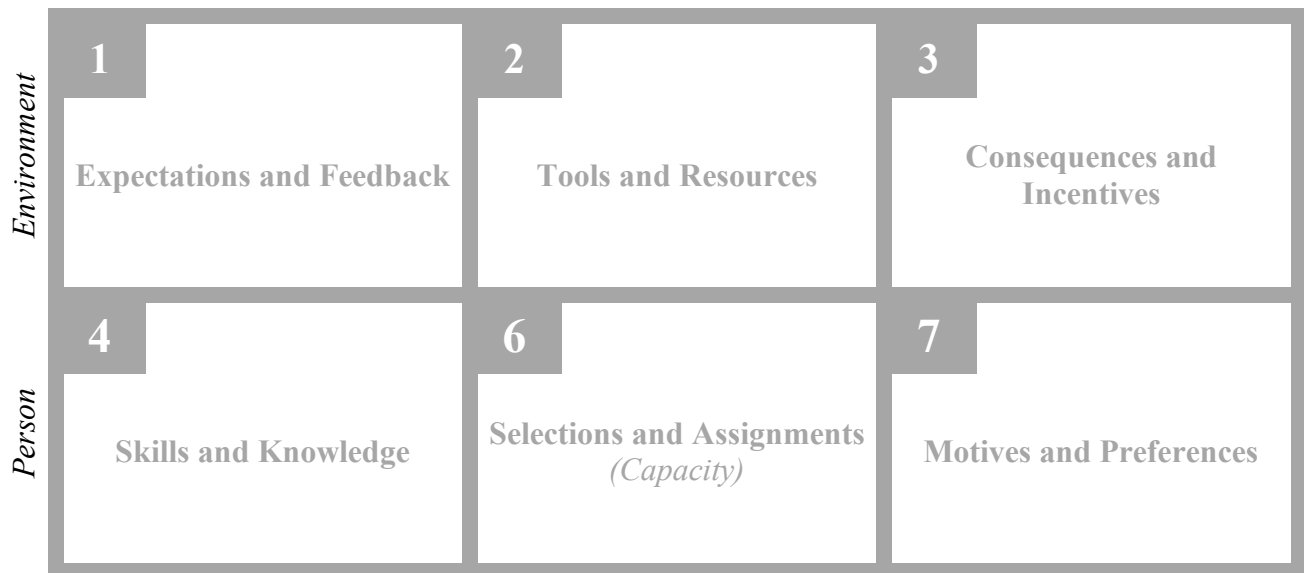
In his article *The Six Boxes™: A Descendent of Gilbert’s Behavioural Engineering Model*, Carl Binder notes that although Gilbert’s contributions to the PI field were profound, it was his colleagues and students, including Binder himself, who successfully “transformed his concepts into commercially viable businesses” (1998, p. 48), and exposed the world to his brilliance (1998). Using the Six Boxes® model, instructional designers can have conversations with decision-makers free of jargon, and thus focus on impactful solutions that align with business goals (The Performance Thinking Network, 2010). A detailed understanding of this model is key to this study’s approach to examining the ID-to-PI transition.

The Six Boxes® Model. Carl Binder’s two models can be combined to make sense of behaviour influences. The Six Boxes® model is capable of transforming seemingly disparate behaviour influences into a “systemic framework” (The Performance Thinking Network, 2018b, 25:20) that is simple to use. By doing so, the Six Boxes® model forms a systematic way of looking at behaviour influences and provides useful input to the leftmost element of the Performance Chain®. By understanding the needed or desired outputs “we can discover or plan for behaviour to produce them and then assemble the behaviour influences needed to establish,

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support, or accelerate that behaviour” (Binder, 2009, p. 14). Behavioural influences are defined as “the factors that affect or influence behavior to produce work outputs and [...] are the many different conditions in the performer’s environment and techniques, tools, or methods that we can arrange to influence behaviour” (Binder, 2009, p. 18). With this context in mind, the model can be best understood visually, as in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6 *Binder’s Six Boxes®*



From “The Six Boxes™: A descendent of Gilbert’s behavior engineering model”, by C. Binder, 1998, *Performance Improvement*, 37(6), p.50 (<https://doi.org/10.1002/pfi.4140370612>).

The Six Boxes® model provides its users with the ability to succinctly identify and describe the variables that influence behaviour (Binder, 2009). All possible performance gaps, and the interventions designed to address them, can be found within the six boxes (Binder, 2009). These are categorized the same way as Gilbert’s BEM model, beginning with a top row describing the environment external to the performer.

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- *Expectations and Feedback* are what is communicated to the performer about what is expected of them, the conditions in which they are to accomplish this, and how they are doing as they work (Binder, 2009).
- *Tools and Resources* cover just about anything that is used by workers to perform, including tools, processes, consultant interactions, and even physical attributes like heat and light in the workplace (Binder, 2009).
- *Consequences and Incentives* are the intentional and unplanned consequences of a worker's performance (Binder, 2009). These are sometimes obvious; being financially rewarded for meeting or surpassing sales targets, or being penalized for missing them. They can also represent more nuanced situations, such as a low performer on an assembly line impacting not only the daily quota, but also having a social implication for the entire team, regardless of how fast others are producing results (Binder, 2009).

The top three boxes thus look at what is communicated to the performer, what they leverage to do the work, and the stimuli and results of the performance, all of which are generally external to the performer. The bottom three boxes, meanwhile, target the individual performer directly (Binder, 2009).

- The *Skills and Knowledge* category looks at what the performer has or needs to develop via training or non-training solutions (Binder, 2009).
- *Capacity* is what the performer brings to the workplace, such as leadership or social skills, that employers can select for in the hiring process but can't provide (Binder, 2009).

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- *Motives and Preferences* encapsulate the performers' mindset about their work and how that impacts their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their job (Binder, 2009).

Taken together, these bottom three boxes look at the performer from a personal perspective, describing how the internal levers of know-how, skills, personality, and mindset influence their performance.

When the Six Boxes® are applied, all possible elements in a performance improvement problem or solution can be categorized somewhere into the six cells of the model. It is “a convenient, powerful yet simple way to understand what a scientist would call the independent variables that we as managers or performance improvement specialists configure to provide the most cost-effective impact on performance that we can arrange” (Binder, 2009, p. 19). As a result, this model provides a natural endpoint on the road from ID to PI. Capable of both depth and concision in its analysis, the Six Boxes® model is a popular tool.

Conclusion: Navigating the Models Key to the ID-to-PI Transition

The slow process of transitioning from instructional design to performance improvement occurs not just in how the practitioner approaches a problem, but what they use to analyze it. Practitioners are inevitably confronted with a complicated array of challenges inherent to improving performance in the workplace. The feeling that training may not be a catch-all solution then leads to new ways of looking at these challenges, and the need for new models to analyze both the input and output sides of the performance improvement equation. As IDs take on more nuanced views of their professions, they can use Binder's tools to practice performance consulting, and eventually change their conversations with stakeholders and clients to focus on interventions outside of the training box. With a clear picture of the tools necessary to make the

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transition in place, my literature review will next move on to the methodology used to conduct the study.

Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM)

This section of the literature review will define and discuss grounded theory (GT), the main theoretical approach used in this study. Since its inception, researchers have continuously adapted this versatile methodology, creating a diversity of approaches that reflect an original divergence between the methodology's two founders, Glaser and Strauss. To cope with this plurality of viewpoints, my review of GT will begin with a broad introduction to the theory, and then take a closer look at the historical conditions that led to its creation. With this perspective in hand, I then examine how difficult it is to separate various versions of the theory, and explain both the core concepts and reasons for adoption of Kathy Charmaz's constructivist grounded version for the practical aspects of the study. Once this theoretical approach is made as clear as possible, common critiques will be listed and addressed to ensure a balanced view of both the methodology's benefits and limitations.

The Emergence of Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory (GT) methodology was born in the study of death and dying, and first described in the book *Awareness of Dying* in 1966 (Glaser & Strauss, 1966). After the book's publication its authors, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, were inundated with questions about their new methodology, which led them to publish a more detailed examination a year later in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Their approach to qualitative research was avant-garde, and grounded theory was unusual because its methodology allowed hypotheses to emerge from data, rather than focusing on the testing and verification of theories selected before a study began (Creswell, 2012). Grounded Theory allows the researcher to

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develop “a broad theory about your qualitative central phenomenon ‘grounded’ in the data” (Creswell, 2012, p. 422). This reversal of the traditional order necessitates a major change in how research is designed, and GT is thus a “systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or an interaction about a substantive topic” (Creswell, 2012, p. 423). Together, Glaser and Strauss had developed “systematic methodological strategies that researchers could adopt for studying many other [qualitative] topics” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 32).

Today, the frequent application of grounded theory has led to the claim that, “it has profoundly changed the face of social science” (Morse et al., 2016, p. 13). Since the original 1967 publication, many permutations of and variations on grounded theory have emerged (Heath & Cowley, 2004). Refined versions of the theory remain useful today, and a historical overview of their emergence informs this study’s specific choice in methodology.

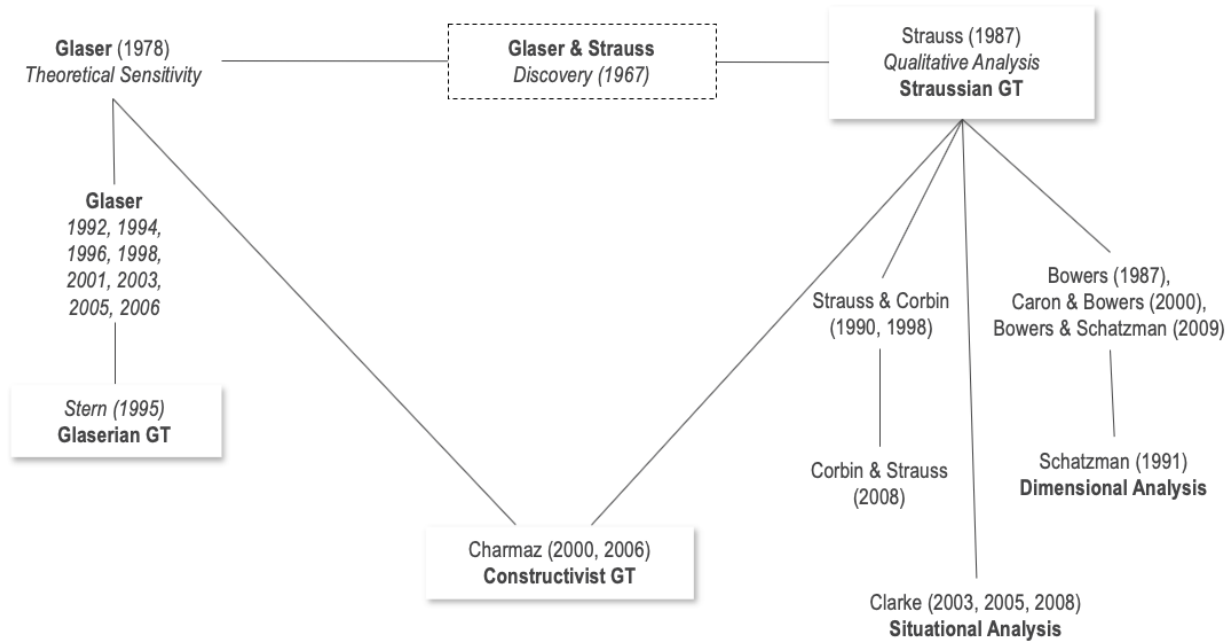
Innovation on the Grounds of UCSF. The University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) was the setting for what would become Glaser and Strauss’ most influential collaboration. In 1960, Strauss was recruited to UCSF to build a doctoral program for nurses, after which he built a doctoral program in Sociology (Morse et al., 2016). Upon being awarded his doctorate in 1961, Glaser returned to his home state of California (Morse et al., 2016). The two first met “at a gathering” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 24), which soon led to Strauss inviting Glaser to join him at UCSF as a research scientist for a funded study on dying (Charmaz, 2015a). Kathy Charmaz was in the first cohort of Strauss’ sociology doctoral program and is the source of many useful anecdotes about the pair’s approach to research. She learned grounded theory from graduate seminars taught by Glaser, and Strauss was her dissertation chair (Charmaz, 2006). Though Charmaz was one of only a few researchers to be taught by both Glaser and Strauss,

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there was an entire second generation of grounded theorists who were taught GT by one or the other of its originators.

A Second Generation Redefines Grounded Theory. This “second generation” (Morse et al., 2016, p. 9) of grounded theorists were responsible for a range of modifications to Grounded Theory which emerged after 1967; “grounded theory did not stop with the original developers but has continued through their students in a distinct ‘genealogy’ of development” (Morse et al., 2016, p. 16). **Figure 7** is a modified illustration describing the divergence and genealogy of Grounded Theory which highlights Kathy Charmaz’s Constructivist Grounded Theory, the particular GT applied to this study, as the only version that draws on both Glaser and Strauss.

Figure 7 Modified Genealogy of Grounded Theory: Major Milestones



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Adapted from *Developing Grounded Theory: The Second Generation* (p.17), by J.M. Morse, P.N. Stern, J. Corbin, B. Bowers, K. Charmaz, and A.E. Clarke, 2016, Routledge

(<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315430577>).

Describing grounded theory in a strictly objective way would restrict that explanation to one specific researcher, interpreter, and particular moment in time. Because the methodology itself is constantly evolving, its exact application changes slightly to suit each new project. Even the theory's originators didn't agree on its exact definition for long: Glaser took it in a direction influenced by his quantitative roots, Strauss took it in another direction influenced by his qualitative roots, and Charmaz's constructivist interpretation falls midway between the two. The position of Charmaz's iteration of GT at a nexus of the two influences, and its resulting adaptability, is the reason it was chosen for this study.

A Closer Look at Charmaz's Constructivism

A salient criticism of grounded theory, which will be discussed at greater length later in the chapter, is the inability of its practitioners to be completely objective about the data they collect (Thomas, 2006). The constructivist iteration of the methodology, however, addresses this issue by not just acknowledging the researcher's interaction with their data, but actively leveraging it. Charmaz proposes that the interaction between researcher and data constructs knowledge which furthers research in a novel way (Charmaz, 2015a). More specifically, this means that during data collection the researcher is an active participant in the construction of their research. This active participation in the construction of knowledge occurs under conditions which the researcher does not control and may not even be cognizant of (Charmaz, 2015a). This is often referred to as "dancing with data" (Hoare et al., 2012), and is most evident during constant comparative analysis in the coding process. The fact that "codes consist of short labels

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that we [the researchers] construct as we interact with the data” is an advantage because collected data drives the codes, rather than being pre-planned theories into which the researcher slots their findings (Charmaz, 2012, p. 5). This adaptability is a core feature of constructivist GT.

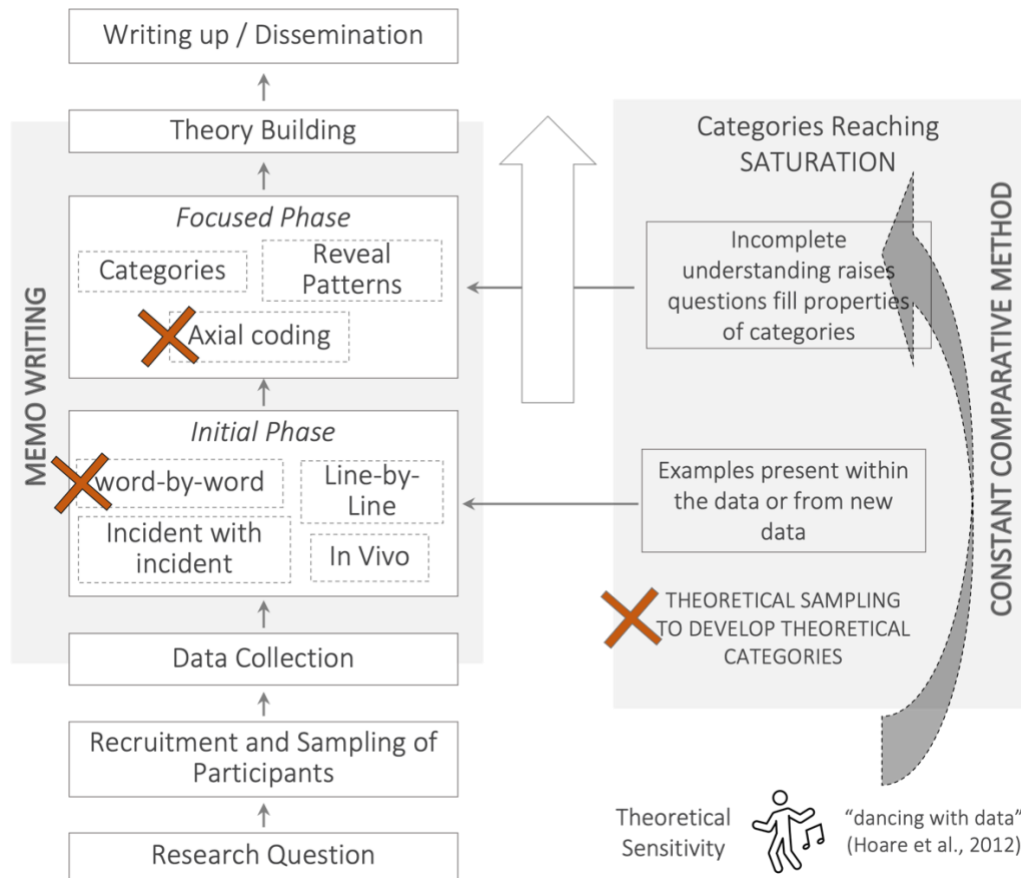
An Overview of the Key Features of Constructivist Grounded Theory. Constructivist grounded theory is a hybrid in which Charmaz “adopted the strategies that Barney Glaser developed, but in a much more Straussian way,” (Morse et al., 2016, p. 237–238), and thus provides a much more open view of what the definition of GT theory can be (Morse et al., 2016). As the major theoretical approach used in this study, this section of the literature review describes these features in detail, with an eye toward the explanation of their application in Chapter 3 “Methodology.” The key features of constructivist grounded theory, most of which were applied in this study, are listed here and then discussed in detail:

- theoretical sensitivity
- data collection via theoretical sampling
- analyzing collected data through constant comparative analysis
- coding to create an “interactive analytical space”
- memoing to focus analyzed data into a research paper

Figure 8 is a visual representation of the interaction of these processes in the progression from study conceptualization, through construction and data gathering, and continuing on to analysis and thesis writing. What follows *Figure 8* is an examination of each feature in detail.

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Figure 8 *Modified Visual Representation of a Grounded Theory.*



Note: Alison Tweed constructed the original figure from Tweed and Charmaz (Tweed & Charmaz, 2011, p. 133). Adapted from *Constructing Grounded Theory* (p.46), by K. Charmaz, 2015, SAGE Publications (<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/constructing-grounded-theory/book235960>).

Theoretical Sensitivity. Before detailing how a researcher gains or heightens theoretical sensitivity, the term must be defined. Charmaz describes this feature of constructivist GT as the “ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and the capability to separate the pertinent from which isn’t” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 137). This concept aligns closely with Corbin and Strauss, who define it as the “attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data,

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the capacity to understand, and the capability to separate pertinent from which isn't" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 41–42).

The effect of theoretical sensitivity on content comes in the researcher's interaction with a study's data. Hoare calls this interaction "dancing with data" (Hoare et al., 2012), a description extrapolated from Strauss and Corbin's explanation of how a researcher becomes sensitive to data by interacting with it:

Insight and understanding about a phenomenon increase as you interact with your data. This comes from collecting and asking questions about the data, making comparisons, thinking about what you see, making hypotheses, developing small theoretical frameworks (miniframeworks) about concepts and their relationships. In turn, the researcher uses these to look again at the data. Often, one idea or insight sparks another, directing you to look more closely at the data, to give meaning to words that seemed previously not to have meaning, and to look for situations that might explain what is happening here. (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 43)

Strauss and Corbin list sources of theoretical sensitivity, including: literature, professional experience, personal experience, and the process of interacting with the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) (Hoare et al., 2012). This aligns with Glaser's belief that "everything is data" (Glaser, 1978), but departs from his view that personal knowledge and experience is merely peripheral (Hoare et al., 2012). Despite these disagreements, theoretical sensitivity has been generally accepted as a desirable trait for a constructivist approach and can be cultivated or improved by being "sensitive to the underlying meaning of the data" (Thistoll et al., 2016, p. 621). The adaptability and nuance provided by this approach is key in extracting meaning from participants in a study whose subject is subtle or ambiguous in its expression in the data.

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Data Collection via Theoretical Sampling. When a study begins, the researcher identifies criteria for the initial sampling (Charmaz, 2015a) of study participants that could lead to “sampling texts, people, settings, or larger structures such as government agencies or organizations” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 162). Sampling shifts from initial to theoretical when a gap forms in the data, forcing the researcher to pursue more data (Charmaz, 2015a). Theoretical sampling is a “selective, systematic, and strategic way of gathering specific additional data to develop the emerging theory” (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007, p. 3). It is fundamental to grounded theory because the core research question addressed by a study is constructed or refined during and after interviews with participants (Charmaz, 2015a). Theoretical sampling allows data analysis to run concurrently with data collection and enables the analysis of one interviewee to drive the identification and recruitment of the next participant (Charmaz, 2015a). Creswell (2012) describes theoretical sampling in grounded theory as a way to select data that supports theory generation; “sampling is intentional and focused on the generation of a theory” (Creswell, 2012, p. 433). Charmaz further clarifies this process by indicating that theoretical sampling is often erroneously treated as a procedure applied during interviews. Instead, it must be a “strategy that you invoke and fit to your specific study, not a unitary data-collecting procedure” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 167). These concepts align with the fundamental nature of grounded theory, and their interaction emerges as “developing ideas shape what you do, areas you tap, and questions you pose while doing theoretical sampling” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 167).

Charmaz describes the difference between initial and theoretical sampling, stating that “Initial sampling ... gets you started; theoretical sampling guides where you go” (2015a, p. 162). The data thus leads the researcher in their pursuit of robust theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2015a). Unfortunately for planning and timing purposes, however, the researcher “using

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theoretical sampling never knows what twists and turns the research will take” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 146). Theoretical sampling is a sought-after strategy in constructivist grounded theory; once the initial sampling is recruited, interacting with participant data may lead the researcher to newly identified sample criteria, and thus drive the next sampling source. This data-driven approach to sampling is foundational to constructivist grounded theory, but also elusive and not always practical in reality.

Analyzing Collected Data Through Constant Comparative Analysis. Constant comparative analysis describes a process where data collection and analysis weave into one another (Charmaz, 2015a), and is a major component of Hoare’s “dancing with data” (Hoare et al., 2012). The procedure for constant comparative analysis involves “gathering data, sorting it into categories, collecting additional information, and comparing the new information with emerging categories” (Creswell, 2012, p. 434). By constantly comparing “every part of data, i.e. emerging codes, categories, properties ... with all other parts of the data to explore variations, similarities and differences in data” (Hallberg, 2006, p. 143), the dance becomes more and more complex at each level of the study’s analytic work (Charmaz, 2015a). At first, a researcher might compare lines and events with other lines and events within that same interview, but then expand the comparison to different interviews, different data sources from the same subject, or to similar events among other participants (Charmaz, 2015a). Active participation of the researcher in the construction of the research is paramount to Charmaz’s methodology (Charmaz, 2015a). A researcher’s memos, a concept described below, add another important layer to this process of constant comparative analysis, and Charmaz describes the comprehensive comparative process as “rather than seeing your perspectives as truth, try to see them as representing one view among many. That way, you may gain more awareness of the concepts that you employ and might

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impose on your data” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 118). A constructivist researcher is always on the floor during this dance with the data.

Coding to Create an Interactive Analytical Space. Coding is an analytical technique involving the labeling of pieces of data. The process of coding is an essential bridge from data collection to the construction of a theory that explains that data (Charmaz, 2015a). The data could be almost anything; a video or picture, a blueprint, observation notes or, most common in the social sciences, a transcript of a focus group or interview. By labeling “segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 101) the researcher begins to transform the raw data into theory.

Figure 8 demonstrates the two main coding phases in constructivist grounded theory, initial and focused (Charmaz, 2015a), and shows the different types of coding approaches within each phase. Coding is flexible; a researcher is not bound to apply all approaches, nor stick to a specific process, rather they “code for possibilities suggested by the data rather than ensuring complete accuracy of the data” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 106). This helps the researcher “define the range of variation” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 106) for the study and “provides leads for conceptualizing it further” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 106). Coding carries on the active interaction of the researcher with their participants during data collection into an “interactive analytical space” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 99). In initial coding, data is mostly studied in fragments of “words, lines, segments, or incidents” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 99), though there are also times when a participant’s voice is captured by in vivo codes (Charmaz, 2015a). In subsequent focused coding, the researcher filters the abundant data by using the “most significant and/or frequent earlier codes” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57), by deciding “which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize [the] data incisively and completely” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57).

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A possible third coding phase is Strauss and Corbin's "axial coding," a highly structured approach to reassembling fragments present in initial coding that "give coherence to the emerging analysis" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). Though this is a valid approach, Charmaz leans towards Glaser's argument that the focused coding phase, specifically theoretical coding, obviates a "need for axial coding because they 'weave the fractured story back together'" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63). With this overview in mind, I will now examine these phases in detail.

- **Initial Phase:** The advantage of initial coding is that it propels a researcher forward by helping them achieve "two criteria for completing a grounded theory analysis: fit and relevance" (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 118). It "fits the empirical world" (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 118) when a participant's experience is crystallized from constructed codes, and is made relevant by an "incisive analytic framework" (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 118) that deciphers and connects participants' words with other data sources (2015a). Charmaz describes initial coding as "naming each word, line, or segment of data" (2015a, p. 102), and identifies practices for the initial coding phase. GT researchers choose the options most appropriate for their work. The most salient of these possible choices are described in *Table 2*.

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Table 2 *Summary of Initial Phase Coding*

Types of coding	Description
Word-by-word	Word-by-word coding pushes the researcher to “attend to images and meanings” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 11), and represents the most nuanced coding available in grounded theory. This approach is often used for phenomenological study or the analysis of ephemeral data sources (such as blogs) (Charmaz, 2015a).
Line-by-line	Line-by-line coding is focused enough to allow the researcher to become intimate with the data, but also maintain a broad enough perspective to “begin conceptualizing [their] ideas” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 43). Constructivist methodology requires the researcher to use a heuristic device while coding line-by-line, with examples including the use of gerunds, an avoidance of descriptions, and a focus on actions.
Incident with Incident	Incident with Incident coding prompts the inquirer to identify recurring events with one participant, or across two or more participants, and “think analytically about them” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 106). The researcher’s conceptualization and contextualization of similar incidents matures as these constant comparisons are made (Charmaz, 2015a).
In vivo codes	In vivo codes capture individual pieces of a participant’s speech. These accurate codes can help preserve a participant’s meaning, though their usefulness in analysis depends on the researcher’s treatment (Charmaz, 2015a); a researcher might be tempted to select pithy segments for in vivo codes, rather than finding more mundane but relevant ones. If properly selected, treated, and compared, in vivo codes can be well utilized in grounded theory analysis (Charmaz, 2015a).

- **Focused Phase:** Focused coding takes the researcher into a deeper analysis of their data. This form of analysis emerges by focusing on those initial codes which have “more theoretical reach, direction, and centrality” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 124). This process is not linear, likely beginning well before initial coding comes to an end. Focused codes are much larger batches of data than the fragments named during initial coding. The researcher looks at the words, lines or segments named in initial coding and identifies those which deserve more attention because they either “appear[ing] more frequently among [their] initial codes or have more significance than other codes” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 122). As preliminary

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categories for emerging themes are identified, focused coding “can also provide the grist to interrogate the data and to contemplate what’s missing in it” (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007, p. 3). Often codes identified in the focused phase become important parts of a finished analysis. This decision-making process is not binding, however; “you have the flexibility to pursue the codes that prove to be fruitful and to put aside ones that are not” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 127).

- **Memoing to Focus Analyzed Data into a Research Paper:** Memos comprise all the notes the researcher takes over the course of their work and can be related to literally any part of the study. Memo-writing is the bridge between data collection and drafting research into a paper (Charmaz, 2015a), and is an analysis trigger throughout the research process. Charmaz describes the memo-writing process as a “private conversation” researchers have with themselves (2015b) while breaking down their codes and analyzing their meaning (2015b). This frees them to “explore their ideas, scrutinize and improve their codes, make conjectures, examine their assumptions, and express doubts” (2015b, p. 1617). This ongoing engagement with the data positions the researcher to increasingly compare “more abstract categories with data, codes, and other categories” (Charmaz, 2015b, p. 1618), which leads to “successively increase[ing] the theoretical level of their emerging analysis” (Charmaz, 2015b, p. 1618).

With a detailed summary of GT complete, I will now move on to critiques of the theory. The next section will look at the most prevalent general criticisms of grounded theory, and zoom in on how constructivist GT addresses them.

Critiques of Grounded Theory

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Grounded theory and its various interpretations are not without their critics, and an understanding of them provides a better-rounded view of both the theory and its use in this study. The most prominent critiques of grounded theory focus on discovery during data collection and problems with theoretical sampling (Thomas, 2006; Gibbs, 2010). The following summary provides an overview of the most common criticisms, as well as an opportunity to briefly address how Charmaz's constructivist GT deals with them.

Theory-Neutral Observation is Unlikely. In Glaser and Strauss' original version of GT, theory is discovered during data collection rather than being set out in advance. Critics note that under these conditions researchers cannot maintain the purely neutral stance required by grounded theory because most studies' methodology need to be approved before going ahead. For a study to go through the approval process, the researcher must perform a preliminary literature review and have some knowledge of the topic, which makes entering the data collection process totally free of bias or presupposition impossible. Gibbs summarizes this critique in a recorded University of Huddersfield graduate lecture by saying "theory-neutral observation is impossible, whatever we do is embedded in theory, an interpretation in a meaningful structure" (Gibbs, 2010, 5:38). Charmaz's version of the methodology compensates for this issue by embracing the influence of the researcher, and including their experiences and pre-existing knowledge in the analytical process (Charmaz, 2015a).

Theoretical Sampling is Time-Consuming and Often Omitted. Theoretical sampling, the process in which one data source leads to another (Creswell, 2012), seems ideally suited to GT in theory, but is extremely time-consuming in practice. Gibbs points out that most researchers who say they used a grounded methodology in reality simply did a lot of coding; "Theoretical sampling is often something that gets left aside, and sampling is done before they

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even start the empirical work. It takes too long to do it” (Gibbs, 2010, 6:00). This specific limitation applies to this study and is addressed in chapter 5.

Coding Disrupts Narrative Flow of Data. Critics suggest that coding can break up a study’s narrative flow, “relegat[ing] the original voice” (Thomas, 2006, p.790), and that the “essence of the narrative approach is to get the flow of the story” (Gibbs, 2010). Charmaz addressed this issue by writing about the opportunities that coding presents for rapid analytic development, how engaged coding is essential to grounded theory, and that through coding a researcher learns “what forms these data and in which theoretical directions you can take them. Implicit processes become visible. Connections between codes emerge. And your questions about your data grow more precise and penetrating” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 137). Coding in Constructivist grounded theory is more likely to refine rather than disrupt the narrative flow.

Realist View is Not Realistic. Grounded theory has been frequently accused of being unrealistic; “preclude[ing] any possibility of modification or retrenchment” (Thomas, 2006, p. 770). Challenges to the system include that it has a “problematic and rather naive realist view of data” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 3), and that both Glasser and Straus believed “the concepts and categories lie in the data waiting to be discovered” (Gibbs, 2010, 2:46). Charmaz’s version of GT accepts that a researcher’s experiences and perspectives influence the data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007) and assumes that “multiple realities and multiple perspectives on these realities” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 3) exist. The constructivist approach thus assumes that theories aren't discovered directly from data, but that researchers co-construct the data alongside their participants.

Conclusion: Constructivist Grounded Theory - an Adaptable Data-Driven Method

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Grounded theory provides researchers with an adaptable and ever-evolving set of tools with which to approach their research problems. Since its creation by Glaser and Strauss at UCSF and revisions by an entire second generation of researchers, GT has used a variety of innovative conceptual approaches to allow its users to interact with their data at great depth. As the theory matured, criticisms of it emerged. Concerns about the impossibility of theory-neutral observation, time commitments in theoretical sampling, coding as a breakwater for data flow, and the overall realism of the approach are all worthy of consideration. Among many derivative versions, Kathy Charmaz's constructivist GT addresses many of these issues, and benefits from being the only one to trace its lineage and influences back to both of the theory's original creators. Despite some difficulties, the intimacy and subtlety of constructivist GT's interaction with the data made it a natural choice for a study examining the ambiguous process of transitioning from instructional design to performance improvement.

With the study's theoretical approach described, the next chapter will look at the key features of constructivist grounded theory in terms of how they were practically applied to this study. Although the features discussed in this section are key to constructivist grounded theory, and GT in general, how a researcher goes about putting them into practice is more subjective. Juliet Corbin, who partnered with Anselm Strauss for over 16 years, describes interpreting grounded theory:

I think grounded theory is a way of thinking. I believe it's a general all-round method, but the way you choose to do it—as long as you have theoretical sampling, constant comparison, ask some sort of questions—how you actually do it is individual. We all do it differently. The actual method you use is what works for you. (Morse et al., 2016, p. 236)

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Conclusion: Literature Review

Both instructional design and performance improvement require the ability to identify and solve novel problems, and with that variety comes a similarly wide range of options in how solutions are found. The common thread that unites both areas, however, is a need to obtain a deep understanding of both worker and workplace. Constructivist grounded theory provides the toolkit necessary to analyze this ambiguous transitional process.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In chapter 2, I reviewed the literature defining ID and PI, the models and tools helpful in navigating the transition from instructional design to performance improvement, and finally constructivist grounded theory, the methodology chosen for this study. With the literature review complete, I now move into the first of three chapters that document the study itself.

This chapter covers everything leading up to and including the collection of data. I begin with a recap of the study's purpose, followed by an explanation of the rationale behind my methodology and interview tool choices. Next, I catalog the materials needed, share recruitment details, explain the data collection process, and provide a list of interactions with the participants before, during and after the interview process.

Revisiting the Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to explore the ambiguous career transition of instructional designers as they become performance improvement practitioners. My research set out to look at the experiences, or "career stories," of professionals who successfully made this transition, and through them understand the influences and behaviours that made the process successful.

My Methodology Choice: Constructivist Grounded Theory

The study employs constructivist grounded theory as its theoretical approach. In the previous chapter I explored the origins of the methodology, the subsequent divergence in the approach of the two founders, and its most modern iterations, with a focus on Kathy Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory. To ensure a balanced view, I discussed some common critiques of grounded theory in general, and briefly addressed how Charmaz's Constructivist GT deals with them. Now, moving beyond the literature, this chapter sets out to explain the reasoning

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behind my methodology selection, and examine the role of the researcher as an active participant in the construction of their research.

Why Constructivist Grounded Theory?

This study explores the transitional process undertaken by instructional designers as they become performance improvement practitioners. Studies that are exploratory in nature preclude a study design that is quantitative, and are better-served by qualitative design (Creswell, 2012). When my research proposal was first created, there was little specific information available about the individual transition from instructional design to performance improvement. Of all the qualitative methodologies available, a grounded theory approach seemed like the best choice because it is well-adapted to research that seeks a “broad theory or explanation of a process” (Creswell, 2012, p. 423).

An Active Participant in the Construction of the Research

Another strength of Kathy Charmaz’s GT is its ability to incorporate the researcher both as an active participant and practitioner of the subject of study. Over the years my research took place, I was living what I was studying. I was, and still am, navigating the ambiguous career transition between being an instructional designer to a performance improvement consultant. Constructivist grounded theory acknowledges and leverages the researcher’s interaction with the data, and uses that interaction to construct knowledge which furthers the research (Charmaz 2015a). The ability of GT to embrace a researcher’s personal experience in study construction transformed my biases and limited objectivity with the subject from a possible liability into a definable benefit.

During the process I tried to remain open to the possibilities of learning while coding and make an effort to “learn and examine how [my] past influences the way [I] see the world and

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[my] data” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 105). I most definitely interacted with the data during theory construction, and was able to wholeheartedly “acknowledge subjectivity and the researcher’s involvement in the construction and interpretation of data” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 40). Charmaz’s constructivist take on grounded theory, therefore, seemed to be the right choice for this study.

Conclusion: Constructivist Grounded Theory is the Right Choice

Charmaz’s constructivist grounded theory is the ideal iteration of grounded theory for this study because it allowed me to embrace my interaction with the data. I acknowledge that subjectivity influenced my “construction and interpretation of data” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 40). With the choice of constructivist grounded methodology explained, the next section explores my choice of interview tool.

My Tool Choice: Career Story Interviews

With the study’s theoretical approach described, it is now possible to move on to the practical realities of data collection and study design. This section explains my choice of “career story interviews” as the technique of choice and explores why this style of interview is best suited for this study. After detailing the theoretical background, I describe the modifications I made to design this study’s interview.

Why Career Story Interviews?

The ambiguous nature of this study’s subject required an interview that allows space for the participants to tell their stories while maintaining enough structure to keep the conversation focused on their career story. Diane Kuhlmann’s life story interview technique meets these criteria. In order to study the development of expertise in tax accounting, Kuhlmann collected her data “by conducting 60 to 90 minute, one-on-one interviews in which the technical-tax experts shared their life stories” (Kuhlmann & Ardichvili, 2015). Her description of the

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differences between compliance and consulting accountants, and the transition from one to the other, echoed how Foshay et al. described instructional designers and performance improvement consultants (2013). This parallel prompted me to take a deeper look at Kuhlmann's life story interview technique, but unfortunately its mechanics were not a focus of her paper. The search for specifics about this style of interview led me to Robert Atkinson's claim, from his book *The Life Story Interview*, that "Storytelling is in our blood" (2002, p. 122). This book details the depth and breadth of the technique, and the power of giving each participant the opportunity to "tell his or her story in the way that person chooses to tell it" (Atkinson, 2002, p. 126).

By adapting the life story interview to collect oral histories of experts who have experienced the ID-to-PI career path, I gained valuable insight that helped demystify the ambiguity inherent to the ID-to-PI transition Process (Mitchell, 1996).

What Is the Life Story Interview, and How Does It Work in Qualitative Research?

Atkinson charts the evolution of the life story interview from oral history into a legitimate data-collection method in qualitative research, describing it as a technique capable of accurately describing the "essence of one person's entire life" (2002, p. 123). This narrative emphasis in interview design offers "practical, specific insights" (Creswell, 2012, p. 502), and "captures an everyday, normal form of data that is familiar to individuals" (2012, p. 502). In life story interviews, the participants' stories are the data.

According to Atkinson, two main types of life story interviews are prevalent in modern research: the naturalistic approach and the constructivist approach (2002). The naturalistic approach is designed "to let their [participants'] voices be heard, to let them speak for and about themselves first" (Atkinson, 2002, p. 124) by limiting the participant's interaction with the interviewer. The constructivist approach differs by allowing substantial collaboration between

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interviewer and respondent, giving the interviewer opportunities to provoke shifts of context in the respondent's story (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). This study adopted the latter approach in order to better steer participants toward experiential anecdotes that explained an already hard-to-define transition, and avoid losing focus on the topic, rather than attempting to provide less focused free-form personal histories.

For life story interview techniques to work in qualitative research the researcher's interaction with their participants must be carefully designed. What follows is an overview of the study's implementation of the interview technique to demonstrate how this type of interview works in practice.

My career story interviews started with written instructions provided before the interview, along with a worksheet to facilitate the mental exercise of looking at the influences of their career path in chapter format. The participants submitted their worksheets prior to the interview. Both researcher and participant had access to the completed worksheet during the interview, but in most cases the participants didn't seem to be actively referencing it. At the beginning of each interview, I provided a quick personal introduction, explained the study, and asked for permission to record the conversation. Participants were invited to tell their story chronologically, with most beginning with chapter 1 and some adding a prologue. Before transitioning from one chapter to the next, I asked four pre-planned questions about who they were during that chapter and what the most important influences were. I sometimes added questions that were not predetermined in order to clarify issues or focus the conversation, but tried to keep my interruptions to their storytelling to a minimum.

I adapted the constructivist life story interview method for this study in order to focus on the respondents' career, rather than including details less germane to the topic being studied. I

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named my process “career story interview” as a result. With this basic definition in mind, the next section will deal with the specific design of the study’s interview technique.

Designing the Career Story Interview

Amendments to the life story interview technique are as common and varied as the career paths they describe. An inherently adaptable methodology, making changes to the life story interview process is common practice (Atkinson, 2002). I designed the career story interview technique by adapting the work of two groups of researchers; Kevill et al. and Lieblich et al. Kevill et al’s study, which interviewed entrepreneurs, made amendments to Lieblich et al.’s interpretation of life story interviews. Both studies were useful as inspiration in designing this study’s approach to interviewing its participants.

The life story interview technique Kevill et al. amended first featured in Lieblich et al.’s book *Narrative Research: Reading, Analysis, and Interpretation (1998)*. Kevill et al. were the main theoretical influence on my design, though I did amend some aspects of their approach.

Table 3 summarizes these differences.

Table 3 Summary of Differences Between Kevill’s Study and Current Study

Interview aspect	Kevill et al’s study	Current study
Name of interview	Life story interview	Career story interview
Instructing participants to divide their story into chapters	Verbal instructions given at the beginning of the interview. Script used as guide, but instructions were often a part of the conversation.	Written instructions provided in advance of the interview.
Writing it down	A table was provided at the beginning of the interview. The completed table was called a chapter sheet	A worksheet was provided with instructions in advance of the interview.

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Interview aspect	Kevill et al's study	Current study
When researcher received a participants' chapters	Upon completion, at the beginning of the interview.	Participants were asked to send their worksheet to me 24 hours before the scheduled interview. In all cases they were received before this deadline.
Chapter sheet / worksheet access during the interview	Interviewer had control of the chapter sheet.	Both the participant and I had access to the completed worksheet. An amended version of Lieblich's four questions for each chapter was provided to the participants in advance, and then used during the interview.
Pre-planned questions	Interviewer asked pre-planned prompt questions if and when necessary.	Questions were also repeated in the interview introduction.
Follow up questions	Asking follow up questions if and when necessary.	Asking follow up questions if and when necessary.

Both Lieblich et al. and Kevill et al. gave their participants instructions and introduced the worksheet at the beginning of the interview, whereas I provided both instructions and worksheet in advance. **Table 4** compares these different versions of the instructions, and the complete worksheet used for this study can be found in **Appendix E Career Story Worksheet**.

The reason for my amendment was two-fold: (i) maximizing time with participants: by providing the worksheet before our call, the participants could begin to develop their responses ahead of time, and (ii) establishing trust with my participants, with the intention of making them as comfortable as possible while telling their stories. I also felt there was no benefit in keeping the completed worksheet from them.

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Table 4 *Instruction Comparison of Lieblich et al., Kevill et al., and the Current Study.*

Lieblich’s Introduction to Interview (Lieblich et al 1998 p.25)	Kevill’s Modified Introduction to Interview (Kevill et al 2015 p.456)	Current Study Worksheet instructions provided in advance of the interview.
<p>“Every person’s life can be written as a book. I would like you to think about your life now as if you were writing a book.</p> <p>First, think about the chapters of this book. I have here a page to help you in this task.</p> <p>Write down the years on the first column – from zero, from the day you were born.</p> <p>When did the first stage end? Write it here.</p> <p>Then go on to the next chapters, and put down the age that each one begins and ends for you. Go on till you reach your present age. You can use any number of chapters or stages that you find suitable to your own life”</p> <p>Once the chapters had been written by the interviewee the following instructions were given [...]</p> <p>Now, please, think about the title you would give each one of these chapters, and write it in the next column”</p>	<p>“Every person’s life and every organization’s life can be written as a book.</p> <p>In our previous discussions you mentioned how you have undertaken, over a number of years, a program of niche marketing within Merchandising Org for a number of different products.</p> <p>Today I would like to focus in detail on this aspect of Merchandising Org. I am interested throughout in getting your views and perspectives. I would like you to think about the story of this niche marketing approach as if you were actually writing this story a for a book.</p> <p>First, think about the chapters of this book. I have here a page to help you in this task.</p> <p>Write down the years on the first column – from zero, from the day the idea of this niche marketing approach was born. When did the first stage end? Write it here.</p> <p>Then go on to the next chapters, and put down the time that each one begins and ends. Go on till you reach the present day. You can use any number of chapters or stages that you find suitable for the story.</p> <p>Now, please, think about the title you would give each one of these chapters, and write it in the next column. Do you have any questions?”</p>	<p>Think about the story of your career as if you were actually writing a book. First, think about the chapters of your book. Use the table on the next pages to help you in this task. Feel free to modify the format of the table.</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write down the period of your first chapter. What year did this chapter begin? In which year did this chapter end? 2. What is the chapter title? 3. In a few keywords or bullet points, jot down a description or an outline of this chapter and its significance in your career path. 4. Repeat. Go on until you reach present day. You can use any number of chapters that you find suitable for your story

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Lieblich et al. provide questions that are content-agnostic regarding the story told in each chapter. I decided that pre-planned questions for each chapter gave me the structure needed to facilitate a smooth interview, while both limiting my influence and minimizing interruptions. Kevill et al. did not provide examples of interview questions, so Lieblich et al.'s work provided a starting point in designing these pre-planned questions. **Table 5** compares Lieblich et al.'s pre-planned questions with the ones I used for my interviews.

Table 5 *Comparison of Lieblich's Pre-Planned Questions with Current Study*

Lieblich's Pre-Planned Questions (Lieblich et al 1998 p.26)	Current Study's Pre-Planned Questions
<i>Verbally told to participant</i>	<i>Provided on worksheet and reviewed verbally with participant the beginning of the interview</i>
1. Tell me about a significant episode or a memory that you remember from this stage.	1. Tell me about the significant events from this chapter.
2. What kind of a person were you during this stage?	2. Tell me about the kind of person you were during this chapter.
3. Who were significant people for you during this stage, and why?	3. Who were the significant people for you during this chapter, and why?
4. What is your reason for choosing to terminate this stage when you did?	4. How and why did this chapter end?

The career story interview, a customized version of the life story interview, provided the ideal amount of structure for this study. Spacing out the steps of the original technique gave participants an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and identify the events most relevant to share during their career story interview.

Conclusion: The Career Story Interview - The Best Choice

Using a constructivist life story interview amended into a career story interview was the right technique for this study because it balanced structure with narrative freedom, giving space for participants to tell their story the way they chose to, with minimal disruptions. With the

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study's interview technique described, the next section will explain the practical aspects of the study's presentation to potential participants.

The Recruitment Story

The recruitment story covers the building and pilot-testing of my recruitment materials, the identification of criteria for potential participant sampling types, and my phased strategy for actual recruitment. Surprisingly, preparing for recruitment ended up taking more time than recruitment itself.

Participant Material

Before collecting data or beginning recruitment, I first needed to identify how to introduce potential participants to the study, and determine how information about the study could best be disseminated to them. I worked with my supervisor, Dr. Richard Schmid, to devise the following:

- An informal introduction to the study, including the purpose of the research and steps required to become a participant.
- A call for participants.
- Information and consent forms required to participate in a research study.
- A description of what to expect before, during and after the interview.
- A career story interview worksheet.

I built a website to disseminate the above-listed materials. The reason for this was two-fold: (i) to encourage sharing of my call for participants beyond direct emails and social media postings, and (ii) to ensure that all potential participants received the same information.

Unfortunately, the software used to build (Adobe Muse) and host (Adobe Business Catalyst) the website have both been decommissioned, so the website no longer exists. *Appendix A Snapshots*

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of Recruitment Website has screenshots of the website, and the subsequent appendices: **Appendix B** *Call for Participants*, **Appendix C** *Information and Consent to Participate in a Research Study*, **Appendix D** *What to Expect*, and **Appendix E** *Career Story Worksheet* contain the attached documents. What follows is a description of the user experience provided by the website.

Potential participants received the website URL via either direct email or a LinkedIn message from me or someone I had sent it to. When potential participants clicked on the website link they were greeted with the words *Student Research* and four icons; a megaphone that linked to the call for proposals, a thumbs up icon that linked to the information and consent to participate in a research study form, a lightbulb icon linking to what to expect, and a pencil icon that brought users to the career story interview worksheet. Below the four icons was an informal introduction to the study titled *Help ISDs enhance their career transition to PI*. Finally, I introduced myself, provided details about the study, and explained the steps necessary if the recipient wanted additional information or if they were ready to volunteer.

The four icons were repeated below these next steps with additional details describing each linked attachment. When the user clicked on the call for participants, they found a one-page PDF document with a short introduction to the study, requirements to participate, what participants would be asked to do, and time estimates. The information and consent to participate in a research study was a three-page PDF with study details, the purpose of the study, a snapshot of the procedures, risks and benefits, confidentiality, conditions to participate, and a participation declaration. What to expect was a one-page PDF that outlines what a participant can expect before the interview, during the interview and after the interview. Lastly, the Career Story worksheet was a two-page word document. The first page had the instructions listed in **Table 4**,

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and a placeholder for the participant to record the details of the interview. The second page was a four-column, eleven row table with the header row indicating chapter number, period, name of chapter and chapter description or outline of main ideas.

Piloting Materials

I piloted the materials and practiced the life story interview technique before launching recruitment. Two people were interested in my study but were not performance improvement professionals. They volunteered to review the recruitment material and provide feedback. They also granted me pilot interviews on condition they would remain anonymous and there would be no recording. The feedback provided during this pilot enabled me to improve the call for participants website and materials. Most of the feedback centered around clearer messaging, swapping academic jargon for layman's terms, and giving step-by-step instructions.

Planning for Recruitment

Given the ambiguity of the ID-to-PI transition, recruiting participants with relevant experience and perspective was a very important step. This section describes my recruitment planning.

The Language of Selection Criteria. I am a unilingual researcher based in Montréal, Canada; a country with two official languages, and a city with many more non-official mother tongues (Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, 2012). Given these constraints, the first selection criteria was that all participants must have full professional proficiency in the English language.

Initial and Theoretical Sampling. In recruitment, theoretical sampling occurs when the data from one participant, directly or indirectly, drives the identification and recruitment of the next participant (Charmaz 2012; Charmaz 2015a). Charmaz summarizes the forward movement

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of the process, saying “initial sampling in grounded theory gets you started; theoretical sampling guides where you go” (2015a, p. 162). Many studies setting out to be grounded in theory run into problems applying theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2015a). My study began with initial sampling, but I did not achieve true theoretical sampling in recruitment because the analysis of one participant’s interview never led to a new participant profile or the recruitment of another participant.

Anticipating Participant Profiles. My initial sampling began with expert performance improvement practitioners who were once instructional designers. Before starting recruitment, I anticipated that theoretical sampling would lead to participants who were novice performance improvement professionals and expert instructional designers. This conjecture was natural because these categories constitute the breadth of experience associated with the career transition process under investigation. I anticipated three waves of recruitment with the following criteria:

1. Expert PIs: (i) Practicing performance improvement professional for five or more years. (ii) Previously worked as an instructional systems designer for a minimum of 3 years (this might overlap with their PI work).
2. Novice PIs: (i) Currently a practicing performance improvement professional. (ii) Previously worked as an instructional systems designer for a minimum of 3 years (this might overlap with their PI work).
3. Expert IDs: (i) Currently working as a senior or lead instructional designer. (ii) A minimum of 3 years work experience as an instructional systems designer.

Initially, my supervisor and I agreed that my study should aim to include five participants due to the potentially vast amount of data that could be generated per participant. Interest in participating in my study occurred faster than we anticipated, and I closed recruitment after

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scheduling six interviews. All my participants fell into the first anticipated category, and my supervisor and I agreed that while exploring the other participant profiles was an area of interest for another study, it was not within the scope of this one. The benefit of this limited sample size, however, was that the study's in-depth approach to interviews led to a very rich haul of data.

Participants recalled stories in their own words and spoke candidly about their circumstances at various points in their careers, often ranging from their lives before becoming IDs to the present day as expert PIs. Some of the limitations of the study's theoretical sampling during the recruitment process were also mitigated by the fact that, despite only fitting into one of the three anticipated categories, the breadth of the participants' experiences covered the other two. As experienced PIs with firsthand knowledge of the transition process from ID to PI, the participants were able to describe many of the intermediate steps that would have been the focus of the two other participant categories.

The Recruitment Plan

This study used both opportunistic and snowball sampling during recruitment, beginning with a search for participants in my own network, and subsequently broadening in scope. This section describes my recruitment plan.

Opportunistic Sampling. Luborsky and Rubinstein define opportunistic sampling as “a technique that uses an open period of recruitment that continues until a set number of subjects, events, or institutions are enrolled... selection is based on a first-come, first-served basis” (1995, p. 10). I employed a two-pronged strategy for opportunistic sampling: first, promote the call for participants via my network, and second, promote through two professional communities.

My strategy for promoting the call for participants via my network included: posting in social media groups, posting to my own social media profiles, including LinkedIn, Twitter, and

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Facebook, sending personalized messages to potential participants I didn't know, but whose contact details were publicly accessible, and sending personalized message to suitable candidates that I did know.

The two professional communities I was hoping to recruit from were the International Society of Performance and Improvement (ISPI) and the Association for Talent Development (ATD, formerly ASTD). At the time of recruitment, I was an active member of the former group and a passive member of the latter. I inquired about recruitment with both organizations, and ISPI responded with an approval letter stating that I would be granted access to recruit through membership. ATD's response wasn't as positive: "ATD has a policy against[sic] promoting recruitment and giving outside researchers access to our members (Moore, personal communication, July 18, 2016).

Mindful of my digital footprint and the amount of digital clutter potential participants might be exposed to daily, I first focused on people that I knew. I contacted them mostly through email or private LinkedIn messages. This, coupled with the snowball sampling method described below, generated enough interest that I did not need to expand my recruitment strategies to social media, people I didn't know, or direct help with recruitment from ISPI's membership.

Snowball Sampling. Creswell defines snowball sampling as instances when, "the researcher asks participants to identify others to become members of the sample" (Creswell 2012, p. 146). I labelled individuals who would have access to further potential participants as "gatekeepers." I reached out to gatekeepers through email or LinkedIn, sending a personal message with information about the study and a link to the call for participants. I invited the gatekeeper to forward the message to anyone they knew that was eligible and might be interested

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in participating. I offered to provide a draft message they could customize and use to send along to their network. Any potential participants were asked to contact me.

Gatekeepers as Potential Participants. During opportunistic recruitment, I treated every potential participant as a potential gatekeeper for the purposes of snowball sampling. Almost all of the gatekeepers were potential participants, with one exception- a colleague who was beginning their career as an instructional designer and had access to expert performance improvement professionals.

Gatekeepers and Potential Participants

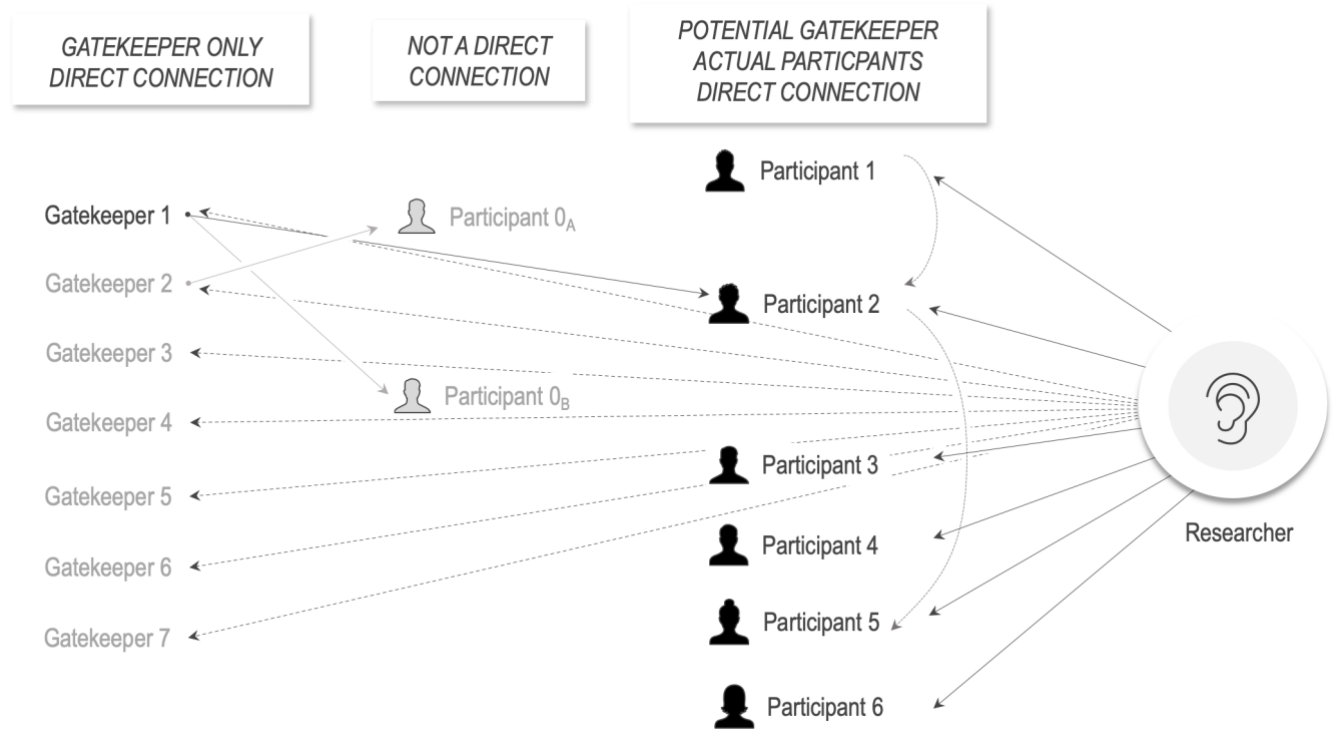
The recruitment stage lasted approximately one month in the late summer and early autumn of 2016. I ultimately engaged with fifteen people during recruitment; twelve were potential gatekeepers and study participants, one was a gatekeeper only, and two potential participants contacted me via a gatekeeper.

In two cases, one study participant initiated the participation of another study participant. I labelled gatekeepers within my network who ended up participating in the study themselves as “direct connections.” Both of the potential participants who were not within my network and had contacted me through a gatekeeper eventually declined to participate. After a few email exchanges, one decided it was not the right time to participate in a research study, and the other lost interest in participating.

Figure 9 provides a visual representation of the recruitment story. Interestingly, all the individuals who ended up participating in the study were part of my existing network and identified as being part of the ISPI community.

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Figure 9 *Visual Representation of the Recruitment Story*



The story of recruitment isn't complete without talking about the participants that were recruited.

About the Participants

I was incredibly fortunate in my recruitment of participants, all of whom were generous with their time, highly qualified, and were refreshingly good storytellers. I feel privileged to have been granted a window into their career journeys.

My pool contained six participants, including four men and two women. All six identified as expert performance improvement professionals who once were instructional designers. Five were teachers before becoming instructional designers. All had graduate-level degrees, with two possessing doctorates and the others having a master's. There were also a variety of supplementary certifications and industry accreditations amongst the group. All participants spoke frequently about mentorship, both as a mentor and mentee. None of the participants had

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originally planned to be either an instructional designer or a performance improvement professional. **Table 6** presents a snapshot of commonalities in their experiences.

Table 6 *Snapshot of Participants' Experiences. Each Checkmark Represents a Participant Having Experience in that Category. For Example, Six Checkmarks Denotes All Six Participants Having had that Experience.*

Category		Category	
Teacher	✓✓✓✓✓	Wrote for professional Publications	✓✓✓✓✓
Military influence	✓✓	Attends conferences	✓✓✓✓✓✓
Mentee	✓✓✓✓✓✓	Presents at conferences	✓✓✓✓✓
Mentor	✓✓✓✓✓✓	Facilitation experience	✓✓✓✓✓✓
Spoke about the importance of metrics	✓✓✓✓✓	Belongs to an informal professional community	✓✓✓✓✓✓
Their work received positive recognition	✓✓✓✓	Management experience	✓✓✓✓✓
Supportive personal partnership	✓✓✓✓✓✓	ISD was not planned career	✓✓✓✓✓✓
Active in local professional organization	✓✓✓✓✓✓	PI was not a planned career	✓✓✓✓✓✓
Active in an international professional organization	✓✓✓✓✓✓	Experienced Organization Culture Clash	✓✓✓✓✓

Conclusion: Successful Recruitment

In general, the study's recruitment process went smoothly. Despite planning for several waves, I managed to populate the study without recourse to a wider second wave of recruitment efforts. I was delighted, but not surprised, that in a field dedicated to improving performance so many practitioners were willing to offer up their time and experience for this research study.

Before, During, and After the Interview

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Each stage of the interview process was designed specifically to both maintain a positive participant experience and draw out the most thorough results possible. With the recruitment process fully described, this section next details the interview process itself, from first contact with interested parties to post-interview follow-up. **Table 7** provides an overview of this process, each of those steps are described in detail further on in the section.

Table 7 Summary of Touchpoints Between Researcher and Participants.

Touchpoint	Details	Consent form presentation	Consent form prompt
First contact			
Direct connection, potential participant priority.	Personal message with link to Appendix B Call for Participants .	no	no
First contact			
Direct connection, potential gatekeeper priority	Personal message with link to Appendix B Call for Participants .	no	no
Follow up after potential participant indicates interest.	Invitation for pre-interview call. Time investment indication, including 30 minutes to review consent form and complete worksheet. Confirm study requirements are met. Links to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix A Snapshots of Recruitment Website • Appendix C Information and Consent to Participate in a Research Study • Appendix D What to Expect • Appendix E Career Story Worksheet 	yes	yes
A few exchanges to determine best time for the interview.	Most of these exchanges included the links noted above.	sometimes	sometimes
Calendar invitation.	Thanking participant for their interest in participating. Date of interview, approximate length of interview, interview will be recorded given participants' permission, reminder to please provide signed consent form and completed worksheet. Link to recruitment website	yes	yes

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Touchpoint	Details	Consent form presentation	Consent form prompt
<i>Appendix A Snapshots of Recruitment Website.</i>			
Approximately 48 hours before scheduled interview (not always sent depending on the exchanges).	Friendly reminder of date, time and dial-in details. Interview will be recorded given participants' permission, reminder to please provide signed consent form and completed worksheet (if not already submitted). Same links as above.	yes (if not already received)	yes (if not already received)
Approximately 24-72 hours after the interview.	Expression of gratitude for their time and sharing their story. Invitation to invite other participants to the study. Next steps for this study. Invitation to meet at the (then) upcoming ISPI conference which happened to be in the city I was currently living in, Montréal.	n/a	n/a
Various exchanges.	I had various exchanges with all participants after the interview.	n/a	n/a
Member checking.	Member checking was never done. This is addressed in the "Ensuring Reliability" section of chapter 5.	n/a	n/a

Interview: Before

Pre-Interview Connection. Once an eligible participant had indicated their interest in the study, I invited them to connect with me through a call or via email in order to answer any questions and provide an overview of the study. I connected with all participants via email, mostly for housekeeping such as securing the best time for our interview and collecting consent forms and career story worksheets. Some participants shared content they had curated or created before the interview, and some asked a few questions. I chatted with one participant on the phone about the study before our interview call. In some cases the participants' busy schedules resulted in some back and forth to plan the interview, and involved rescheduling. In hindsight, I could have made the process easier by providing a scheduling platform for those who preferred to book and/or change their interview time.

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Consent Forms: Presentation and Processing. Before the interviews took place, participants were presented with a consent form, and asked to complete and return it 24 hours before the scheduled interview. I received all the consent forms prior to the 24-hour deadline. The career story interview format involved participants recounting their career path in chapters that they organized ahead of time on their worksheet.

Interview: During

Interviews were conducted by phone or Skype at the participant's discretion. Most interviews began with a few minutes of pleasantries, which were not recorded. When appropriate, I asked the participants if they would allow me to record the interview. Upon approval, I pressed record and said something close to the script found in *Appendix F Sample Introduction to Interview*. I did once unwittingly say a participant's last name while recording, but made sure to omit the name when transcribing the interview. I encouraged participants to jump right in and tell their stories without being concerned about the four pre-planned questions. At the end of each chapter we reviewed the four questions together. Participants decided when to begin their career story. In practice, this meant that every career story began at a different point in each participant's life. These points ranged from childhood to adolescence, forward to post-secondary studies, and also when they first emerged into the professional landscape.

Given the breadth of the participants' work histories, almost every interview included breaks. Most breaks lasted just a few minutes, though one interview was pre-planned to take place over three consecutive days during the participant's commute to work. On a few occasions, connection quality deteriorated. In these cases, we hung up and called back immediately.

I adhered to the following guiding principles to help me facilitate the interviews:

- Create a safe space.

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- Be respectful.
- Minimize my talk-time.
- If a participant is in a vulnerable position do my best to be empathetic and, if applicable, share something similar about my journey.
- Be respectful of the participant's time.

How Was the Worksheet Used During the Interview? Both the participant and I had access to the completed worksheet during each interview. My experiences were designed to be different from those of the interviewer in Kevill et al.'s study, who found that when participants had control of their chapter sheet, "the telling of the chapters was subsequently rushed through" (2015, p. 458), which led to the "interviewer resolved to keep the chapter sheet in his control" (2015, p. 458).

I felt that the process of moving through the chapters ought to be a collaborative effort, and in many cases participants asked me to prompt them about the title and dates of their chapters. I found this system worked well; I listened as they told their story, and they could rely on me to periodically ask the same four questions for each chapter and provide details from their worksheet if needed.

Kevill et al. noted that their interview was rushed and therefore, "did not follow the intended format of each chapter being completed before moving onto the next" (2015, p. 458). My participants and I experienced some non-linear storytelling, but it was not as a result of being rushed; rather, it was just how the story was told. The first few times I experienced this, I felt the need to course-correct, but as I gained experience in facilitating the interviews I realized that gaps and mild non-linearity were an organic element of non-rehearsed storytelling.

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Other Questions. Along with the four questions asked each chapter, I asked two other types of question. The first was to ask for clarification or request more depth about something the participant shared. The second was reserved for the end of the interview, and aligned to the study’s research questions. I asked all the participants one or all of the questions detailed in **Table 8**, depending on time constraints.

Table 8 Checkmark Indicates if Participant was Asked the Extra Question at the End of the Interview.

Extra Question	1	2	4	4	5	6
Have you reached your perfect job?	✓					
How would you measure success as an ID and success as a PI?	✓					
If you could go back in time and give your younger self-career advice, what would it be?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
What steps would you suggest for an experienced ISD to make the transition to PI?		✓	✓	✓		✓
Do you feel your ISD expertise created opportunities or barriers for you?						✓

My participants were all extremely generous with their time, and frequently continued the discussion after our scheduled time had come to an end. The shortest interview was approximately seventy minutes, and the longest was over three hours. The average length was two hours.

Interview: After

I followed up with each participant via an email within seventy-two hours of the interview to thank them for their time and remind them I would soon be in contact with key takeaways from our talk as a form of member checking. I also invited them to contact me if they had any questions, wanted to add to our discussion, and/or recommend a possible future

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participant. *Appendix G Post Interview Email Template* is an example of that email.

Unfortunately, I grossly underestimated the time it would take to transcribe the interviews, and this changed the timeline I originally anticipated for the study.

Conclusion: Before, During and After the Interview

My participants' experience while in my research study was always a priority for me. From a carefully planned out initial contact and pre-interview communications, the interview itself, to following up after the interview. Unfortunately, unexpected delays did change the timeline and post-interview experience.

Conclusion: Methodology

This chapter has described the study's methodology and interview tool choices, the materials needed, the recruitment process, participant commonalities and interactions with the participants at all stages of the interview. With collection of data detailed, chapter 4 will focus on results, data handling and analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Chapter 4 continues to document what happened over the course of the study. While chapter 3 reviewed the methodology of the research, covering everything leading up to and including the collection of data, this chapter considers the results. Chapter 4 describes the handling of the study's data, and unanticipated difficulties with preparing the data for analysis. Next, I describe my progression from a confusing profusion of initial codes to a focused set of emerging themes. This analysis takes into account both the relevant literature and my own influences on the process, demonstrating how those preliminary categories transform into theoretical categories with overarching themes. Those themes are then described using a spreadsheet map that will later provide a starting point for discussion in chapter 5. Before this chapter ends, I also examine iterative aspects of data analysis that transcend the study's individual phases and resist easy categorization into my two-part structure.

Data Handling

With the interviews complete, "data handling" comprised everything that involved interacting with the data, apart from the actual analysis. The first step involved transforming the audio files into raw transcribed documents and then preparing the transcripts for coding, all the while ensuring access and storage guidelines were met. Though many aspects of data handling surpassed the exact bounds of this stage of the study, for the sake of clarity I define this stage's end as the moment when the transcripts were ready to be loaded into Atlas.ti, my Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software. It is interesting to note that my interaction with the data will not really end until after this thesis is submitted, and the collected data are eventually destroyed.

Transcription

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Transcription was a challenge, and constituted one of the greatest unanticipated difficulties of the entire thesis. This section describes this painful experience, which took much longer than I had anticipated during the study's planning process. If I were conducting my study in 2022 the accessibility features built into many virtual meeting platforms would make this process much simpler, but in 2017 my options were far more limited. The result was a transcription process so difficult that it changed the entire timeline of the study.

Massive Transcription Difficulties. Each interview ended with a promise that a follow-up email would be sent within seventy-two hours, followed by a transcription of the interview and a list of key takeaways. I didn't know it at the time, but the promise of a transcript within a few weeks turned out to be a complete impossibility.

Three main factors contributed to this massive and unanticipated delay: my work outside of being a student, life separate from both the work and study spheres, and the simple fact that I seriously underestimated how difficult the physical act of transcription would be for me. If I knew then what I know now, I would have included transcription by a third party in my consent form and invested the time required to find a research-based transcriber. In the event, however, I transcribed all 12 hours of interviews myself, a process that took several painful months. The advent of virtual meeting platforms offering auto-generated closed captions and transcription was just a few short years away, and ironically would have saved me all this trouble were I starting the study in 2022.

Transcription Tools. None of this is to say that I did not prepare for the transcription phase. I purchased a transcription pedal that allowed me to have both hands free for typing, as well as the software required to mate the audio recordings to the new hardware. In the event, I was so slow typing what I heard that I didn't need the pedal. The software still proved to be

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useful because of its transcription-specific options, including a function that would replay audio in segmented loops, with each iteration starting a bit deeper in the recording. Despite these useful features, nothing could compensate for just how drastically I had underestimated the time commitment required to transcribe such substantial interviews.

Transcription Time. This process lasted from the beginning of 2017 all the way to the fall of that same year. During this time my computer, and for a short while my transcription pedal, were always within arm's reach. My initial plan was to be prepared to transcribe a few minutes of recorded interview whenever possible. I transcribed on business trips, holidays, at coffee shops, and at my very own transcription station at home. The process was excruciating, and I can wholeheartedly say that I will never transcribe again.

Colourful Transcription. As I transcribed, I identified segments that stood out to me and highlighted these pieces of text with different colours. Altogether, I created seven types of highlighted text, some of which were functional while others formed the beginning of the coding process. *Table 9* lists the types of highlighted text and their meanings.

Table 9 *Types of Highlighted Text and Their Meanings.*

Type	Colour	Meaning
Removal of any markers or references.	Green	Markers or references are words that could lead to the identification of the participant. This could be any mention of a workplace, school, location, a person, or anything else I felt could be a possible identifier. I replaced each identifying word with a general word and number. For example, if Montréal was mentioned in an interview three times, and it was the second location mentioned in the interview, all three instances of Montréal would be replaced with "LOCATION 2."
PI influencer	Pink	A person that influenced the participant's transition to PI.
PI tools	Light Grey	Any tool or resource that influenced the participant's transition to PI.
Noteworthy	Blue	Interesting segments of transcripts - essentially in vivo codes.

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Type	Colour	Meaning
Not sure what this means.	Red	I didn't understand the recording so couldn't capture exactly what the participant had said, or something that I didn't fully understand. For the latter, I removed the highlight once I understood the text.
Timestamp	Yellow	I added timestamps at the approximate start of most chapters, and sometimes within chapters. This was helpful in finding specific passages in the recordings, especially given that I found it helpful to listen to the recordings as I coded.
Transcript of researcher	Dark Grey	The transcription of all my dialogue was greyed out.

The Bright Side of Transcription. Despite all of the challenges it presented, there was a bright side to the transcription period; it gave me no choice but to interact with the minutiae of my data at great length. These interviews were part of my life for months, and their transcription gave me time to reflect on the stories on a line-by-line basis that would eventually prove very useful in coding and analysis. I also became greatly appreciative of the privileged view my participants granted me on their careers, and grateful for the support of my thesis supervisor, friends, and family as I navigated the process. Despite being by far the most challenging part of my research, the transcription process both informed and benefitted this thesis, despite its high cost in time and emotional effort.

Preparing the Transcripts for Analysis

Before diving into the exciting process of coding, I needed to get the raw transcripts in shape to be loaded into my Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software, ensuring that my coding would go unobstructed. The raw transcripts had typos, identifiable information, and conversational filler words. This section describes the steps I followed to get the transcripts ready for coding, how I managed data storage, and how I prepared myself for the coding process itself.

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Cleaning up the Transcripts. Before coding could begin, the transcripts had to be cleaned up and anonymized. I had also been memoing since the first interview and throughout the transcription process. These memos were transferred to the memo feature in Atlas.ti.

I took into account the possibility that the process of cleaning up and anonymizing the transcripts might affect the outcome of my study. Since my research followed the principle of looking at a conglomerate of data and not individual pieces (Morse et al., 2016), however, I lean toward the assumption that this step did not noticeably change my research outcome. As a researcher who was also actively living the career transition that I was researching, I had an influence on the outcome of the study because I was what Morse et al. define as an instrument of analysis (2016). As I coded, I often listened to the interview recording in order to add “another dimension...a richness to the analysis” (Morse et al., 2016, p. 54). Kathy Charmaz suggests that “the emotion that comes out during the talks is lost in the transcribed interview accounts” (Morse et al., 2016, p. 54), so listening to the interviews while coding provided valuable emotional context. **Table 10** provides a summary of the steps I took in order to prepare the interview transcripts for analysis.

Table 10 *Steps in Preparing Transcripts for Analysis.*

	Step Name	Description
1	Ready to clean and highlight	These are the raw transcripts.
2	Cleaned and highlighted	The filler sounds (e.g. “um,” “ah”) and filler words (e.g. “you know,” “so,” “actually” etc.) were removed, and changes were made to simplify navigation during coding. These included modifying the layout to landscape, the spacing to double, and numbering each line of text. A table of contents was added and my dialogue was greyed out, giving a visual queue to not code it.
3a	Participant copy	In Step 3a most of the highlights were removed, except for two, which were renamed for clarity when given to the participant: ‘to be

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	Step Name	Description
		replaced during anonymization' in green and 'recording timestamp' in yellow.
3b	Ready to anonymize	Transcript with all the seven colour codes noted in Table 9 , but not yet anonymized.
4a	Anonymized	Removal of all identifiable markers or references. These references were replaced with placeholders. For example, if a participant said: "I lived in Montréal for the first part of this chapter while working for Ubisoft and teaching at Vanier College," the anonymized version would read: "I lived in LOCATION 2 for the first part of this chapter while working for ORGANIZATION 3 and teaching at SCHOOL 5." A well-maintained codebook enabled me to have consistent codes.
4b	Ready for Initial Coding	One final sweep of the transcripts between "a" and "b," as a clean-up and check for missed anonymizations. This final version was loaded into the Qualitative Data Analysis tool with highlighted text indicated in Table 9 .

Atlas.ti: the QDA Software Tool. The twelve hours of interviews transcribed to 332 pages and totalled 98,031 words in six Word documents. QDA software was definitely needed to make sense of this mountain of data. I chose Atlas.ti for qualitative data analysis because I had been exposed to an earlier version of the software in my methodology course, and I found it to be a powerful tool with many options supporting the coding process and active memoeing. The solitary drawback with the software was its cost, but I was able to secure a heavily discounted rate with a promotional code disseminated at the end of their public webinars.

Data Access and Storage. All audio files and text data were password protected on my laptop and desktop, and not accessible to anyone other than myself and my supervisor. Any secondary storage or backup was on my supervisor's University account, and thus fully protected. The study's data will be retained until the prescribed term following publication, or after one year of the completed thesis.

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Constructed Job Aids. I built a customized toolkit of job aids to help me interpret Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory, and thereby conduct the analysis phase of my study more effectively. Primarily based on the book *Constructing Grounded Theory* (Charmaz 2015a), the job aids cover a summary of Charmaz's analysis steps of the Initial and Focused phases of coding. A sample of these job aids appear in *Appendix H Interpreting Charmaz's Constructivist Grounded Theory*.

Conclusion: Data Handling

The process of transcription and preparation of collected data for analysis was fraught with unexpected challenges, and changed the timeline of my thesis substantially. Some positives did emerge, however, including a deep dive into my participant data that made memoing easier and jump-started the coding stage before it had officially begun. More in line with my expectations was how the data was securely handled, and the emergence of important themes as soon as I began working with the data. With collection and preparation complete, I was finally free to start the analysis.

Data Analysis

After getting ready for the coding process by preparing the transcripts, gathering the appropriate tools, and familiarizing myself with the methodology, I was finally ready to dig into coding. Saldaña describes a code in qualitative research as "most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (2009, p. 3). In this study, most of my codes were just that; a word or short phrase that represented a meaning to me. In some cases, particularly during in vivo coding, my code was the direct text from the transcript. A segment of in vivo code could also include other code types. In my interpretation of Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory

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there were multiple waves of coding. In general terms, these broke into two phases: initial and focused, though I did find the phases to be iterative, often melding into one another. What follows is a closer look at each phase of the coding process.

Initial Phase

In this phase, my role as the researcher was to be open to wherever the data took me. The goal of this phase was to use the participant data to drive the process of generating and defining core categories. During this phase, constructivist grounded theory suggests that it is very important to stay close to the data in order to avoid applying pre-existing categories during coding (Charmaz, 2015a). This is accomplished first with line-by-line coding, then with incident-with-incident and concurrent in vivo coding, along with memo writing. *Figure 10* lists questions that Charmaz recommends researchers ask themselves while coding during this phase.

Figure 10 *Questions Charmaz Recommends Researchers Ask Themselves During Initial Coding.*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is this data a study of?• What does the data suggest? Pronounce? Leave unsaid? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• From whose point of view?• What theoretical category does this specific datum indicate? |
|--|--|

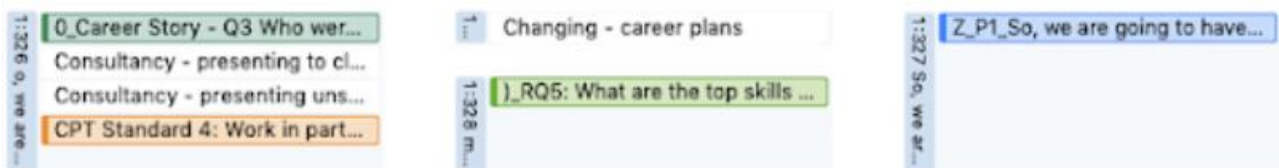
(Charmaz, 2015a, p. 104)

Line-by-Line Coding. Line-by-line coding is part of the initial phase of grounded theory, and helps the researcher become familiar with the data and the gestation of ideas (Charmaz, 2015a). The mechanics of line-by-line coding for my participant interviews was straightforward: I highlighted a line within the transcription and then labeled that line with at least one code. The choice of codes, however, was a bit more challenging. At first my codes tended to simply describe what I was reading in each line, which is contradictory to Charmaz's instructions, which recommend using gerunds, avoiding descriptions, and focusing on actions (Charmaz, 2015a). After some practice and re-coding, coding for actions using gerunds came quickly and easily.

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Overcoming Code Confusion. At the start of coding I was preoccupied with accuracy. However I soon came to understand Charmaz’s suggestion that “grounded theorists aim to code for possibilities suggested by the data rather than ensuring complete accuracy of the data” (2015a, p. 107). This newfound freedom led to a lot of new codes, and about half-way through coding my first interview I realized that they could easily become unruly. I found it difficult to remember or find the code I had first used to describe a similar line. This resulted in several codes that meant essentially the same thing. Upon finishing up the first interview, I went back into my codes and started to group them. This is where the power of Atlas.ti as a software tool emerged. I was able to create buckets of codes that I prefixed with specific words. This made it easier to code going forward, and key words like “consultancy” allowed me to quickly identify emerging themes. See *Appendix I Snapshot of Coding in Atlas.ti* for screenshot examples for “consultancy.” I also used Atlas.ti’s colour labeling feature to distinguish some of the codes. For example, in vivo codes were labeled blue and Certified Performance Technologist (CPT) standards were labelled orange. **Figure 11** is an example of how these labels looked in Atlas.ti.

Figure 11 Example of Prefixed and Colour Labeling in Atlas.ti.



Atlas.ti has a helpful function in which any existing code can be dragged onto a specific line in the transcript. This, along with the prefixes and colour labeling, made it much easier to apply existing codes and reduce the occurrence of multiple versions of a code with similar meanings.

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Event-with-Event. The coding stage I call “event-with-event” Charmaz refers to as “incident-with-incident.” Given that the roots of Charmaz’s research lie in medical sociology, the term “incident” seemed macabre for a performance improvement study, and I decided to rename this coding type. “Events” in this study were milestones in participants’ career stories, for example being introduced to instructional design and performance improvement as two distinct events. I identified thirty-nine coded events during this step, though some of the codes ended up being fairly similar. These codes are listed in *Table 11*. I used the prefix “001” for all event codes because I thought they would benefit from being easily retrievable at the top of the code list. I also added numbers between word events and codes in an attempt to organize the codes, but eventually realized that this level of organization was excessive, and stopped midway.

Table 11 *List of Event Codes Used in Event-with-Event Coding.*

001_Event_1_Intro to consultancy	001_Event_9_Being a savvy PI
001_Event_1_Intro to ISD	001_Event_10_Sharing experience with others
001_Event_1b_Becoming an ISD	001_Event_11_Recieving Recognition
001_Event_2_Being a Savvy ISD	001_Event_12_teaching others about PI
001_Event_2a_Becoming a Savvy ISD	001_Event_12_Using your PI tools on yourself
001_Event_3_Intro to PI	001_Event_13_becoming a leader
001_Event_4_Thinking about becoming PI	001_Event_13_becoming a trainer
001_Event_4b_Performance”ah-ha” lens,	001_Event_13_becoming an author - Publishing
001_Event_5_Intro to ISPI (not linear)	001_Event_13_being a leader
001_Event_5_Intro to ISPI EMEA (not linear)	001_Event_14_becoming an influencer
001_Event_5b_Intro to ATD (not linear)	001_Event_becoming an Entrepreneur
001_Event_6_Becoming a PI consultant	001_Event_Being unemployed
001_Event_6b_Becoming a consultant	001_Event_external changes impact work
001_Event_6b_Introduction to consultancy	001_Event_Global change impacts career
001_Event_6c_Becoming a savvy consultant	001_Event_Intro to being a business owner
001_Event_6c_immersing oneself in PI	001_Event_Intro to Systems Dynamic Society
001_Event_6d_Becoming a PI evangelist	001_Event_learning about running a business
001_Event_7_Becoming an intermediate PI	001_Event_NOT Receiving Recognition
001_Event_8_Becoming an savvy PI	001_Event_opportunity from network
	001_Event_running a business

As mentioned in chapter 2, coding for events prompted me to “think analytically about them” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 106), and identify recurring events both within one participant’s interview and across multiple participants. As suggested by Charmaz, I continuously reviewed

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events as I coded the transcripts and analyzed the data, which allowed me to improve my understanding of the participants' stories by comparing both events and their codes (2015a).

Atlas.ti also gave me the ability to see similar events across all participants at a glance.

Figure 12 shows an example output from Atlas.ti for the event "Intro to ISD." The quotations are truncated in the figure, but when working with the software itself, I had access to the full quotes with a click of a button.

Figure 12 *Example of Atlas.ti Output of the Event 'Intro to ISD'.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 001_Event_1_Intro to ISDQuotations: do you want a chapter on how I get into instructional... And then when I started becoming an instructional designer... It is at Place of study 1 that I really start to dive deeply... That really only takes us up to... And some of that touched on training and development... I start to see instructional design and training and development as a potential career pa... Really thinking through this behavioural psychology, learning and development... I ended up completing that portfolio piece... It is my foray into junior ID... Initially, a large part of what we did was training... Huge amounts of training... And so we did a variety of training... ISD was kind of the basis for doing this kind of work. this was my first start in the area... In the courses I had ... I remember before lunch time even I thought "this is what I want to do... And I was like I'd love to do this! ...
--

Across Phases

The visual representation of grounded theory represented in **Figure 8** makes the initial and focused phases seem theoretically distinct. In practice, however, I frequently found that these two phases overlapped. The more I examined my own coding process, the more elements of data analysis seemed to follow the same pattern, resisting easy categorization into one of the two main phases. In vivo coding, constant comparison, and memo writing all shared elements across the methodology, so in this section I examine them as part of an overlapping stage. Though

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seemingly complex, the iterative nature of these steps flowed naturally as I undertook them, and led me to a comprehensive understanding of my participants' stories.

In Vivo Coding. In vivo codes help preserve the meaning of a participant's voice by using their own words to label their experiences. Despite the fidelity this allows in code selection, I consciously wanted to avoid the trap of selecting pithy segments for these codes instead of more relevant but mundane ones (Charmaz, 2015a). Grounded theory takes this possibility into account, and if carefully selected, even vivid in vivo codes can be useful when the time comes for analysis (Charmaz, 2015a). With this risk in mind, I started capturing in vivo codes many months before ever loading the transcripts into Atlas.ti.

My in vivo coding happened iteratively, and during the live interviews I added time stamps and a brief description whenever I found a point of interest that I anticipated wanting to revisit. While transcribing I then highlighted significant segments of transcripts to draw my own attention to these passages.

Coding for the participants' voices continued throughout the initial and focused phases. All in vivo codes were captured via Atlas.ti, regardless of the stage at which I identified them. In the hope that the codes would properly integrate into grounded theory, I treated these segments analytically by constantly comparing them, as recommended by Charmaz (2015a). During the initial phase I constantly compared the codes in order to build categories. In the focused phase I grounded the initial coding categories in both my literature and my own influences on the study, in order to prepare for analysis.

Constant Comparison. Constant comparison is a key component of a data-driven approach to theory construction, and is an active part of many stages of constructivist

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methodology. I used this method throughout data collection and coding, with the process' complexity steadily increasing as I started analytic work.

In tune with constructivist grounded theory methodology, I began by comparing lines and events within individual interviews, then broadened my scope to include comparisons with the data collected from other participants (Charmaz, 2015a). Memos played an important role in these comparisons, allowing me to develop ideas, categories and themes without losing track of where I was in my analysis. This ongoing interaction with my participant data positioned me to compare “more abstract categories with data, codes, and other categories” (Charmaz, 2015b, p. 1618) later in the process.

Memo Writing. Kathy Charmaz describes memo-writing as a bridge between data collection and the creation of a research theory that encompasses both the original data and relevant literature (2015a). I found the process invaluable throughout my analysis.

Memo writing took multiple forms throughout my research. I often practiced what Charmaz calls “private conversations” (2015a) with myself as I wrote out ideas, addressed challenges, interacted with my participant data, and trouble-shot problems. My memo writing was often free-form, with some memos being very focused on specific research topics, and others amounting to essentially random notes.

To impose some order on this process, I arbitrarily drew a line and defined the beginning of my memo writing as the notes I jotted on the printed copies of the participants' completed career worksheets. I studied the worksheets before speaking with each participant, and the notes I took helped me begin to grasp the context of their stories. As a fictional example of this process, if a participant mentioned pharmaceutical training in New Jersey, a little research would reveal

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that New Jersey is one of Northern America's big pharma hubs. An example of a memo created for this example on the career story worksheet can be seen in **Figure 13**.

Figure 13 *Example of What a Memo Would Look Like with the Fictional Example About Pharma.*

P5 New Jersey North American pharma hub - training, P2 did pharma training as well... similarities?

Memo writing proved to be a versatile tool, and I subsequently created more memos during the transcription process. Memo creation during transcription allowed me to take a valuable second look at my participant material, and I added any salient new observations to the hard copy of the career worksheets. These handwritten memos were then transferred to Atlas.ti, and frequently triggered new analytical angles during the rest of the research process.

Once inputted into Atlas.ti my memos were a dynamic space in which I could both record new ideas and draw connections as I noticed them. Charmaz positively recommends the leveraging of comparisons of data and memo writing, and I did find that the process heightened my awareness of the concepts presented by my interviewees (2015a). The memos started as a collection of notes and evolved into an emergent analytical and theory-building tool, often helping me develop notes straight into broader categories and themes. **Figure 14** shows some examples of my memo writing.

Figure 14 *Samples of my Memos in Atlas.ti.*

001_Event_4_Thinking about becoming PI

- *have team members or trusted colleagues that you can discuss with*
- *continue to work on consultancy skills*
- *identify and appropriately react to client resistance*
- *begin to apply CPT standards 1-4*
- *consultancy skills - presentation to clients*

Advice:

Take more times listen to others. Listen more than talk. I know it sounds kind of obvious, I would be hearing people but not listening because I thought I knew better and the key things is to tell yourself that you don't know it all and it kind of realized the older I get, the less I know.

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Conclusion: Iterative Overlaps Between Coding Phases

Though it is useful to look at coding in distinct phases, the data-driven approach of constructivist grounded theory, coupled with the deeply in-depth approach taken, led to both coding and memo writing that was more iterative than strictly bound into specific stages. This phenomenon persisted into subsequent stages of my research, and though I have broken many parts of my thesis into distinct steps, it is worth remembering that in practice most were not nearly as discrete or clear cut as they sometimes appear.

Focused Phase

I transitioned into focused coding by making decisions about the initial codes, and assigning them into carefully crafted categories. There was no clear beginning to this phase, and I began categorizing my initial codes while still deep in line-by-line coding (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2014). This iterative interaction reminded me strongly of Hoare's "dancing with data" (Hoare et al., 2012). In line with Charmaz's predictions, I found that codes gave me direction and preliminary ideas to explore and the methodology provided the space for "theoretical playfulness" to see where analysis might lead (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 120).

Code Groupings - Preliminary Categories

Several categories emerged from my initial coding. The first version of these categories were groupings of codes or preliminary categories. **Table 12** demonstrates this part of the coding structure using one of the emerging themes discussed in chapter 5, Consultancy, as an example.

Table 12 *Example of Coding Structure - Collection of Codes that Became "Consultancy" Categories.*

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building business • building long term relationships • exploratory tour • getting client buy in • improving with experience • NOT getting client buy in • Things happen • "selling" your services • a career of different gigs • access to decision makers • Asking questions • Being a mentor to emerging professionals • Being resourceful • being rewarded for hard work • building a project • building expertise • business basics • challenging situations • changing • Hiring expectations • client not interested in PI details • client resistance • client wants results • coming back after failed project • communicator • cross selling • diving into new project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doing whatever the client wants • facilitation skills • financial advice • finding 'opportunities' • finding 'opportunities' to earn • money tomorrow • finding 'opportunities' to improve • finding balance - what we need to and getting to do what i want to do • finding market • getting first client • getting paid • hiring employees • identifying gaps • implementation • interact with stakeholders • learning from missed opportunity making first sale • making your client look good managing risk • many part time work = full time • negotiation skills • new clients • not finding work • not getting paid for failed • interventions • part 1 - doing interesting work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part 2 - running the business • part of the success story of client partnership • performers not getting it • philosophy of working with clients • playing host • presenting to client • presenting to large groups • presenting to leadership • presenting unsavoury results to leadership/client • pushing paradigm shift / disruption • reading people • recommending interventions resources • results = getting paid • risk taker • Sharing success stories • Solving the problem • sudden end of contract • surviving bad project • systems training • traits reoccur in clients and stakeholders • unpredictability • working with executives
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Progression Towards Literature, Theoretical Categories, and General Themes

These preliminary categories presented me with visible parallels to literature, which reinforced my confidence in creating theoretical categories, and subsequently beginning to identify overarching themes. My own biases and experiences influenced what I researched, and

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are reflected in these results. At the end of this process, I had identified nine overall themes and created 43 theoretical categories. *Table 13* lists these in detail.

Table 13 *Nine Themes and Forty-Three Theoretical Categories*

Theme	Theoretical Category
BEM / 6 Boxes	Environment: Expectations and Feedback
	Environment: Tools and Resources
	Environment: Consequences and Incentives
	Individual: Skills and Knowledge
	Individual: Selection and Assignment (capacity)
	Individual: Motives and Preferences (attitude)
	Professional Growth
	Networking and Engagement
	Opportunity to Give Back
Professional Home	Certification
	Publication
	Recognition
	Career Planning
	Standard 1: Focus on Results or Outcomes
CPT Standards	Standard 2: Take a Systemic View
	Standard 3: Add Value
	Standard 4: Work in Partnership with Clients and Stakeholders
	Adaptability
Future Ready	Awareness
	Curiosity
	Empathy
	Alignment
	Collaboration
	Integration
Purpose	Personal purpose
	Social Purpose
	Societal purpose
Consultancy	Knowledge and Skills
	Strategic and tactical conceptual abilities
	Personality Traits
Client Relationships	Client as co-producer
	Client has solution in mind
	Impossible client

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Theme	Theoretical Category
Constant changes & Career Decision-Triggers	Constant changes (and adapting to those changes)
	Personal life triggers
	Professional life triggers
	Global triggers
	Mindset Shift
Stages of professional development	Being a change agent/disruptor
	Stage 1: Apprentice
	Stage 2: Colleague
	Stage 3: Mentor
	Stage 4: Sponsor

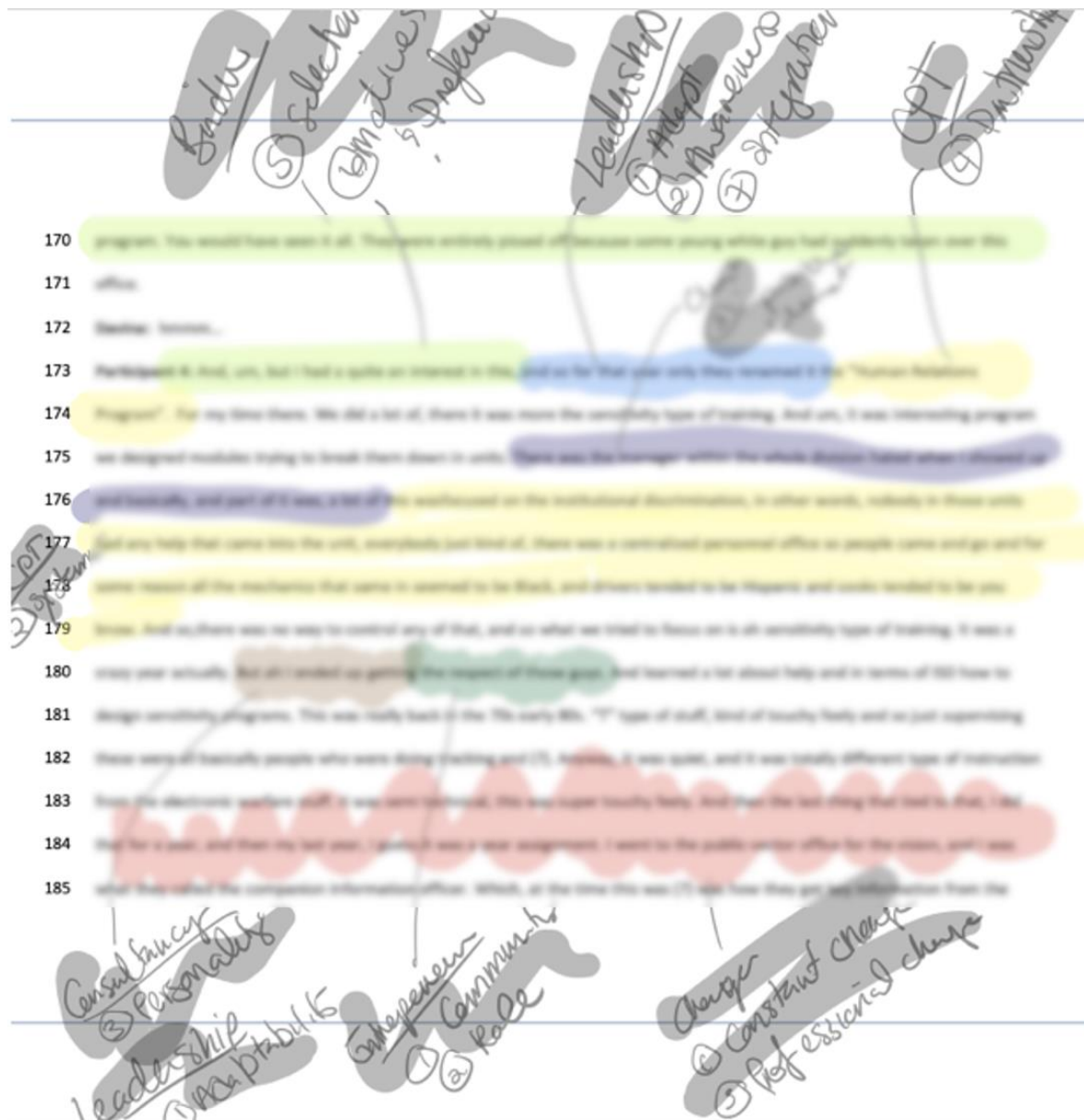
Returning to Coding

With my emergent themes and theoretical categories in place, I returned to my participant transcripts to re-code them with these revised criteria in mind. For this round of coding I used a word processor application, tablet, and stylus. This hardware set-up helped me highlight and colour-code the transcripts to reflect the new codes and categories. I began by coding the transcripts, and then did a second sweep to log the codes, greying out each code after logging it.

Figure 15 provides an example of what this looked like in practice.

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Figure 15 Example of Two Passes in Focused Coding: (i) Coding Using Nine Themes and 43 Theoretical Categories, Then (ii) Logging the Codes and Greying Them Out Once Logged.



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Mapping the ID-to-PI Career Transition

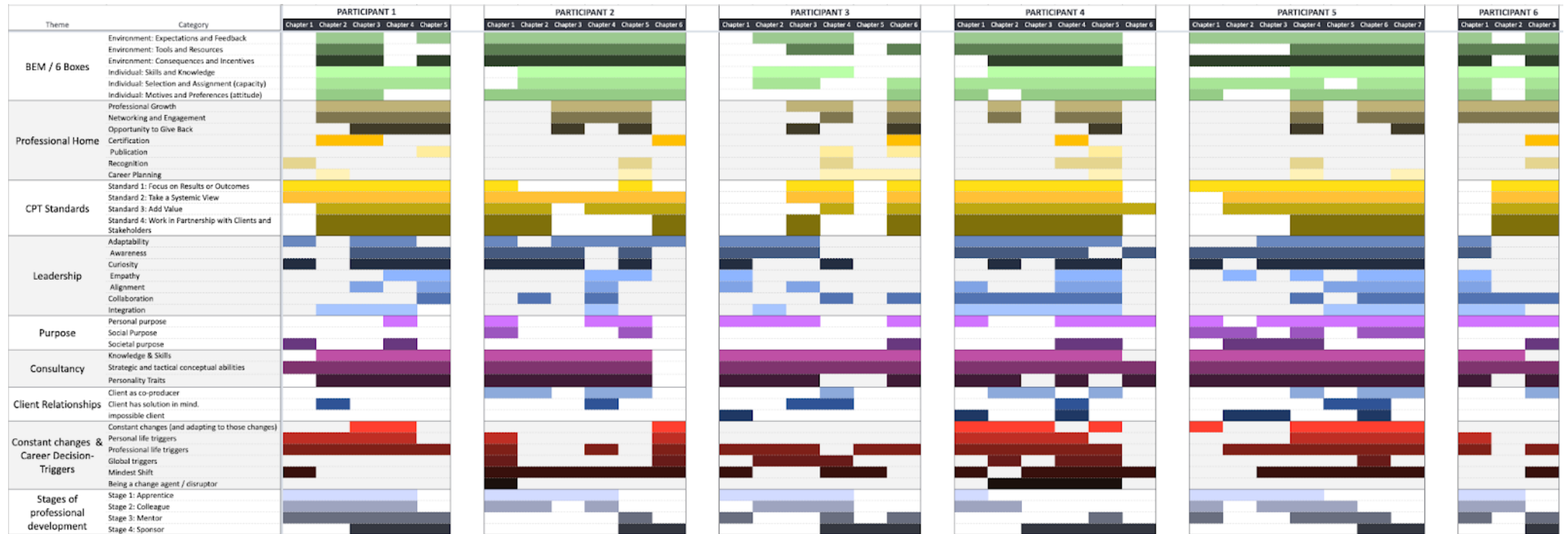
Using these logged codes, I built a map of the theoretical codes that appeared in each chapter of every participant's career story. I did not record frequency, choosing instead to focus on the themes themselves. I accomplished this with a spreadsheet, a screen capture example of which can be seen in *Figure 16*. My original plan was to next create individual maps for each participant, but I abandoned this effort after realizing that the spreadsheet provided a better layout. *Appendix J Abandoned Attempt to Create Individual Maps in PowerPoint* shows an example of my abandoned attempt at individual maps, and *Appendix K Participant Maps* from the Spreadsheet provides examples of individual portions of the larger map.

Figure 16 demonstrates what this process looked like. The themes and theoretical categories are presented in the two leftmost columns. There are six groupings of columns, each representing a participant, with a single column representing a chapter. I assigned a colour to each theoretical category, so every coloured cell reflects the presence of that category, and blank cells denote its absence.

Conclusion: Focused Coding Takeaways. In hindsight, my decision not to track code frequency during the focused phase was an error - a weakness that is recognized in my discussion chapter. Though visually descriptive, I could also have replaced my colour-coding system with something simpler; a similar result could have been obtained with a binary code such as "present" and "not present." Though not easily available at the time, current data analytics technology would have been very useful for my data set, particularly if I had run frequency numbers through a visualization tool.

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Figure 16 Occurrence of Theoretical Categories and Themes Mapped for Each Participant.



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Conclusion: Results

Though the overall process of focused phase started haltingly, I did emerge from it with a solid set of theoretical categories and emergent themes upon which to base my subsequent analysis. The immense number of initial codes was difficult to parse, but grouping them into preliminary categories and cross-referencing these categories with relevant literature helped me transform them into usable theoretical categories and emerging themes. Though a frequency analysis would have added more nuance to my understanding of the data set, I am well-positioned to begin discussion.

In a sea of difficulties and unexpected challenges, the quality of my data, strength of Charmaz's methodology, and an intuitive QDA tool allowed for a smooth and interesting data analysis phase. Chapter five will dig deeper into the career stories of my participants. I remain grateful to have had access to such talented and thoughtful professionals as I examined the transition they made from ID-to-PI. With all aspects of this part of my thesis journey documented, Chapter 5 will discuss my selection of themes and seek to answer my research questions using the insight they provide.

Chapter 5: Discussion

With the final aim of answering the study's research questions, this chapter will follow a series of steps to both justify and explain its conclusions. First is a discussion of how I selected which emergent themes were the most useful in addressing the research questions. With the four most important emergent themes identified, each is then explained with transcript segments from participant interviews. Next, I examine how the themes and other extractions from the data can be pieced together into a model that describes the ambiguous career transition undertaken by IDs as they become performance improvement professionals. To check the strength of this model I discuss its transparency, reliability, bias and rigour. With this set-up complete, I answer the research questions, update my model, discuss this study's contribution to the field, and make recommendations for future research.

Selecting the Themes That Define the ID-to-PI Transition

This master's thesis has a defined and carefully limited scope. Its participant interviews yielded a trove of information that could lead to conclusions well beyond the description of how IDs transition to PI, so some hard decisions were required in identifying which emergent themes were most germane to that process. The examples that follow demonstrate how and why these choices were made.

Excluding Specific Standards and a Useful Tool

When analysing the codes displayed in **Figure 16**, where the initial occurrence of theoretical categories are mapped for each participant, three themes stand out: "Consultancy", "CPT Standards", and "BEM / 6 Boxes". Of those three, the latter two defy categorization as themes.

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- CPT standards in particular fell outside the parameters of this study because of its general focus on creating guidelines for the ID-to-PI transition. CPT standards are very specific to one professional organization, the International Society of Performance Improvement (ISPI), and so are of only marginal help in creating an overall picture. Because all my participants identified as being part of the ISPI community, their standards cannot be used to draw general conclusions.
- Binder's Six Boxes® model surfaced in my literature review as I described IDs going beyond the "training box". I could have categorized it as an emerging theme, however, I found it more useful as a tool to explore the parallels between it and my model. The Six Boxes® model's utility as a tool more than a theme will become clear later in the chapter when I use it to help answer this study's research questions.

As both of these edge cases are discussed elsewhere in this thesis, including in my section addressing possible future research, I felt safe choosing them as the first two major concepts excluded from my analysis. They were necessary casualties as I narrowed the focus of my thesis to specifically identify the most relevant conceptual factors that define the ID-to-PI transition.

Selecting the Most Relevant Emergent Themes

Of the remaining themes, I selected "Leadership" - which I renamed "Future Ready," "Consultancy," and "Professional Home" for further discussion.

- Future Ready was a logical choice, because its emphasis on adaptability and collaboration explained both the participants' ability to deal with constant change and leverage teamwork to manage the challenges they encountered as a result.

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- I selected Consultancy because of its consistent reoccurrence across all chapters, for all participants.
- The final key theme was Professional Home. Though it did not occur in the participants' stories as early as the other themes, it proved to be a major stepping stone both in becoming an ID, and during ID-to-PI transitions.

Surprisingly, after going through this selection process, a new theme had also emerged:

- Storytelling was an overarching and obvious theme. So obvious, I didn't see it until much later in the analysis. It positioned narrative understanding as a factor in completing the career transition, demonstrated how the participants conceptualized the process, and also served to explain why their interviews were so articulate.

The Remaining Themes and Categories Move to Further Research

Excluding specific standards and a useful tool, and then selecting three emerging themes from the remaining themes listed in **Figure 16**, leaves four themes not discussed. These themes are "Purpose," "Client Relationships," "Constant Change" and "Stages of Professional Development." "Keeping scope in mind, I chose not to select these themes for practical reasons, a short description of which follows.

In his book *The Purpose Economy*, Aaron Hurst describes three main purpose drivers: personal, social, and societal. He suggests performance can be most improved when workers have a sense of purpose in their life and at work (Hurst, 2016). Interestingly, Hurst was the opening keynote at an ISPI conference which I attended in 2016. This theme emerged in different ways as participants spoke about purpose in their lives, giving back to their community, and the projects and clients that were most meaningful to them. Although this topic fascinates

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me, I felt that for this study, Purpose would be adequately touched upon in Professional Home: Opportunities to Give Back and also possibly take shape in some of my in vivo quotes. For these reasons, I chose to not include Purpose in my discussion of emergent themes.

“Client Relationships” is the second theme I chose not to discuss. Three pieces of literature and the concepts they explain influenced my decision to exclude Client Relationships as a subject of study.

- In their interviews, my participants often noted that clients have a dual role in both ID and PI practices, acting as both customer and co-producer of the intervention. Martin et al. (2001) describes this dual role and the nuances it brings to the customer-consultant relationship in detail, and was my main influence for this theoretical category.
- Next, in their book *Performance Consulting: A Strategic Process to Improve, Measure, and Sustain Organizational Results*, Robinson et al (2015) discuss the complex circumstances when a consultant is in the position of being an order-taker. According to my participants, clients having pre-set solutions in mind was, unfortunately, quite common.
- Lastly, Butman describes four impossible client behaviours in his article *How to Manage Impossible Clients (2013)*, some of which emerged in my interviews.

The Client Relationships theme and its implied theoretical categories are interesting, and a further study of this relationship through the career transition process does merit further research. I decided, however, that this examination was beyond the scope of my study, given its substantial overlap with my Consultancy and Purpose themes. It also shows up as one of my in vivo codes, further suggesting that it is not worthy of independent discussion here.

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Constant Changes and Career Decision-Triggers was another theme I decided to exclude, though it was deeply embedded in every interview. I developed this theme and its categories without a literature influence, and its naming conventions changed more over the course of my study than any other. After several passes through my participant interviews, I finally broke this theme into four categories, defined as follows:

- Constant changes (and adapting to those changes): these are changes in everyday life. Participants were aware of these changes, but they didn't trigger a decision that impacted their career story.
- Personal life triggers: large changes in participants' personal lives that did trigger decisions that impacted their career stories. Examples include pregnancy, births, and new relationships.
- Professional life triggers: at-work events that triggered decisions that impacted career stories. Examples include changes in team, direct supervision, executive leadership, and organizational policy changes.
- Global triggers: global events that triggered decisions that impacted career stories. Examples included all manner of economic and geopolitical events, from natural disasters to terrorist attacks.

I dropped this theme because of its massive scope. Instead, I chose to focus on the specific aspect of this larger process most related to the ID-to-PI transition; my participants' ability to adapt, and ultimately thrive, in the face of change. Triggers that impacted my participants' career stories by provoking major decisions were already a feature of the Adaptability category in my Future Ready theme, and thus did not need to be discussed in their own section.

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Stages of Professional Development was another theme deeply embedded in my data. In hindsight this makes perfect sense, given the narrative, chapter-based nature of my career story interview technique. Dalton et al.'s describe a series of professional stages; apprentice, colleague, mentor, and sponsor (1986), and I found it fascinating that some participants oscillated through these stages as they moved from ID to PI. Analogizing these phases to the performance world would yield roughly the following stages: pre instructional designer, instructional designer, performance improvement professional. I started out with the idea that these professional stages were abundant enough to be relevant to the journey from ID to PI, but eventually decided that I needed to focus in on elements specific to instructional designers transitioning to performance improvement. These Stages of Professional Development were industry-agnostic, and thus of lesser use in a study with as precise a goal as mine.

The last theme and set of categories I opted not to include, but felt was worth mentioning, was "Entrepreneurship." The main literary influence for this theme was Drencheva et al.'s conference proceedings titled *Founder Identity: A Review and Framework of Multiple Identities in Entrepreneurship (2018)*. I originally focused on three categories in this theme: Community, Role and Locale of an Entrepreneur. The deeper I got into my analysis, however, the more I concluded that there was too much overlap with my Consultancy theme for Entrepreneurship to be viable on its own. I reluctantly discarded it as just a little too large and too far out of scope for my study.

Conclusion: Selecting the Themes that define the ID-to-PI Transition

I selected the themes that best define the ID-to-PI transition by first excluding CPT Standards and BEM/ 6 Boxes. Of the remaining themes from **Figure 16** I selected Future Ready, Consultancy and Professional Home. I also added a new theme, Storytelling, a crucial concept

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that emerged after building the map in *Figure 16*. I moved the remaining themes and categories to a later section describing possible further research.

These selections were not as straightforward as they could have been. In hindsight, frequency analysis would have made it easier to choose the most salient themes, but I remain confident that I have chosen appropriately. Detailed analysis of the participant interviews themselves led me to select these concepts carefully.

Emerging Themes

This study was rich in emergent themes, which I mostly derived from my theoretical categories. This section discusses the four key themes that I did select as crucial to the ID-to-PI transition, with the discarded themes mentioned earlier being relegated to the future research section. The four chosen themes are: Storytelling, being Future Ready, Consultancy, and active involved in a Professional Home. *Table 14* lists the emergent themes I selected for discussion in the analysis of the ID-to-PI career transition, and their accompanying categories.

Table 14 *The Emergent Themes Selected to Discuss the ID-to-PI Transition.*

Theme	Category
Future Ready	Adaptability Collaboration
Consultancy	Functional Knowledge Communication Skills Cognitive Dexterity Tolerance for ambiguity
Professional Home	Professional Growth Networking and Engagement Opportunity to Give Back
Storytelling	The participants of this study are good storytellers Leveraging storytelling to get the job done Participants reflect on their stories to inform future decisions and behaviors

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Three of the four themes were influenced by and interpreted through multiple perspectives from the study:

- **Data:** Several categories emerged from my initial coding. The first version of these categories were groupings of codes or preliminary categories. These preliminary categories formed the beginnings of my emergent themes. Also, my participants' voices came through in anonymized snippets of their transcripts.
- **Literature:** The preliminary categories that emerged from the data presented me with patterns and visible parallels to literature, which matured to theoretical categories and subsequently to overarching themes.
- **Researcher:** As the researcher, I was an active participant in the construction of the research. I interacted with the data, and my findings reflect my interpretation. This theoretical sensitivity increased my insight in to the data, and gave me new leads to pursue as the themes emerged.

Storytelling, the first theme, emerged long after my focused coding phase, and after a moratorium from the study. As such, it was less influenced by my already-completed search for parallels to literature. Therefore, storytelling was primarily influenced by and interpreted through two of the three perspectives:

- the data itself via in vivo codes and
- the researcher, a product of theoretical sensitivity and my active participation in the research.

These influences provide a real-world example of how grounded theory draws themes out of ambiguous data. The emerging themes and the viewpoints through which I interpreted them are discussed next.

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Storytelling

Storytelling is an important starting point for all communication, and both instructional design and performance consulting are inherently communicative endeavors. Storytelling is likewise foundational to this study, and a core part of the process through which narrative analysis helps to describe the progression from ID to PI.

The theme of storytelling emerged in many ways during this study, with three being the most revealing about the ID-to-PI transition: the participants themselves were good storytellers, they all leveraged storytelling to get the job done, and they universally reflected on their own stories to inform future decisions.

The Participants of This Study are Good Storytellers. Storytelling was such an inherent part of each participant interview that I didn't isolate narrative talent as an emerging theme until I re-listened to all the interviews after a lengthy moratorium from the study.

The career story interview technique encourages participants to think of their careers as a story to tell, an approach that placed some emphasis on narrative format before the interviews even began. My chosen interview technique was an adaptation of the "life story interview," and my participants were instructed ahead of time to think of their career as a book. The interviews were driven by the participants telling their stories one chapter at a time. Before progressing from one chapter to the next, they were always asked the same four questions:

1. Tell me about the significant events from this chapter.
2. Tell me about the kind of person you were during this chapter.
3. Who were the significant people for you during this chapter, and why?
4. How and why did this chapter end?

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It is thus safe to say that while the interview structure did put narrative at the forefront, it was shining a spotlight on an already present theme more than imposing one on the participants. The consistent narrative coherence displayed by my interviewees suggested that existing talent was something that each participant brought with them to their interview, rather than a function of session structure or the worksheet.

I am not the first researcher to notice the link between narrative focus and technical ability in the performance field. Both Gargiulo and Boje (2001, 2005) note that storytelling is a key capability for a consultant, and stories “are incredibly useful in the conduct of any analytical activity in the social sciences” (Winiecki, 2015, p. 11). The interviews of this study are saturated with evidence of storytelling ability, mainly in the form of compelling illustrative anecdotes. Storytelling is critical to the performance consultant, who leverages it to effectively communicate a translation of HPT theory and its application to key decision-makers (Winiecki, 2015). According to Gubrium and Holstein (2009), what makes a good story and storyteller is not easily definable. Some contributing factors are the trustworthiness of the storyteller, the context and environment in which a story is told, and the value the story has to the listener (2009). I trusted that my participants and their stories were relevant, timely, and meaningful to me as the listener. Identifying a good storyteller is an obscure process, so I can only speak anecdotally about my participants, but in my opinion they were all very good storytellers. What follows are a few segments that provide examples of the participants’ narrative prowess and intuition. To protect the identity of my participants some of the salient details of their stories have been removed, resulting in a less poignant story and diminishing evidence of the very storytelling talent I am showcasing. Even with a filtered transcript, however, I believe their storytelling capabilities are still apparent.

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This story is about how a participant saw an opportunity to use new technology to transition into instructional design. It is a succinct analogy for an important part of the overall transition process:

I learned that I really liked working with adults in the workplace and I realized I needed some sort of portfolio. I started writing a functional manual teaching people how to use a software. I ended up completing that portfolio piece on how to use it and it landed my first job in the field as a junior ID.

This next participant described a flash of insight they went through as an emerging performance improvement professional, seamlessly weaving a story about how they wanted to stay away from training into a general lesson about how their performance solution design process was changing.

The aha moments are important. I worked with a performance consultant with decades of experience and we were doing some impact mapping. We do these interviews and I'm leading some. And I want to stay away from training, I want everything to be, you know, a tool or a process change or something like that... And then to see this experienced performance consultant look at the same data I'm looking at and say: "right here, this is something they need to know. This is different, this is new, they need to be trained to that. And it is important, so it should be evaluated. It should be formal training." Rather than blindly creating training or tools, we could go back to the client and say: we talked to a bunch of high, medium and low performers, we talked to managers of each and we talked to stakeholders and here's what the key *Skills and Knowledge* are, here's how the existing materials and processes maps to that. We recommend revising this course, changing this process, building this tool, retiring that and we recommend creating a new course that would look like this.

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Another participant told a story about how focusing on results is important for an instructional designer's resume. This simple story demonstrates how a discussion can move an ID from a traditional way of thinking into a more performance-based mindset.

Our ISPI chapter is struggling to find practitioners that have data around how they are actually improving performance and having them share those case studies. It is a struggle, because a lot of people just don't have the information. They have customer satisfaction, or if people like the training. But their data collection is not focusing on results that are valuable. I consult with instructional designers that would come to our chapter meetings and I'd look at their resume and ask them about including results. This often leads to a conversation about repeat business for IDs working for vendors. A lot of instructional designers and a lot of people are just doing what they are told, they are not focusing on results... as much as they should be.

Storytelling proved to be an important part of the study's interview process, both as an approach to data collection and an emerging theme among the participants, who universally shared it as a trait.

Leveraging Storytelling to Get the Job Done. Storytelling emerged as a natural place to start my discussion of key emergent themes not only because the participants of the study were good storytellers, but because they actively leveraged storytelling techniques to accomplish their goals. For example, one participant specifically pointed out the need for a story or case study to actualize the transition from instructional design to performance consulting.

The problem is, when you are a new performance consultant, you don't have a story about what you do...Interesting things that became your first case study. But once I had that first experience as a performance consultant I could tell the next client the success

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story of a performance solution from a training request: “hey let me tell you this story about a group that wanted this training...”

Each of the other participants had their own versions of leveraging the narrative of their experiences to open doors to new opportunities, often in unique and creative ways. One participant told me the story of how they found themselves applying for a position where they didn’t fit the profile hiring managers were looking for. The participant felt passionate about the position and had the *Skills and Knowledge* to back it up. By sharing stories of previous successes, they proved themselves the most qualified applicant.

Another participant described their performance improvement approach in a success story they could leverage in future projects: “The existing physical test was designed so only the very strong could do it, but the physical performance that was being tested didn’t align to the job. We got around to changing that and making the physical test job-related. For the first time, we had more diverse applicants making it through.”

Participants Reflect on Their Stories to Inform Future Decisions and Behaviours.

My final reflection on the storytelling theme is more abstract; even if storytelling did not feature directly in the stories themselves, all participants reflected on their experiences to inform future decisions and behaviours. The construction of these experiences as a coherent narrative was clearly helpful in this process. I will describe this finding in terms of an overall strategy that all participants applied.

The participants all engaged in a kind of iterative reflection as they shared their stories. Of course, there is no way to know if the participants were reflecting on their experiences systematically as they made career transitions, but they were demonstrably reflecting on the interview process during the interview itself. For example, my first participant knew they were

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the first interviewee, and one of the first things they said was: “Do your thing, go through the questions, get them all worked out and then you can modify them for the next participant.”

Another participant reflected back on some of their previous chapters and checked to see if what we were doing worked for my study: “I feel like we kind of combined multiple chapters. Did I cover all the questions? Or are there holes you’d like me to go back to.” This self-reflexive thought process demonstrated a narrative understanding of the research process as a whole, and suggested that each participant was used to both looking back at their experiences, and examining them procedurally as they occurred.

By looking at a participant's career story as a whole, I was able to see patterns emerge as they reflected on and learned from their past experiences. When they found themselves in frustrating or ambiguous professional situations their first response was typically to attempt to understand their position as part of a process, rather than analyzing it in isolation. Participants emerged from these ambiguous circumstances in stronger professional positions, and harnessed what they’d learned to inform future decisions and behaviours.

Conclusion: Storytelling - A Tool with Many Uses. While storytelling is certainly a product of how this study conducts its research, it also emerged as a theme in its own right. It proved to be a life skill and professional technique that helped the participants make sense of ambiguous work conditions. The use of narrative fostered awareness, reflection, and the pattern-recognition required to adapt to future situations.

Future Ready

Being “future ready” implies the ability to anticipate and prepare for unforeseen challenges, increasing the possibility of future success with measures taken in the present. The concept is borrowed from the technology field, where a system can be programmed to process

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information designed for a future version of itself. This idea of permanent adaptability and preparedness is undoubtedly useful in many sectors, and is a significant indicator of a performance improvement practitioner. Even when they hadn't yet finished their transitions, this study's participants identified a variety of steps that they undertook as instructional designers that were needed to foster this trait. Future-readiness proved fundamental to their professional development.

Throughout my participant interviews, two main concepts emerged as defining factors; adaptability and collaboration. In searching the literature for corroboration of the importance of these future-ready traits, I landed on Harvard Business School professor and former Medtronic CEO Bill George, and his concept of "global intelligence." He defines this as, "a step beyond emotional intelligence" (BillGeorgeTrueNorth, 2015, 0:56). George lists seven traits as a requirement for leadership success in a global context (George, 2015). Two of these traits jumped out as close matches for what my participants identified as key traits for future readiness; the ability to adapt to change, and the collaborative effort required to do so effectively.

Adaptability. A professional who is adaptable "alter[s] their tactics quickly to adjust to changes" (George, 2015, p. 252). This study's career stories are saturated with situations where participants pivoted quickly to adjust to change. The breadth of these experiences ranged from the enormity of global events, such as the September 11th attacks in 2001, to much more individual changes, like the birth of a child or getting a new boss. Several of those stories illustrate future readiness as an important factor in the transition from ID to PI with great lucidity. One such change involved a participant that pivoted from working abroad to behavioural psychology:

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I was focused on working abroad when 9-11 happened. My mom didn't like the idea of going abroad in a time of war. So that changed my path ... I dove deeply into behavioural psychology and training and performance improvement related both to instructional design and more traditional performance improvement methodologies and approaches. This participant describes how adapting to a revelation and putting his new theory into practice resulted in his transition into work as a behaviorist:

And then when I started doing research and I became more of a behaviorist. Then I changed from a constructivist to a behaviorist. In making sure you design instructions that better behaves. That was probably one of the first steps in the journey towards performance improvement moving from discovery learning to performance-based learning.

In another example, the participant explained that “the market changing is a business opportunity. One nice thing about a small consulting firm is that you really can be nimble and you really can start changing your business model rather quickly,” and how change lead to new opportunities: “we created an eLearning about performance. And then, we did more work in performance.”

Adaptability featured as a common theme among all my participants, and regardless of whether they were reacting to large or small-scale changes, its utility consistently drove both their personal and professional transformations.

Collaboration. The ability to collaborate effectively was a key trait that emerged as my participants prepared to face unpredictable challenges. According to George, collaborative leaders; “bring people together around common goals, and create a modus operandi” (2015, p. 254). Participants universally described collaboration between peers, colleagues, clients, and

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stakeholders as important factors in their professional development. Through their stories, it became evident that when colleagues supported each other, regardless of whether they were working on the same project, everyone benefited from the culture of mutual support and innovation their collaboration had created:

I'm very thankful that I have made really good connections. And I have a very well-developed network of collaborative mindset-type people. People willing to collaborate and they aren't that type of people that believes 'I can't help you because what if you surpass me, what if you do better, what if you use my stuff?' I feel very thankful for that.

This study's PI consultants frequently sought out collaborative peer relationships. One participant identified learning from a more experienced colleague as a key moment of development as they expanded their professional skill set:

One of my first projects was helping a senior colleague [...] and I had a front row seat to how someone with much more experience than I had taken rich performance data and mapped out an approach or a strategy to work through. To make sure whatever we did was going to, really move the needle so to speak for those performers... even to this day, if I get a chance to work with her on a project I will do everything I can to clear my calendar and take that assignment.

In addition to working with teachers and peers, the study shows the importance participants placed on ongoing collaboration with clients to maximize transparency and co-ownership of projects, while minimizing surprises. In this example, a participant described the advantage of collaborating with clients and stakeholders as a key tool in making the transition from instructional design to performance improvement:

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We did a better job by doing a lot of analysis and design in a high turnaround collaborative approach [with] our clients. Our learners were involved in the iterative process by doing a lot of prototyping, usability testing, and prioritization strategy. And so all those came together and suddenly we are making that full transition from people who were good at providing performance-based training to a team who could provide performance-based training as one of a large number of components in larger-scale performance support.

Participants also emphasized the downsides of operating within workplace cultures that discouraged collaboration. One participant, for example, immediately identified new leadership as a potential problem: “We met the leaders and we went to their offices. The culture was very different. They were just giving out orders.” Participants likewise found issues when working on projects where restrictive communication was a matter of policy: “It was an environment where the training people couldn’t talk directly to the clients. Even when it was about, you know, instructional aspects of the work and the content.”

Given the binary possibilities in becoming PI professionals seeming to reflect either collaborating or working in isolation, all participants sought out the former. One participant’s enthusiasm for working with their colleagues and students summarizes the importance of collaboration, and describes a sense of excitement about the future indicative of true future readiness:

I’ve got a great colleague, that got me into this new project. I don’t know where it is going to go, but we suspect that there is going to be a grant and research associated with that. It is going to be a fun ride. And another partner is just fantastic. We see this as an opportunity for our students to work together in the future.

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Collaboration was a key factor for my participants; being able to rely on others to meet challenges was an essential step in becoming a performance improvement practitioner.

Conclusion: IDs Transitioning to PI are Future Ready. Being future ready emerged as a fundamental factor as the study's participants dealt with the ambiguous and unexpected aspects of transitioning from ID to PI. Specifically, all participants described needing the ability to pivot in response to the constant changes they found in their personal and professional lives. They also identified collaborating with colleagues, peers and clients as a support system crucial to their successful transition.

Consultancy

The next major emergent theme revealed by the study's participants as they transitioned into performance improvement was Consultancy. Dana Robinson explains how Consultancy is inherently linked to performance in her *The Art of Performance Consulting* video, stating that it is "so important that the word consulting be associated with the word performance. We have to consult with clients to do this work. Consulting means partnering in a collaborative way, influencing through the questions we ask, not the things we tell" (ATD, n.d.). Consultancy was a consistent theme in the research data and covered a wide variety of personal and professional situations among the participants. Banai and Tuliimieri (2013) define business consulting as, "a professional who helps organizations improve their performance, primarily through the thorough analysis of existing business problems and development of plans for improvement" (p. 887). This type of process was consistently something towards which my participants gravitated.

My participants' career transitions reflect Banai and Tuliimieri's (2013) business consulting framework, with particular emphasis placed on four elements: functional knowledge,

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communications skills, cognitive dexterity, and tolerance of ambiguity. Each of these factors proved important for my participants as they expanded into performance improvement.

Functional Knowledge. Functional knowledge is a catch-all concept representing the know-how that a performance consultant brings to a project as a result of previous learning and experience. Acquisition of new functional knowledge was an important part of the participants' career transitions. This knowledge “could be acquired through academic studies as well as long-term work experience” (Banai & Tulimieri, 2013, p. 887), and often provides credibility to both the project and the executive leadership to which the project sponsor may be accountable (Banai & Tulimieri, 2013). This study provided a particularly advantageous view of the participants' development of functional knowledge by contextualizing their professional experiences through the use of the career story interview technique. The importance of functional knowledge was especially apparent when participants answered the question, “tell me about the kind of person you were during this chapter.” Functional knowledge was often a key part of their response. One participant described how acquiring functional knowledge in an area unrelated to performance led to opportunities to grow into consultancy: “So, I ended up kind of growing and taking on the responsibilities of having to develop proposals for money, having to negotiate for more money, and just feeling like this consulting thing could work.”

Several participants described how acquiring new functional knowledge facilitated their transition from instructional design to performance improvement, and gaining this new knowledge was like seeing the world a new way, through a “performance lens:”

I start seeing how you can analyze, look at these different things, through this different lens is really powerful and kind of addictive when you first learn it, you kind of want to

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put every little thing in your life through this tool to analyze it and try to make it, make yourself more efficient or maybe the people around you more efficient.

That lens provided a fresh perspective on teamwork, project organizational structure, and often the world in general, providing participants with a more systemic and systematic viewpoint:

I start to see projects that are training projects with PI components, or are based on PI analysis. Like a 6-box analysis and we are going to design training to this. We are going to design this tool, you know we are going to impact this process. And so, instead of being discouraged in one or the other, I see the way this blended approach can work.

Acquiring functional knowledge from published works and their PI community provided a “systems” perspective to the performance lens:

Being influenced by these different models or these different approaches that are much more rooted in the real world. And then captured or captivated by the idea of people as performers within a system. And that if the systems are dysfunctional, then oftentimes the performers will become dysfunctional, or their performance will become dysfunctional and maybe at odds with different areas of the system.

Participants spoke about learning this perspective as a positive experience: “It was fun to become a systems thinker and thinking about all the different things that affect performance.” Once they gained the functional knowledge needed to see the world through this performance lens, it stuck: “You are not looking at just one thing. Once you develop or hone that skill you can never lose that.”

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Most participants identified the acquisition of new functional knowledge as axiomatically valuable. They consistently brought up the acquisition process itself as a learnable skill, emphasizing the importance of absorbing knowledge from both resources and people:

And you know so there are different methodologies that I was learning, different approaches, working with different people and seeing how they facilitated different things and what are the things that worked for me and reaching out and really building my network as well. Reaching out to other people in the field and seeing what they are doing and how they were approaching things.

Another participant identified the realization of the importance of the acquisition process as an indicator of professional maturity:

I think it is mostly just doing reading and hanging around with people who do this work so that's what happens gradually, as you begin to look at things your viewpoint expands wider and wider and so-called systemic viewpoint forms...and certainly looking at systems dynamics is a very easy way to get a big bump up, a thing I didn't discover until much later than I would have wished.

Opportunities that took participants out of their comfort zone and demanded new learning also featured prominently:

Instead of just trying to force-fit training, I went the opposite direction. Training should be the last thing you do. You know like anything but training. And that's not really the right answer, either right? But you need to get through that to understand that for any performance problem, training can have a valuable seat at the table.

The process of learning was often accompanied by increases in responsibility:

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I feel like I grew up at this place. You know I got to manage one project, and then multiple projects and pretty soon I managed one person and then multiple people, and then I managed an account and then multiple accounts.

Participants identified different domains of functional knowledge as important, with the most prominent topics being the science of learning, performance improvement, running a business, and industry-specific knowledge for the area in which they worked. See *Appendix L Academic Knowledge* for a list of all the books, articles, and authors mentioned by the participants' during their career stories. Interestingly, not one participant specialized in a single industry for their entire career, though some had long periods in one industry before moving on to the next. The most prominent non-ISD or PI functional knowledge set among participants was finance, which helped participants take on scoping, negotiating, and billing responsibilities for the organizations they worked for, or was a necessity when running their own businesses:

I wore a lot of hats. I did all the financial stuff. I did my own bookkeeping. And they say that's a great thing to do, so you understand the money you learn where each and every penny goes.

The process of gaining new functional knowledge in order to view the world through a performance lens was foundational to all participants. The acquisition process often provided a useful model for how to deal with being a consultant, and provided both personal and global perspectives to participants. Functional knowledge was a key building block for the participants as they laid the foundations of their transitions from ID to PI.

Communication Skills. New knowledge isn't the only consultancy element a PI professional requires. Often overlooked as a driver of change due to their fundamental nature in the PI profession, communications skills are a crucial part of the process of transitioning from ID

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towards PI. A performance improvement professional must be a good communicator to hear their clients and stakeholders, and the study's participants frequently identified this skill set as crucial to their professional progress. The following quotes take a deeper look at how these skills became important in the careers of this study's participants. When asked, "if you could go back in time, what would you tell your younger self?" one participant immediately identified the receptive aspects of effective communication:

Take more time to listen to others. Listen more than talk. I know it sounds kind of obvious, I would be hearing people but not listening because I thought I knew better and the key thing is to tell yourself that you don't know it all and I kind of realized the older I get, the less I know.

Another participant succinctly described their purpose as a consultant: "Our purpose was to meet clients where they were and listen to their needs and try to help them do the right thing."

Participants also pointed out the need to maintain effective two-way communication in order to navigate the uncomfortable line between consulting and order taking: "For whatever reason people often look at IDs and they often look at performance consultants like: I know what I want you to do, and you need to do it for me and we suddenly become order takers." One participant learned that consultancy requires great flexibility by practitioners because not all clients will want a strictly performance-oriented solution, and may opt for something their organizations are more comfortable with:

I can see when and where we've got to do training. Because that's what we are being asked to do or that's what the client is buying, but we are going to consult along the way so that our client, when they are asked 6 months down the road, why their training hasn't had an impact, they can say we made some performance-based suggestions and maybe

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we need to take a closer look at this process. So then, you point out some of the other things as opportunities.

This participant pointed out that with a client, effective communication meant navigating their story:

You can't explain what you are doing in a bunch of HPT jargon. You have to come up with some way that says what you are doing really simply and really quickly so that they will want to partner with you to solve their problem.

Yet another participant noted the need to emphasize where the client was coming from, and accepting that they might not know all the nuances of a situation. The ability to adapt to what the client did request and lay the groundwork for future success was also an important part of successful consultancy communication:

Even if we can't help them do the right thing on a current project. Maybe we can hold hands and kind of educate each other along the way and over time earn the right to do more of the right thing [performance solutions] on the next project and then more of the right thing on the project after that.

Equally important, a performance improvement consultant must understand their own limitations, and how to mitigate them by communicating and working with others: "We talked about this problem and thought well I've done this part before and they have all these guys as customers, so why don't we team up?" All participants discussed the importance of knowing their audience: "You learn over the years to kind of soften your messaging and try to get to speak the language of the business and not make people upset." This participant referenced their executive audience and the importance of keeping communications succinct while still being prepared to back up their decisions:

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With leaders you have to condense it down because they are busy, they don't have a lot of time, and you can't spend hours explaining it to them. It's like trying to explain performance consulting to somebody you got to do it really quickly. Clear, concise and the words they use. So, now I'm kind of, taking what I learned with performance improvement and speaking the language of business.

All of the study's participants described effective communication skills as fundamental to the transition toward consultancy. Despite the seemingly clichéd nature of emphasizing this skill as important, the participants expressed this theme in a deep and nuanced way at all stages of their professional lives.

Cognitive Dexterity. While functional knowledge and communications skills are demonstrably important as prerequisites for the transition to consultancy, they share another trait; trainability. Ability and personality are at least as important to a PI as learned skills. This section will discuss cognitive dexterity and make clear its role in the subject of the following section, tolerance of ambiguity.

Banai and Tulimieri, (2013) describes the natural predisposition toward the type of flexible thinking that is so important to PI professionals as “cognitive dexterity,” or the ability “to look at issues from both a strategic and tactical perspective and frame solutions with that mindset – that distinguishes the great business consultant from the good one” (p. 889). As IDs gain functional knowledge, they experience large-scale shifts in personal perspective that forms a key part of the ID-to-PI transition. Many participants talked about this shift in point of view as a “PI lens” which, once acquired, permanently changed both their view of the world and their approach to their work. One participant summarized this concept succinctly: “So, once you've looked through the lens, every situation you are in you are looking at and thinking: how come

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things aren't working here? I always find it funny that I can't undo that and that I'm even using the same language at home." This PI lens didn't simply appear with the acquisition of knowledge; it manifested as part of a professional progression, which many participants didn't notice in themselves until they hit some sort of major threshold:

Having an organization, picturing an organization as this sort of interlocking system of levers and influencers that ultimately should engineer the performance you want. Really kind of changes the way I look at the world, fundamentally, I would say at that point.

This lens gave my participants a unique advantage in helping their clients get the best solutions for the problems that they wanted to solve. The concept of cognitive dexterity emerged in the frequent realization that sometimes solving a specific problem wasn't the most important aspect of their work. Participants repeatedly found themselves conceptualizing best-practice solutions outside of the original scope of their projects. This became a key part of the consultancy process; the ability to use cognitive dexterity to intuitively navigate often ambiguous client requests in order to pivot toward the best solution possible, even when that approach wasn't the best performance solution: "And then there are those clients that are only interested in training and don't really want to hear about the other [5] boxes [from Binder's Six Boxes® model]." One participant highlighted that this process also required tolerance of the views of others:

If we don't partner and do that education and appreciation for each other's culture, you are never going to get anywhere. To just say no, you know you are not doing the right thing, I don't want to do this work, you never get anywhere you never help anyone that way.

And another still noted that the compromise inherent in cognitive dexterity was crucial to the practical aspects of PI consultancy:

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And I guess the whole time we were in business we had the same goal and quandary just like everyone else in ISPI. How do we do more of this performance improvement stuff while still staying in business and still making a living.

Participants frequently spoke of the importance of prioritizing potential long-term partnerships and business opportunities over quick wins and present-day billables: “Sometimes you're adding value even if you are contributing to a non-successful project because you are building a successful partnership.” Participants also recognized the importance of tone in their communication - and that the ability to alter it was an important facet of cognitive dexterity:

I can see some of the impact right, which is what I couldn't necessarily see when I was just learning focused, but I can also see like my clients getting credit for a job well done and that wasn't necessarily happening if I would have pulled them over the coals until they fixed their process.

Cognitive dexterity did not just help the participants deal with challenges, it also allowed participants to recognize when they were working on “unicorn projects,” where their work was trusted and the client was open to solutions outside of training: “And having a handful of projects with those kinds of clients who really get it.” This recognition was not just a general realization; it extended to a granular level where participants could recognize the mechanics that made a unicorn project so desirable:

I think the neat thing is when you are able to make that pitch of: we are going to make performance solutions that are uniquely tailored to your organization. Every now and then you get these moments where ah, you actually have clients that get it and have signatory authority to make this kind of stuff happen.

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Without exception, the participants of this study either naturally demonstrated or made a conscious effort to develop cognitive dexterity as they transitioned into performance consulting. The ambiguous nature of their professional environments made the ability to react to change with intellectual and emotional alacrity important to their success.

Tolerance for Ambiguity. Another aspect of Banai and Tulimieri's consultancy framework that matches my participants' consultancy experiences is also a non-trainable trait; a consultant's tolerance of ambiguity. They characterize someone who is tolerant of ambiguity as capable of perceiving "ambiguous situations as desirable, challenging, and interesting, and neither denies nor distort their complexity of incongruity" (Banai & Tulimieri, 2013, p. 892). Navigating ambiguity is necessary as both an instructional designer and a performance improvement consultant, but the PI approaches the same situation in a different way. Here's how one participant described the difference in terms of the variety of possible solutions accessible by each type of professional:

Most instructional designers ask questions. [about the training they've] been brought in to do. As a performance improvement consultant you look at the same set of information, requirements and standards and are going to ask a whole different type of set of questions that could take you anywhere.

In another example, a participant adapted to a new position prior to becoming an instructional designer. The participant demonstrated considerable comfort with ambiguity and knew how to make sense of it.

I was at a desk and the phone just kept on ringing ...the callers had all these questions. I didn't know how to answer one question. So, every time they would call, I would put the caller on hold, and get my question answered. And then I would log the person who

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called, their question and the answer. And so, I guess over 6 months I learned the job. I remember it was very overwhelming and very frustrating. They would tell me they wanted me to be consultative. And I thought, what does that even mean?.

This participant described an ambiguous new project they navigated while transitioning from instructional design to performance improvement, and how that meant taking on unexpected responsibilities.

I was hired initially to come in and clean up. The project was a total mess. There are just hundreds of procedures of how everything should be done. And there is a requirement before a worker does something that they have somehow been trained.

Instructional designers tend to be focused on the training solution, whereas performance improvement consultants avoid having an end solution in mind. A performance consultant must navigate the ambiguity of a project even when the mandate from the client is a clear training solution.

Oftentimes organizational leaders, business leaders, have done the analysis themselves and they think it is a training problem. The problem can be solved with training. And they don't really want to hear about the other boxes that could impact performance. They don't want to discuss feedback or tools and processes, incentives and consequences [Binder boxes]. Because they think they already have all those in place.

If a consultant is open to the ambiguity of other possibilities even when they end up delivering a training solution, the experience could lead into future opportunities, as noted in my review of cognitive dexterity. Identifying and reacting to gaps outside of the *Skills and Knowledge* box was the difference between IDs and PIs. Here's one participant describing how they used Carl Binder's Six Boxes® to identify the problem and generate solutions: "That's how we did our

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findings and recommendations. We presented all the gaps in the top three boxes. And then, we came up with a way to solve them.”

Cognitive dexterity and tolerance of ambiguity are not just traits fundamental to shifting from being an ID to a PI; they are key characteristics of a successful consultant in any domain.

Conclusion: Consultancy - the Highway From ID to PI. All of the study’s participants undertook some kind of shift toward consultancy as part of their journey from ID to PI. To do this, they had to carry functional knowledge and sharpen their communications skills to meet their clients’ needs. They either honed or developed the cognitive dexterity needed to pivot toward new opportunities, and used their “performance lens” to see the world. Lastly, they found creative ways to manage the emotional and professional duress of the ambiguity inherent to work as a PI consultant.

Professional Home - ISPI

In a profession defined by mentorship and collaboration, it is no surprise that the need for a formal, international professional home emerged as a consistent theme among PIs making the transition from ID. Working in an ambiguous and often-changing client environment meant that most of this study’s participants found the need to ground their professional journey somewhere outside of their day-to-day workspace. For this study’s participants, that professional home was the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI). This resource was highly relied upon, providing a consistent source of professional growth, networking opportunities, and even the chance to give back to the community once they began mastering their craft.

This study is biased towards ISPI. It is important to acknowledge that during the years leading up to this study, and at the time of recruitment, I was an active member of ISPI. All of my participants were recruited from my personal network, either as a direct connection or via a

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gatekeeper. Given this fact, it is of little surprise that all my participants were members of ISPI, and that ISPI was their professional home. This study is thus biased towards ISPI membership. This is not to say that my results are not applicable to other professional homes; I just need to recognize that this specific study is weighted toward ISPI, adheres to its conventions, and treats it as an example of the benefits that professional homes in general convey.

What is ISPI? The International Society for Performance Improvement is a professional association that aims to support performance improvement practitioners with resources often unavailable to them via their clients and employers. At the time of writing, the “Mission and Vision” page of their website describes what the organization does as:

Help people and organizations make a difference. To their co-workers and clients. Their communities. Their world. By providing tools and strategies for effective and universal improvement, we are helping members create bigger impact, make greater contributions, and, ultimately, make our world a better place to be (*ISPI: Mission and Vision*, n.d.-a).

The evidenced-based approach used by ISPI is defined in their mission statement; “ISPI and its members use evidence-based performance improvement research and practices to effect sustainable, measurable results and add value to stakeholders in the private, public, and social sectors” (*ISPI: Mission and Vision*, n.d. b). In summary, ISPI provides a wide range of professional services to performance improvement practitioners and adds a level of standardization and evidence-based rigour to an otherwise enormously contingent and variable work environment.

Why PIs Need a Professional Association Home. In chapter three I noted that all study participants were part of the ISPI professional network at the time of their recruitment. Though this trend can be explained by the study’s recruitment methods, it is also indicative of broader

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themes in the world of PIs; namely the ambiguous nature of the work, and the need for a professional community.

Looking at a Professional Home Through Member Benefits. The study's participants benefited from ISPI membership in many ways, and frequently identified it as their preferred professional association. At the time of writing, the ISPI website lists eight benefits resulting from, "becoming part of the movement," including: professional growth, networking and engagement, opportunities to give back, certification, publication, awards and recognition, career planning, and insurance (*ISPI Membership Benefits*, n.d.).

Participants expressed that ISPI met their needs in a way that distinguished it from other professional organizations: "Yeah, I mean what separates ISPI with other professional organizations [I've experienced] is that the experts want to help people starting." Participants also emphasized how ISPI's membership made the experience unique: "You can read about someone in a book, whether it is Carl Binder, Roger Addison, or whoever and then talk to them at an ISPI conference".

The interviews were replete with mentions of seven of the ISPI's benefit categories, with insurance being the only one that was not discussed. With plentiful data supporting the idea that the participants identified ISPI as their professional home, it was difficult to extract in vivo codes for certification, publications, and awards, and still respect their anonymity. Although important, I will not discuss those benefits here, instead I will focus on professional growth via the annual conference, networking and engagement, and opportunities to give back.

Professional Growth via the Annual Conference. An annual conference is the main event on ISPI's calendar, and a recurring element in the career stories of all of this study's participants. The conference was identified as providing benefits in the areas of networking, new

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ideas, workshopping, sharing work, and giving back to the community. Each participant of this study attended more than one conference: “Once you go to a conference in April, you got about 3-4 months to figure out and submit a proposal for what you are going to present at the next conference.” They all spoke about what they got from their experiences, and how the conferences influenced them professionally:

My first conference was the same year that I started my full-time position as an instructional designer. But I was also very much a sponge and learning more specifically about instructional design. And so, I got a grasp or an idea of the bigger picture of the whole concept of performance improvement, that it wasn't really about designing and developing training, but it was also about helping people to improve their performance.

Here, a participant describes a “conference-buzz:”

At an ISPI conference, I've found, I get one or two interactions that give you that buzz, where you met that person who wrote that book, or wrote that article. And you get to ask them, face-to-face a couple of questions that maybe you had while reading their work. Or you ask them to relate the experience through a recent project or something. It just deepens your kind of relationship with the society, while also giving you direct access to these great thinkers and doers of our field.

Participants identified access to leading figures in their field akin to meeting their heroes. Here are several segments in which participants describe their experiences meeting performance improvement thought leaders via the society:

I went to four [conferences] in a row and probably Toronto was the biggest and the best.

Who's who was there. Richard Clarke was there. Carl Binder, and a whole bunch of

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people. I haven't been to all of them. They are all a bit different. But all of them are really wonderful.

Meeting performance improvement influencers at the conference was frequently described as a “superhero moment,” and as something unique to ISPI “I just met Will Thalheimer, after hearing him speak at a couple of ISPI conferences, he’s an expert on evaluation and wrote a book called Performance-Focused Smile Sheets.” This participant talked about how getting an autograph set the foundation for their professional home:

At the conference itself I volunteered and assisted at a workshop. I bought a copy of Alison Rossett’s book and went up to her and asked her to autograph it for me. She’s always remembered me. I’ve been going to ISPI conferences pretty much since then. I think I’ve missed less than a handful of those conferences. That’s where my professional root- network largely lives.

Lastly, this participant met their “Batman:”

I got to meet Dale Brethower at the conference in Philly this year, and I was like a little kid meeting Batman, it was a superhero moment for me. That’s what ISPI should really be all about.

ISPI’s annual conference was consistently identified by this study’s participants as being highly beneficial, and a source of knowledge and interactions distinct from other professional conferences. Given the ambiguous and changeable nature of the demands of performance improvement work, the participants relished the chance to meet thought leaders, brainstorm ideas, and interact with their peers in a conference setting.

Networking and Engagement. Though often mentioned as a feature of annual conferences, networking and engagement were benefits seen by the study’s participants in many

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of their other interactions with ISPI and their fellow members. Each had several examples of how the ability to connect with other practitioners, both independent of their work environments and outside of the conference, proved important to their professional journey.

The value of networking was mentioned by one participant as a crucial part of ISPI membership that was at least as durable as other benefits: “One of the things I realized is that I really enjoy talking and meeting with people. It’s taking the time to connect with people. Keep in contact, we can give each other feedback. And so, I’m still involved with ISPIers that way.”

ISPI is aware of the value its members place on this aspect of the organization, and describes networking and engagement as; “ISPI utilizes communication in as many platforms as possible to ensure members can connect – and stay connected – in ways that are meaningful and long lasting” (*ISPI Membership Benefits*, n.d.). Their website catalogs several opportunities for networking and engagement, most saliently local chapters and international ISPI committees. All participants were at some stage of their careers’ active members in a local chapter:

Being involved at the local level gives you that home base network of like-minded people to talk about areas you’d like to get better at, areas you don’t quite understand. To learn and grow organically, like self-driven. Not, not event driven, not book driven, just you own it and you get out what you put in. That’s how I would term any sort of chapter relationship.

Another participant also talked about engagement in the form of getting out of the experience what they put in:

If you are a passive participant in your chapter, that’s going to be the type of development that you get out of it. If you are an active participant in the chapter then it is much more hands on experiential type of thing.

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This participant talked about building relationships through regular monthly meetings of a local chapter:

At that time our local chapter was pretty active. We had monthly meetings, and we had different speakers and so it was a matter of learning through that. I built and developed relationships with some of them from my graduate program, some of them I met after that. Some I met through those ISPI meetings. And just building my network and learning what other people were doing and learning the approaches that they were doing.

Another noticed that participating at a local chapter inevitably segued into participation at a global level:

So, a significant event somewhere during grad school was when the professor suggested that we get involved with ISPI. I went to my first ISPI meeting. And of course, if we fast forward we can backtrack to how significant that event was. It was an all-day workshop type of an event. I sat next to somebody that was already on a committee for ISPI. So, you know how that goes. That person got me involved in that committee. And I don't know the exact timing but the next year I ended up chairing that same committee. I got involved with ISPI during that period of life and it has been a constant throughout my life.

ISPI gave my participants a chance to network, develop professional relationships, and expand their career horizons. They were collectively aware that being active in their local chapter was a gateway to much broader opportunities.

Opportunities to Give Back. Almost all of my participants felt the need to give back to the community. In keeping with the collaborative nature of the industry and their mission

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statement, ISPI also recognizes the importance of providing opportunities for its members to contribute to the community.

As part of their mission statement, “ISPI believes that Being Better Matters, and part of that is the opportunity to give back. ISPI has many volunteer opportunities to work closely with the Society and enhance professional and personal development” (*ISPI Membership Benefits*, n.d.). Participants frequently talked about the culture of sharing and paying it forward prevalent within the community:

ISPI community has that kind of win-win philosophy, I can help others and not hurt myself. And oftentimes, the corporate world is like, if I’m successful then someone else has to lose. That was very attractive to ISPI with the ability to share and mentor others.

So that was modelled to me when I was starting off, and I felt, I want to pass on and share what I’ve done and what I know.

Mentorship also emerged as an important theme. Participants often spoke about being on both sides of a mentorship relationship: “Those were fun ... to be mentored was significant, developing with other peers and through ISPI, and then just using the tools we were given and to see if we could actually make a difference.” Being mentored invariably evolved into becoming a mentor:

And I think I’ve become quite good at the work we do. And I’ve done some presentations around that. And it is interesting. If I did stuff within ISPI, further, I probably would like to do work with mentoring.

This also leads to new opportunities for learning: “There have been a couple of ISPIers that are new to the field that I mentored and coached. I don’t know if I ever taught them anything. I know they taught me a lot.” Many of the participants talked about the “pay it forward” culture:

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You know there certainly something about ISPI, if you don't have this kind of itch inside you to pay it forward, then either you didn't get the help that you needed when you were coming up, or your kind of out of sync I would say with the group's norms and our values. ...You kind of got failed along the way. I feel like everybody I meet through ISPI is very sensitive to giving credit to the people that helped them. And they are very sensitive and alert to pay that forward when the time comes.

As participants moved forward in their careers, they consistently felt the needed to give back to the ISPI community that had helped them advance to where they were. Pleasingly reflective of the profession as a whole, mutual support and frequent mentorship emerged as one of the most valuable services baked into both ISPI and the participants' career stories in general.

Conclusion: ISPI - the Professional Home of the ID-to-PI Transformation.

Professional growth, networking and engagement, and opportunities to give back all emerged as core concepts in the career development of the study's participants. These key markers of progression in the transition from ID to PI stemmed from membership in ISPI, this study's example of a professional home. ISPI provided a professional venue that the participants could work within to fulfil and actualize their career transformations.

Conclusion: Emerging Themes – ID-to-PI Transition

This chapter has examined the career stories of the study's participants to discover which factors most consistently influenced and facilitated their transitions from instructional design to performance improvement. Four main themes defined those journeys; storytelling, being future-ready, a shift toward consultancy, and engaging with a professional home.

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Storytelling emerged not only as a feature in how the study was conducted, but as a professional technique that helped the participants both conceptualize their journeys and make sense of ambiguous work situations.

Being future-ready was key to each participant as they navigated careers full of dynamic and rapidly-changing circumstances. Each needed to be adaptable enough to react quickly to new situations, and willing to collaborate with their clients, employers, employees and peers. Over the course of their stories, the participants all shifted toward consultancy as part of their transition from ID to PI. This shift involved carrying functional knowledge and developing the communications skills required to identify and execute their clients' needs. They also developed and fostered the cognitive dexterity needed to recognize strategic opportunities, and the personality traits to welcome and navigate ambiguous work environments.

Professional organizations like ISPI provided invaluable opportunities for personal and professional development. This society of like-minded practitioners gave participants a touchstone in the transitional process, allowing them to meet, network, develop, and finally give back to help others do the same.

Each of these represents a key component in the process of transitioning from ID to PI. Together they provide a structural overview of the steps taken by the participants as they made the changes, and provide a framework that describes how the process occurs in the industry in general. Taken as a group, these themes are the keys that unlock the door between ID and PI.

Creating a Model of the ID-to-PI Career Transition System

With the study's emergent themes cataloged, they can now be modeled into a system that describes how an instructional designer can make the transition to performance improvement. The study's participants often spoke about the importance of getting an overall look at the

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system in which a project took place, and *Figure 17* models their career stories using that same approach.

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Figure 17 Model: *System View of the Ambiguous Career Transition from ID-to-PI.*



The input side of **Figure 17** comprises the instructional designer and the immediate actions they take to begin the process. This leads to the transformative part of the system; the instructional designer's behaviour changes towards a performance improvement approach. This change is influenced by the emerging themes; storytelling, future-readiness, consulting, and having a professional home. As the instructional designer's behaviour tilts towards performance improvement it leads to the output of the system; accomplishments and the business results of the performance improvement approach. At first glance the model may appear to be comprised of discrete steps, but the ID-to-PI transition is very much an iterative experience, with the changes in behaviour and shift towards PI happening over time. I will revisit this model further along in the chapter while answering my research questions.

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Transparency, Reliability, Bias, and Rigour

With the main emergent themes of the study identified and the career transformation model introduced, it is possible to begin formulating responses to the study's research questions. Before laying out structural conclusions and recommending future research, this section will review the credibility, trustworthiness, and possible biases of the study. The process of researching and writing this study took longer than expected and encountered a variety of challenges that necessitated adaptation and changes in methodology as it was constructed. Each of these factors are described below.

Guaranteeing Transparency

The methods and procedures of this study were explicitly described early on, and did not need major revision despite encountering many challenges. It is worth noting that the author's personal experiences and biases may have influenced the study's interpretation of collected data. This authorial influence is normal and encouraged when using a constructivist grounded approach, but must be explicitly acknowledged.

Ensuring Reliability

Charmaz's constructivist methodology embraces the influences that the researcher's experiences exert on study reliability. Charmaz states that; "My emphasis on constructivism loosens grounded theory from its objectivist foundations and brings the grounded theorist into the research situation and process of inquiry. We stand within our research process rather than above, before, or outside it." (2015a, p. 240). In line with Charmaz's methodology, I've interacted with both data and emerging ideas openly over the course of the study, and made sure to acknowledge researcher interaction throughout.

Validating Through Constant Comparison

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As discussed in chapters two and four, constant comparison is a key component of grounded theory, and was an active component of much of this study's methodology. Lines and events were compared with other lines and events within each interview, after which I further widened my scope to compare different interviews, as prescribed by constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2015a). Memos played an important role in these comparisons, allowing for the development of new ideas, categories, and themes further into my analysis. This ongoing interaction with the data positioned me to compare "more abstract categories with data, codes, and other categories" (Charmaz, 2015b, p. 1618).

Although a researcher's interpretation of an interview or data source impacts the research, particularly in constructivist methodology, I do not foresee a substantial gap between the emic (data provided by participants in their professional vernacular) and etic (the researcher's interpretation of the emic data), primarily because of my experiences as a practitioner in the same field as the participants. Member checking would have further minimized misunderstandings, but shared professional context has covered much of the same ground.

Dealing With Bias

Researcher bias is an inherent part of constructivist grounded theory methodology. As an active participant in the construction of the research I interacted with the raw data, and the codes derived from it reflect my interpretation. I tried to remain open to learning possibilities while coding, and made an effort to "learn and examine how [my] past influences the way [I] see the world and [my] data" (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 105). This study interprets Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory as comprising multiple waves of coding. In general terms these waves can be looked at in two phases; initial and focused. The iterative nature of these phases, which melded into one another while memo-writing, was integral in capturing my thoughts and ideas

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throughout the process. The extensive use of in vivo data, exemplified in this chapter, provides the reader with first-hand evidence of those interpretations. In effect, the reader is provided with the data needed to undertake their own “audit,” though the samples are demonstrably selective.

Ensuring Rigour Through Instrument Pilot Testing

I pilot tested all of the study’s worksheets and its interview approach before data collection to ensure rigour. The pilot test was done with professionals who did not identify as either instructional designers or performance improvement consultants.

Ensuring Credibility of Data

In this type of study there is always a risk that the contents of the participant interviews might be in some way inaccurate. Given the professional caliber of the participants, however, this seemed unlikely. Still, to guard against the temptation to embellish events or accomplishments, communications with the participants emphasised that the interview was meant to be an accurate retelling of their career stories. To further ensure credibility, the participants’ career paths were cross-referenced with their LinkedIn profiles, and in some cases their resumes. There were no discrepancies.

Conclusion: Transparency, Reliability, Bias and Rigour

Despite a variety of challenges and delays, this study attempted to exercise maximum effort in ensuring transparency, reliability, bias-identification, and rigour. Despite many obstacles, the instrument-testing and self-reflexive ability of Charmaz’ grounded constructivist methodology to embrace a researcher’s influence, as well as the validation through constant comparison done during research and writing, resulted in the study maintaining a reasonable standard of academic objectivity.

Answering the Research Questions

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This section reviews the purpose of the study's research, and then examines how the study illuminates the ambiguous process inherent in the career transition from instructional designer to performance improvement consultant. I first list the research questions, then summarize the updates made to them over the course of the study. As I explore research questions, I revisit the model that represents the results of this study's grounded research and explore it through a performance lens. Over the course of my research I underwent a transformation; my understanding of my subject grew both with the knowledge I acquired while interacting with the study's literature and results, all the while maturing as a practitioner in my own right. The development of the performance lens I used both in my own work and as I wrote my thesis is evident in the evolution of my research questions, which I discuss below.

The Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the ambiguous career transition of instructional designers as they become performance improvement practitioners. The research sets out to look at the experiences, or "career stories," of professionals who successfully made this transition, and through them understand the influences and behaviours that made the process successful.

The Research Questions

The study was guided by the overriding research question, "what are some immediate actions that instructional designers can take to begin their career transition from instructional design to performance improvement?" Additional research questions, designed to further clarify the process, were:

- ii. What are the results of an ID-to-PI transition?
- iii. What are the outputs instructional designers produce that contribute to the overall result?

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- iv. What are some common behaviours that successful Performance Improvement consultants took to transition from ID-to-PI?
- v. What are the most common influences of behaviour?

Although similar to their original versions, these research questions are not identical to the ones included in my 2016 research proposal. Lightly revising the questions to best reflect the emerging themes of my research fit neatly with Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory, and allowed me to explore the most relevant data from my research. I describe rationale for these changes in the next section.

The Evolution of the Research Questions

To provide maximum clarity and structure to my emerging map of the transitional journey, I altered the research questions over the course of my study. In *Developing Qualitative Research Questions: a Reflective Process*, Jane Agee (2009) describes the research questions as a tool, and emphasizes that "good qualitative questions are dynamic... functioning as lenses that are directed outward by the researcher to capture the nuances of the lives, experiences, and perspectives of others" (p. 446).

Revision of the research questions was a key part of this study's approach and ongoing interaction with the data. Charmaz explains how a researcher must "...be willing to alter your research questions when you discover that other questions have greater significance in the field" (2015a, p. 48). As the study progressed, the depth and complexity of its approach to its topic matured, though the intended outcome did not shift. This growth is evident in an examination of the initial and final sets of research questions.

The research questions in the study's proposal, written more than six years prior to its completion, read as follows:

HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

- i. What are the best practices which successful Performance Improvement consultants took to transition from ID-to-PI?
- ii. Does an ISD background provide an advantage or disadvantage to PI?
- iii. Why and in what circumstance are PI and ID used interchangeably?
- iv. What are the top skills (5 hard and 5 soft) that facilitated the transition?

Though the second and third questions were touched upon in the data collected, they were never its main focus, and would require further research to answer. As a result, I moved these questions to the *Further Research* section of this chapter. The study's collected data made it clear that the first and fourth questions should become the new focus, and their objectives were carried over and amplified in the next version of the research questions:

- i. What are some common behaviours that successful Performance Improvement consultants took to transition from ID to PI?
- ii. What are the most common influences of behaviour?
- iii. What are the most impactful actions an instructional designer can take to transition to performance improvement?

This progression of understanding can be explained not only as a researcher refining her topic, but also as a parallel to an instructional designer transitioning to performance improvement. There was an interesting reflection of my own professional progression alongside the career stories I was studying. This personal and extended interaction with the data prompted a third and final rephrasing of the research questions:

- i. What are some immediate actions that instructional designers can take to begin their career transition from instructional design to performance improvement?
- ii. What are the results of an ID-to-PI transition?

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- iii. What are the outputs instructional designers produce that contribute to the overall result?
- iv. What are some common behaviours that successful Performance Improvement consultants took to transition from ID to PI?
- v. What are the most common influences of behaviour?

These five questions form the final basis of my study's analysis. Before responding to them individually, I will present a simplified version of my ID-to-PI career transition model.

Starting Simple

When I modeled the ID-to-PI transition, I noticed substantial overlap between the system I was developing and Binder's Performance Chain® and Six Boxes®. Overlap with such a well-established framework gave my approach both weight and direction, and Binder's insights provided guideposts for the changes I made to my overall model as I tried to simplify, streamline, and finalize it.

My simplified career transition diagram begins with the system model in **Figure 17**. From that starting point I moved the "key components" to the top and applied the headers: "immediate actions," "change in behaviour," "accomplishments," and "business results," creating **Figure 18**.

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Figure 18 *Simplified Model*



This simplified model now bears a resemblance to Carl Binder’s Performance Chain®, which I discussed in the Literature Review and replicate in **Figure 5**. Upon further consideration a few additional modifications to the model were necessary.

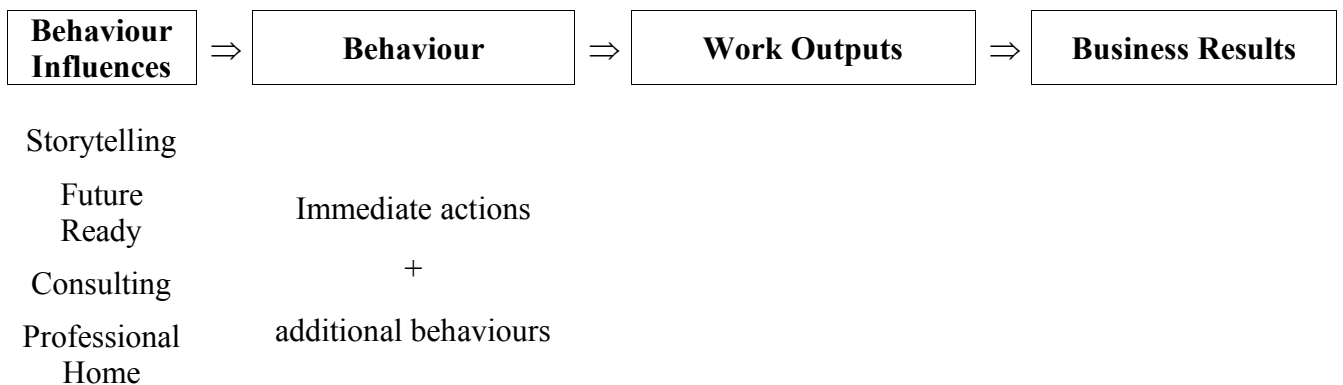
- The immediate actions are behaviours that instructional designers tend to begin at the start of their journey towards performance improvement, so I placed them under the second column, which I renamed from “change in behaviour” to “behaviour.” Additional behaviours key to the ID-to-PI transition were identified in this study, and though I omit them here for the sake of brevity, they will be discussed in the answer to research question four.
- With the immediate actions filed under “behaviours,” the influences of that behaviour change; Storytelling, Future Ready, Consulting and Professional Home are moved to the leftmost column. That first column is then renamed from “immediate actions” to “behaviour influences.”
- One of Gilbert’s critical contributions to human performance was the suggestion that analysis begin with the accomplishments of behaviour rather than the

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behaviour itself (Binder, 2009). Binder calls these accomplishments “work outputs.” With this in mind I renamed my third column from “accomplishments” to the synonym “work outputs.”

These updates transform my simplified model to fall in line with the elements of Carl Binder’s Performance Chain® (*Behaviour Influences, Behaviour, Work Outputs, and Business Results*), and the changes are reflected in **Figure 19**. My literature review discussed that the first element of the Performance Chain® leads to the Six Boxes®, and that these two elements together make up Binder’s Performance Thinking Approach (n.d.-a). The author’s website describes this approach as connecting “behaviour with business results to engage employees and focus them on the most valuable activities and work products” (Binder, n.d.-b). Unifying my model with Binder’s is an opportunity to present my findings of the ID-to-PI transformation through the lens of an established and practical framework.

Figure 19 *Unifying my Simplified Model with Carl Binder’s Performance Chain®*



Theoretical Sensitivity in Action: Applying a PI Framework

In the same way that PIs apply Binder’s Performance Chain® and Six Boxes® to connect behaviour with business results in the workplace (Binder, n.d.-a), I apply them to the ID-to-PI career transition. This approach is an example of the theoretical sensitivity component of grounded theory, and how it continues to have a place in the research, even at this late stage. As I

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interacted with the data and literature, and grew as a learning professional in parallel, my “insight and understanding about a phenomenon [Performance Thinking Approach] increase[d]” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 43), my “ability to give meaning to data, [and the framework] the capacity to understand, and the capability to separate the pertinent from which isn’t” (Charmaz, 2015a, p. 137) improved, and I was able to synthesize the data into a new application.

My growing understanding of performance improvement and the tools that PIs use to understand the performance of others prompted me to apply both Six Boxes® and the Performance Chain® to answer the research questions, an approach in itself very much aligned to the career transition being studied.

This process summarizes my general approach to answering the study’s research questions; using the same tools that PIs do to refine and reinforce the model I created to illuminate their journeys from instructional design. With my approach of unifying my model with Binder’s framework to present my findings explained as an example of ongoing theoretical sensitivity, I next embark on answering my research question using the study’s findings.

Question 1: What are some immediate actions that instructional designers can take to begin their career transition from instructional design to performance improvement?

Throughout the participant interviews, three courses of action emerged as key ways an instructional designer could support their transition to performance improvement. None of these actions guaranteed a successful transition by itself, but they were an important part of all of the participants’ journeys. These three immediate actions are a significant contribution to the field, as they are explicit actions, or behaviours, that can be done immediately with little to no preparation required to start. These immediate actions are:

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1. **Performance Story** - Build a collection of performance stories. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, all of the study's participants were good storytellers, and each actively employed storytelling techniques to accomplish their goals. Once a participant parlayed a training request into a performance solution, they were then able to tell that story to subsequent clients. By telling their performance stories, they were able to leverage the narrative into widening the solution scope beyond training. If an instructional designer didn't yet have the experience to tell their own performance story, they could create a similar effect by referencing performance narratives gleaned from others. They collected these narratives as they found and sharpened their own performance lens, and built their functional knowledge in various ways, most notably by active involvement in their professional home. Instructional designers on the journey towards performance improvement can take immediate action by crafting their own story, or leveraging an existing one that demonstrates how a performance intervention would be the best solution for a training request. Over time, as their collection of performance stories grows, so too will the possible applications of those stories in the context of different projects, clients, and industries.
2. **Performance Home** - Be an active member in a performance-focused professional organization, such as the International Society of Performance Improvement (ISPI). Soon after attending their first performance-focused event with ISPI, the participants without exception became active volunteer members in their new professional home. Their participation usually began at a local chapter, and then extended to the international level with conference presentations and

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committee memberships, with some progressing to leadership roles in the society. Described earlier in this chapter as one of the study's emerging themes, the member benefits of participation in a formalized professional home might be all that is needed for a progression from ID to PI, or it might be part of a more holistic, immersive experience. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine which scenario more accurately describes the participants' experiences, but it is safe to conclude that becoming active in a professional home like ISPI can play a significant role in enabling a successful transition from ID to PI. Instructional designers on the journey towards performance improvement can take immediate action by joining a performance-focused professional organization, participating in its events, and volunteering with its members. Over time, as their value proposition to the professional home grows, so too may performance-based opportunities as a volunteer within the professional home, as well as on-the-job chances to find work in new areas.

3. **Performance Lens** - Find your performance lens to see the world. As the participants learned about performance improvement, they eventually crossed a threshold in the way they looked at both their work and their lives. Many of the participants referred to this as “putting on a performance lens” that, once they looked at the world through it, could not be unseen. The process by which the participants found this lens took many forms and was often as ambiguous as the career transition itself. Simply being aware that this performance lens existed served as a universal indicator of entry into the ID-to-PI transition process. Instructional designers on the journey towards performance improvement can take

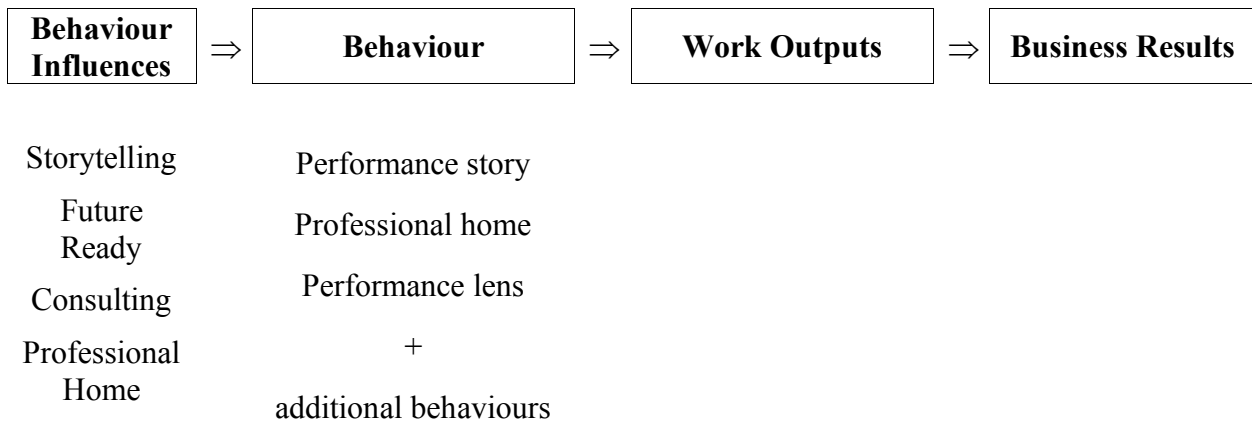
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immediate action by simply acknowledging that a performance lens exists, and asking themselves how performance in any given situation could be improved.

This lens means that IDs should be asking themselves how to improve performance all the time – using opportunities as mundane as meal prep and ordering a coffee all the way to analysis of current work processes or latest project request as targets of their performance lens. Over time, the performance lens becomes innate with the instructional designer, no longer needing to self-prompt, and everything comes to be seen as a performance system rife with opportunities for improvement.

In conclusion, this study found three important answers to its first research question. IDs seeking to transition to PI should build and leverage a collection of performance stories, be an active member in a performance-focused professional home, and begin to build their performance lens. **Figure 20** provides an updated Performance Chain® reflecting these immediate actions. This is the first of an assemblage of behaviours that I will link to the accomplishments, or work outputs, of an ID as they transition to PI. With these criteria in mind, the answers to the study’s second question come into focus.

Figure 20 *Performance Chain® Updated with Immediate Actions.*



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Question 2: What are the business results of an ID-to-PI transition?

To answer this question I continued to approach it the same way a PI would; with the application of real-world performance tools. Most clients engaged with an ID or PI are interested in how the work being done impacts their business, and the same is true of the instructional designers in this study shifting to performance improvement. To account for this, I placed the “*Business Results*” of an ID-to-PI transition in the rightmost link of my model, mirroring their position in Binder’s Performance Chain®. In the field, PIs try to align the results of an intervention with the organizational goals articulated by the client.

As instructional designers embark on a career transition towards becoming a professional with more strategic influence on their client’s business, my study suggests that their new approach will likely impact their business results. Although presented all at once, it is interesting to note that these *Business Results* don’t happen in an instant. They may begin at different times and develop asynchronously. Participants described the following changes in the results they achieved as they moved toward PI-style interventions:

- Growth in PI opportunities: once an instructional designer has experienced their first performance project, in time they will likely see a rise in additional performance improvement consulting opportunities as some clients recognize the value of the performance approach or new clients seek it out. Although participants were excited to engage with performance projects and did experience growth in PI opportunities, it’s worth noting that their work did not shift exclusively to performance-focused projects.
- Continuation of ID opportunities: the study revealed that performance improvement practitioners often continue to do training interventions. In general

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the study participants described the hope that PI work would eventually replace their ID work, but the reality was that training projects remained in abundance. Though the PI approach became the preferred method for the participants, the skill set also did nothing to inhibit their continued engagement with ID opportunities.

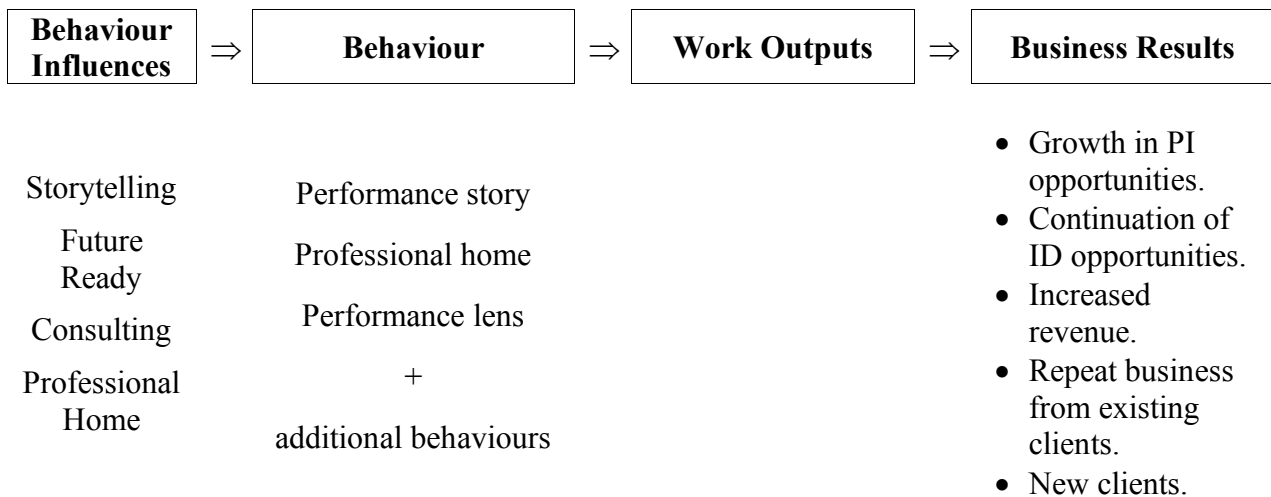
- Increased revenue: PI tactics increase both the instructional designer's strategic influence and their value proposition to their clients. The participants indicated increases in potential revenue as the scope of projects they could undertake grew.
- Repeat business from existing clients: As credibility and trust build between the consultant and client, existing clients are more likely to return. Participants described close partnerships developing with their clients, and work opportunities that continued to reoccur over time.
- New clients: As an instructional designer builds stronger relationships with existing clients, they are more likely to attract new ones. My study's participants frequently found that building a good reputation attracted new clients. The move into PI consultancy also empowered them to talk about the work they did more articulately, which led to increased visibility and, in turn, new clients.

How IDs transitioning to PI are able to measure and track these business results depends on their employment status. Financial data was more available to participants who were working independently or running their own consultancy businesses. Participants who were employees when they started their journeys had limited access to direct data that could help them quantify the business results of their ID-to-PI transition, however, they found ways to infer.

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In conclusion, this study found the Business Results that developed over time to be a growth in PI opportunities, number of clients, and revenue, with a concurrent continuation of ID opportunities, existing relationships, and the business of existing clients. The ability of a practitioner to measure these business results was dependent on access to the data, but was quantifiable in some way for most participants. Figure 21 updates the Performance Chain® to reflect this study’s answer to the second research question, adding the Business Results of an ID-to-PI career transition.

Figure 21 *Performance Chain® Updated with Business Results.*



With the *Business Results* defined, I next move leftwards on the Performance Chain® to answer the study’s third question.

Question 3: What are the Work Outputs that contribute to the Business Results of an ID-to-PI career transition?

As discussed in the literature review, the Performance Chain® flows from left to right in the real world. When designing an intervention, however, performance consultants start with the desired *Business Results*, using them as an anchor as they work their way backwards through the chain. The Performance Chain® connects “behaviour with business results to engage employees and focus them on the most valuable activities and work products” (Binder, n.d.).

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To answer my third research question, I continue to follow the performance consultants' example, working back through the Performance Chain® to find out which work outputs my participant used to achieve their business results. Through my participants I identified several *Work Outputs* that featured most prominently in successful transitions into PI, and broke them into two types: tangible and intangible. Tangible outputs included accomplishments of behaviour like deliverables and transactions. The intangible outputs included less obvious interactions, such as well-taken decisions and newly-built relationships (The Performance Thinking Network, 2018).

As participant instructional designers moved toward becoming performance improvement professionals, the tangible accomplishments from their behaviour over time revealed by this study were:

- Deliver non-training solutions.
- Continue to deliver training solutions.
- Training and performance solutions are diverse.

These results are tangible because IDs can measure them over time. An instructional designer can track the type of their proposed solution and whether it includes training or not. Getting out of the training box widens the range of possible intervention types, and diversifies the solutions even when training is still involved.

The second category of outputs are intangible. Though harder to quantify, these accomplishments are just as important as more measurable criteria. As participant instructional designers moved toward being performance improvement professionals, the intangible outcomes of their behaviour revealed by this study were:

- Client relationships built on trust.

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- Ambiguous opportunities are welcomed.
- Strategic partnerships with clients.

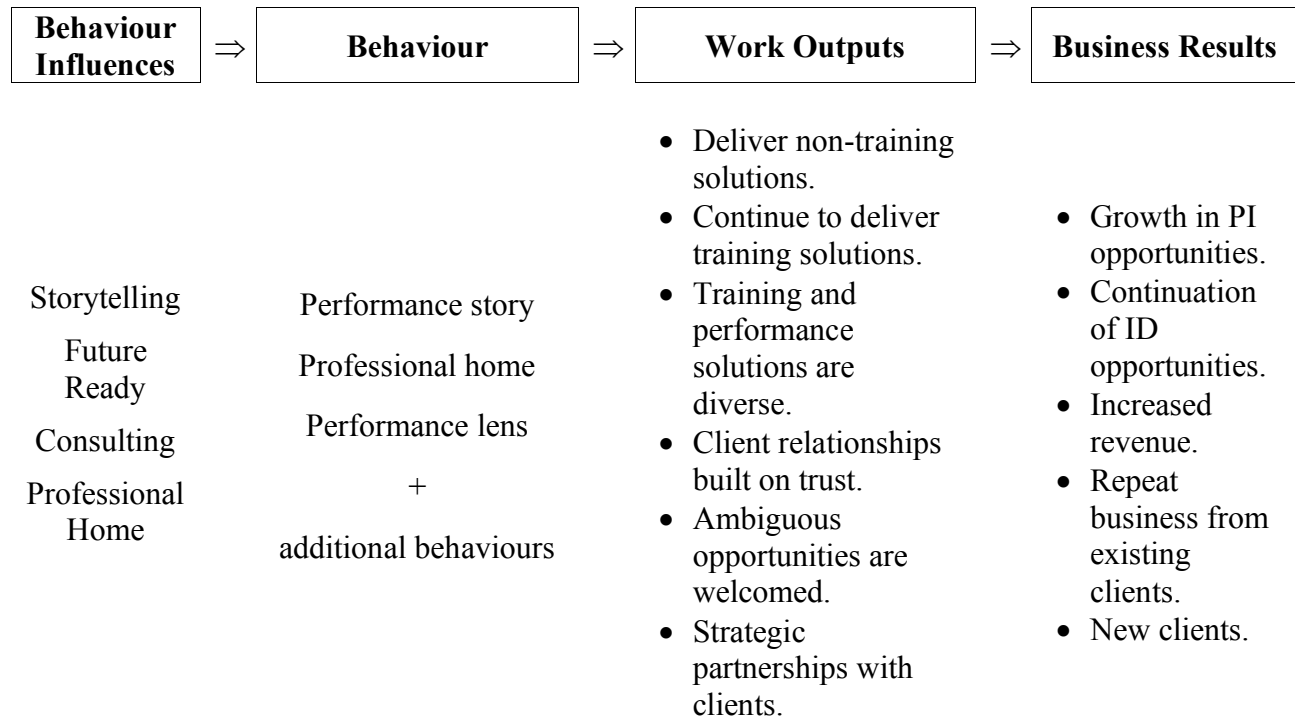
These intangible outcomes of behaviour are difficult to quantify, but their impact was noticeable across all participants. Having the cognitive dexterity to recognize that sometimes what is best for your client isn't always the best solution but builds trust with the client. When a client decides an instructional designer is trustworthy, lines of communication open and the ID is able to transition from order-taker to consultant. As consultancy experiences stack up, so do the ambiguous situations in which emerging performance consultants find themselves in. Over time my participants became comfortable with this ambiguity, and eventually even thrived in it.

These kinds of interactions pave the way for future opportunities where an ID is able to devise interventions more in line with PI practice than had previously been possible. As client relationships strengthen over time, partnerships may develop in which the consultant has influence on strategic decisions within their client's organization.

In conclusion, this study found that the *Work Outputs* that occur as an instructional designer transitions to performance improvement comprise both tangible and intangible elements that all point in the same direction. Over time, as IDs earn their clients' trust, they learn to embrace ambiguous situations and build strategic partnerships that present opportunities to conceptualize novel training and non-training solutions. **Figure 22** is an updated version of the Performance Chain® reflecting this study's answer to the third research question, adding the *Work Outputs* of an ID-to-PI career transition.

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Figure 22 *Performance Chain® Updated with Work Outputs*



With the *Work Outputs* identified, I continue to move leftwards on the Performance Chain® to take a closer look at the behaviours that led to them as I answer the study's fourth question.

Question 4: What are some common behaviours of successful Performance Improvement consultants that transitioned from ID to PI?

After careful review of both codes and narrative aspects of the participant interviews, I found the common *Behaviours* that successful performance improvement consultants undertook to transition from ID to PI begin with the three Immediate Actions introduced in the answer to the first research question:

- Performance story: Build a collection of performance stories.
- Professional home: Be an active member in a performance-focused professional organization, such as the International Society of Performance Improvement (ISPI).

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- Performance lens: Find your performance lens to see the world.

An additional set of six *Behaviours* lead to the *Work Outputs* discussed in my answer to the third research question are listed in Figure 23, below the three *Immediate Actions*. Like the *Immediate Actions*, *Business Results*, and *Work Outputs* previously discussed, these additional behaviours don't happen instantaneously; they occur and are refined over time. The additional behaviours are:

1. **Approach projects with the mindset that training isn't always the solution.** As instructional designers transition to performance improvement, they need to break the often habitual notion that training is always the best way to address their clients' needs. Some participants deliberately took this idea to the extreme, avoiding training as a possible solution almost no matter what the situation. They generally did not hold hard to this technique, however, as they realized that their solutions had to address the root cause of the challenge or lost opportunity. Although training may occasionally be the best solution, research shows that it often is not, or is only a part of it (Tovar, Gagnon & Schmid, 1997). IDs on-the-job behaviour should thus reflect that training isn't necessarily the solution.
2. **Approach projects remembering that training can be part of the solution.** Although instructional designers seeking to become PIs should approach projects with the mindset that training isn't always the solution, training shouldn't be discounted either. When a gap exists in skills or knowledge, training certainly has a place. This study's PI professionals made conscious efforts to consider a far wider range of options than they would have as IDs, but kept training as a possible piece of the proposed solution. Research supports this

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approach, with Tovar et al. (1997) suggesting that training can remain a component of performance solutions. IDs should never entirely discount training as a solution.

3. **Always consider the client's point of view on a project.** My participants found it crucial to consider the client's point of view when conceptualizing and undertaking a new project. They noticed that even if a particular performance intervention would have had the greatest impact, the client might not have been ready for that type of solution. Both IDs and PIs need to recognize that they may not know what is happening behind the scenes at a client organization, nor understand the nuances that lead clients to champion one solution over another. It is important to inform clients of recommendations, and then partner with them to implement a solution that is agreed upon as the best way forward for their current circumstances. IDs behaviour should reflect that they hear their client's priorities and concerns.
4. **Approach projects with a "systems view."** Performance solutions are best arrived at by understanding the system in which they must function. My participants recognized that the problems they tried to solve did not exist in isolation, and were part of a larger system which they needed to take into account in order to create effective performance solutions. To understand those systems, performance consultants must look at them from the perspective of the performers. This expansion of professional perspective frequently informed my participants' choices, and gave them the vantage point needed to design solutions that both identified and solved larger systemic problems. IDs' on-the-job behaviour should reflect a systems view approach to all projects, even those that are presented in isolation.

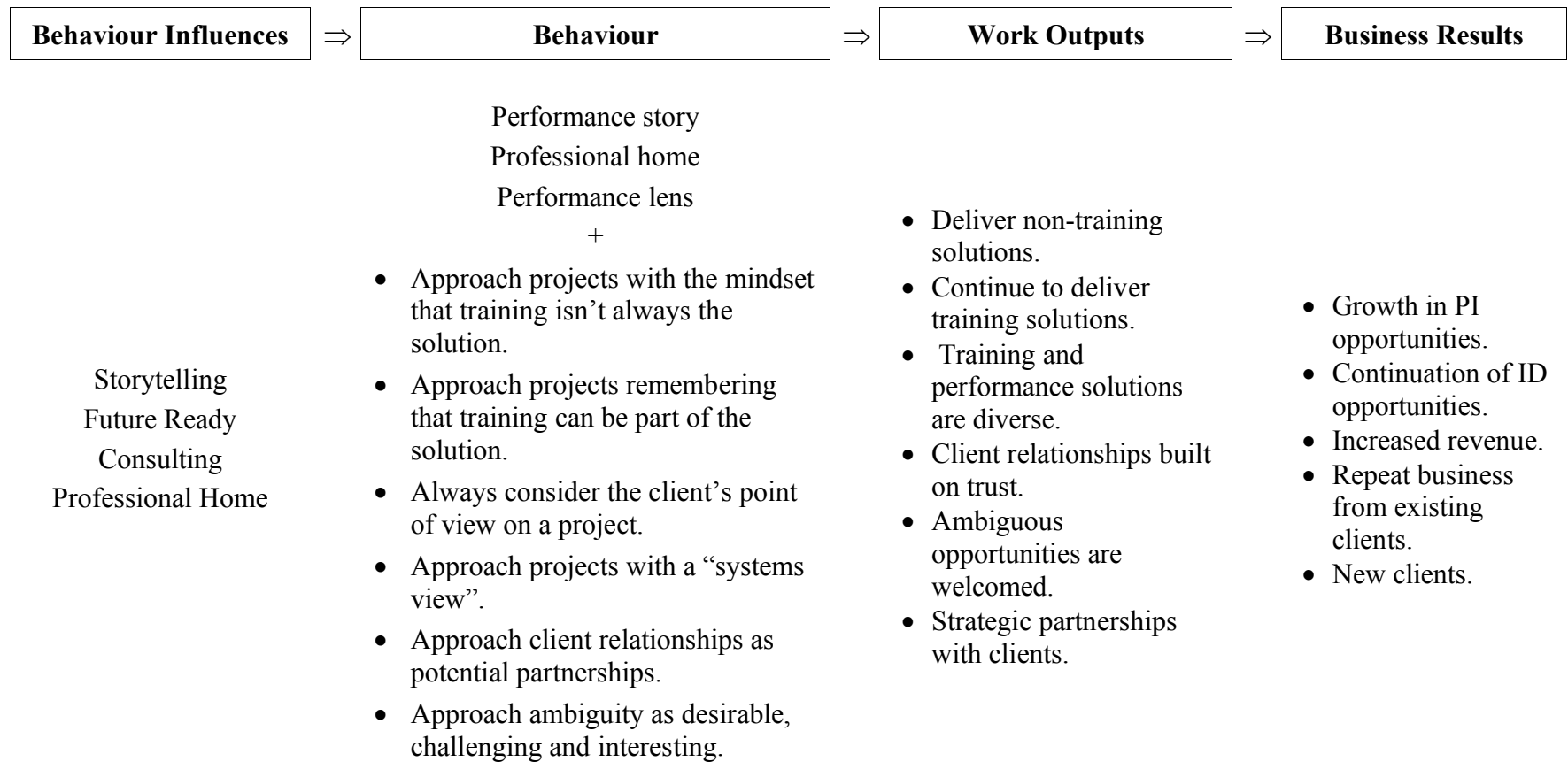
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5. **Approach client relationships as potential partnerships.** Clients are often reluctant to consider non-training interventions as possible solutions. Participants of this study spoke a lot about partnering with clients long-term with the hope of building strategic partnerships. They found that it was important to educate clients on non-training solutions at the pace that suited them. Over time, these relationships allow PIs to shift from taking orders to offering strategic advice. IDs on-the-job behaviour should treat each and every client as a potential strategic partner.
6. **Approach ambiguity as desirable, challenging, and interesting.** Performance consultants are generally brought into a situation to solve a specific problem but the cause of the problem, or the problem itself might not be straightforward. My participants saw value in finding “comfort with ambiguity and the ability to make sense of it” (Banai & Tulimieri, 2013, p. 890). Despite being given specific problems to solve, circumstances often dictate that IDs could potentially be moving in and out of different teams, organizations, industries, and possibly countries. It is impossible for consultants to completely understand every situation they find themselves in, so they instead need to learn how to feel comfortable with not knowing. Ambiguity is prevalent at the beginning stages of projects for many reasons, a common example being that stakeholders are unsure of what the instructional designer or performance consultant brings to the table. This makes the ability to navigate ambiguity paramount. IDs’ behaviour should reflect an expectation for ambiguity, and both embrace it with confidence and enjoy the challenge.

In conclusion, the *Immediate Actions* discussed earlier, along with the six additional *Behaviours* lead to the *Work Outputs* and the *Business Results* of the ID-to-PI career transition form the key steps in my model of the ID-to-PI transition, and are shown in **Figure 23**.

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Figure 23 *Performance Chain® with a Closer Look at the Behaviours.*



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With the Behaviours of an ID-to-PI transition described, the study's last research question leads to the final link of Binder's Performance Chain®, identifying the influences of ID behaviour over time as they transition into performance improvement.

Question 5: What are the most common influences of behaviour?

With the procedural steps of how IDs transition into PI elucidated by the first four research questions, this fifth research question continues to analyze the participants in the same way they examine the performers they seek to improve: by defining the environmental and human conditions that positively or negatively affect their behaviour as they embark on the journey. **Figure 17** models this study's systems view of the career transition from instructional design to performance improvement with the themes that emerged from the participant interviews. These themes are *Storytelling*, being *Future-Ready*, *Consultancy*, and the acquisition of a *Professional Home*, each of which change an ID's behaviour incrementally as they incorporate them into their professional approach. **Table 14** lists the emerging themes and their categories. To answer this fifth and final research question, I discuss these behaviour influences in the context of these categories. "*Behaviour Influences*," situated on the leftmost side of Carl Binder's Performance Chain®, represent the real-world conditions that affect a performer's behaviour. Along with the categories indicated in **Table 14**, there are seven *additional Behaviour Influences*. All nineteen *Behaviour Influences* are listed in **Table 15** and following that a discussion of their emergence.

Table 15 *Behaviour Influences*

Behaviour Influences	
Storytelling	The participants of this study are good storytellers* Leveraging storytelling to get the job done* Participants reflect on their stories to inform future decisions and behaviours*

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Behaviour Influences	
Professional Home	Professional Growth Networking and Engagement Opportunity to Give Back
Future Ready	Adaptability Collaboration
Consultancy	Functional Knowledge Communication Skills Cognitive Dexterity Tolerance for ambiguity Performance tools such as the Performance Chain® and Six Boxes®. Performance lens. ID and PI are ambiguous professions.
Additional behaviour influences	Consultancy: Functional Knowledge – list of resources (<i>Appendix L Academic Knowledge</i>). Output of this research study. Don't assume that training is the solution. Find non-training ways to increase skills and knowledge.

The emergence of additional *Behaviour Influences* is another example of theoretical sensitivity because, as the researcher, my capacity to understand and separate the pertinent data increased throughout the writing phase of the study. This forward movement of the research because of my influence is embraced and expected by constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2015a). As my understanding of Binder's performance tools grew alongside my continual interaction with the data, I felt I needed to make a proper place for them; the first additional behaviour influence is "*Performance tools such as the Performance Chain® and Six Boxes®.*"

My response to the first research question about *Immediate Actions* that instructional designers can take to begin their career transition towards performance improvement led me to an additional *Behaviour Influence*. *Performance Lens* was coined as participants described crossing a threshold of understanding performance improvement that fundamentally changed the way they looked at their work and their lives. The process by which the participants found this

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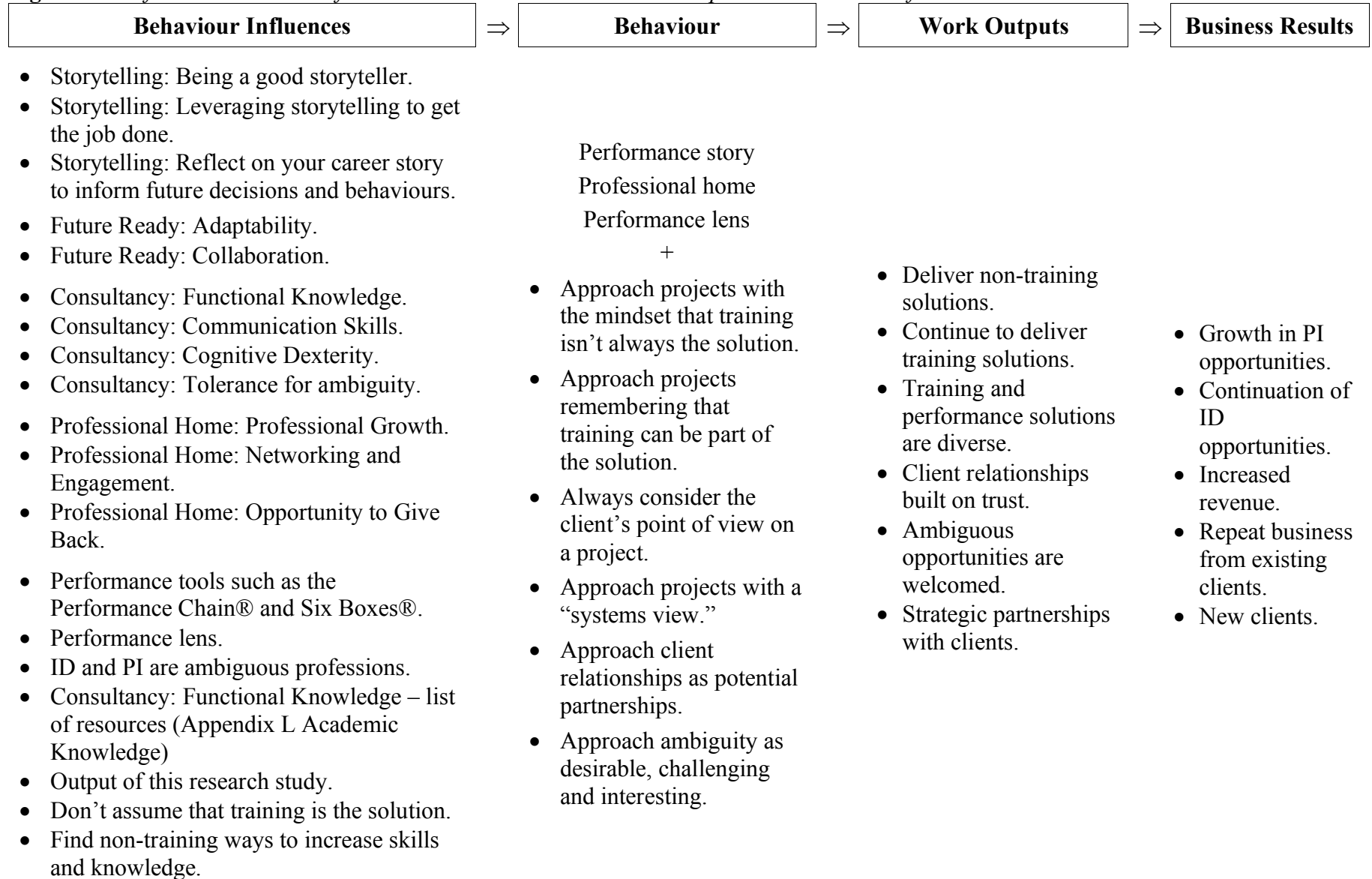
lens is as ambiguous as the career transition itself, and is included in possible further research at the end of this chapter. For an instructional designer to take the *Immediate Action of Find your performance lens to see the world*, a *Performance Lens* must exist, which leads to “*Performance Lens*” being a *Behaviour Influence*.

Given the ambiguity discussed in answering the fourth research question, the next additional behaviour influence is “*ID and PI are ambiguous professions.*” The list of resources collected in **Appendix L Academic Knowledge** represents all the publications that influenced the participants of this study, placing “*Consultancy: Functional Knowledge – list of resources (Appendix L Academic Knowledge)*” as the fourth additional influence. It is also worth noting that the “*Output of this research study*” is a potential *Behaviour Influence*, though one limited in scope. In his webinar *How Leaders and Managers Can Drive Continuous (Agile) Talent Development*, Carl Binder describe my last two behaviour influences perfectly: “Don’t assume that training is the solution.” and “Find non-training ways to increase Skills and Knowledge.”

These seven additional *Behaviour Influences*, combined with the original categories behind the emergent themes, result in a total of nineteen *Behaviour Influences* that define the ID-to-PI career transition. **Figure 24** replaces the broader emerging themes of this study with these *Behaviour Influences*.

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Figure 24 Performance Chain® of the ID-to-PI career transition with expanded behaviour influences.



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To situate *Behaviour Influences* in the larger context of the development of human performance, Binder places his Six Boxes® model into the first step of his Performance Chain®. Similarly, to understand the *Behaviour Influences* that set this study's participants on the road from ID to PI, the next step is to identify where in the Six Boxes® they belong. Arranging them in the six cells of the model is a systematic way to look at these *Behaviour Influences* in terms of both the external environment and the performer. These categorizations is done in **Figure 25**.

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Figure 25 *Behaviour Influences Slotted in Carl Binder’s Six Boxes®.*

<i>Environment</i>	1	Expectations and Feedback	2	Tools and Resources	3	Consequences and Incentives
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ID and PI are ambiguous professions. • Storytelling: Reflect on your career story to inform future decisions and behaviours. • Performance lens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storytelling: Leveraging storytelling to get the job done. • Consultancy: Functional Knowledge – list of resources (Appendix L Academic Knowledge) • Output of this research study. • Performance tools such as the Performance Chain® and Six Boxes®. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Home: Professional Growth. • Professional Home: Opportunities to give back. 	
		4	Skills and Knowledge	6	Selections and Assignments (Capacity)	7
<i>Person</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultancy: Functional Knowledge. • Don’t assume that training is the solution. • Find non-training ways to increase skills and knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storytelling: Being a good storyteller. • Future Ready: Adaptability. • Consultancy: Communication Skills. • Consultancy: Cognitive Dexterity. • Consultancy: Tolerance for ambiguity. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Ready: Collaboration. • Professional Home: Networking & Engagement. 	

It is important to note that only three of the nineteen *Behaviour Influences* are in the *Skills & Knowledge* box, while over 80% are out of the training box. **Figure 26** combines both models, summarizing the transition from ID to PI using both the Performance Chain® and Six Boxes®.

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Figure 26 Carl Binder's Six Boxes® and Performance Chain® of the ID-to-PI Career Transition.



Performance stories

Professional home

Performance lens

+

- Approach projects with the mindset that training isn't always the solution.
- Approach projects remembering that training can be part of the solution.
- Always consider the client's point of view on a project.
- Approach projects with a "systems view".
- Approach client relationships as potential partnerships.
- Approach ambiguity as desirable, challenging and interesting.

- Deliver non-training solutions.
- Continue to deliver training solutions.
- The training and performance solutions they delivered were more diverse.
- Client relationships built on trust.
- Ambiguous opportunities are welcomed.
- Strategic partnerships with clients.

- Growth in PI opportunities.
- Continuation of ID opportunities.
- Increased revenue.
- Repeat business from existing clients.
- New clients.

Environment	1 Expectations & Feedback <input type="checkbox"/> ID and PI are ambiguous professions. <input type="checkbox"/> Storytelling: Reflect on your career story to inform future decisions and behaviours. <input type="checkbox"/> Performance lens.	2 Tools & Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Storytelling: Leveraging storytelling to get the job done. <input type="checkbox"/> Consultancy: Functional Knowledge – list of resources (Appendix L: Academic Knowledge) <input type="checkbox"/> Output of this research study <input type="checkbox"/> Performance tools such as the Performance Chain® and Six Boxes®.	3 Consequences & Incentives <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Home: Professional Growth. <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Home: Opportunity to Give Back.
	4 Skills & Knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Consultancy: Functional Knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/> Don't assume that training is the solution. <input type="checkbox"/> Find non-training ways to increase skills and knowledge.	5 Selections & Assignments <input type="checkbox"/> Storytelling: Being a good storyteller. <input type="checkbox"/> Future Ready: Adaptability. <input type="checkbox"/> Consultancy: Communication Skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Consultancy: Cognitive Dexterity. <input type="checkbox"/> Consultancy: Tolerance for ambiguity.	6 Motives & Preferences <input type="checkbox"/> Future Ready: Collaboration. <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Home: Networking and Engagement.
Person			

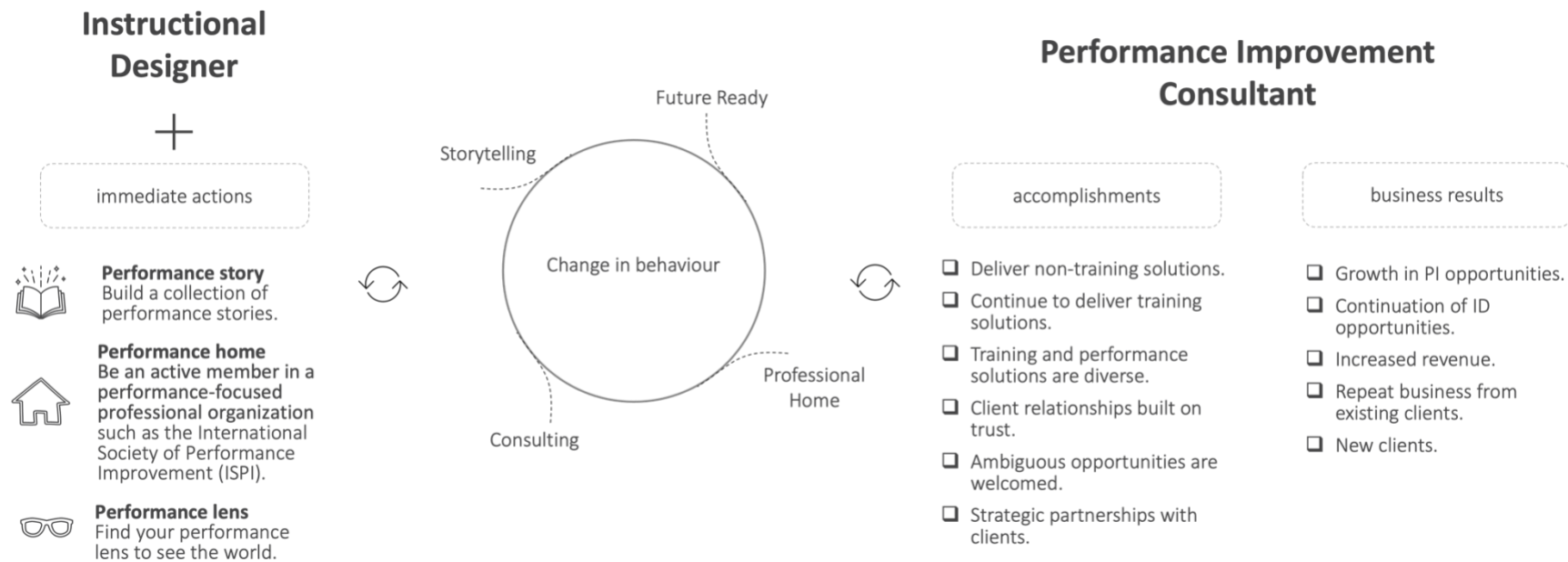
Updated ID-to-PI Model

The knowledge gained from transforming my simplified model into frameworks that mirror how performance improvement consultants explore workplace systems has relied on both answering the research questions and examining the theoretical ID-to-PI transition with practical PI tools. I will next return to my model of the ID-to-PI transition to revise it using this new perspective.

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Figure 27 is an updated model that includes the findings and conclusions of my research questions. Similar in structure to the original shown in **Figure 17**, the updated model tracks all the various inputs over time that create the ID-to-PI transformation, or that allow iterative progression in the performance consultant's *Accomplishments* and *Business Results*. With the research questions answered, new details can be added to the model with *Immediate Actions*, *Accomplishments* and *Business Results*.

Figure 27 Updated Model of the ID-to-PI Career Transition



With my research questions answered and my model complete, I will next move on to this study's place in a larger context.

Just as answering my research questions helped me update my model, this completed description of the ID-to-PI career transition has a chance to contribute to the field of study in general.

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Contributions to the Field

With my model complete and my research questions answered, I next hope to position my study within the greater context of its possible contributions to the field. I began this thesis as a personal exploration of the ID-to-PI journey, hoping that the insights of other professionals might inform my own professional progression, and perhaps be of some interest to readers at a similar career stage. What emerged as I deepened and developed my research was more complex; a ruleset that might serve practitioners at any stage of the progression.

In addition to the direct findings uncovered by my research questions, I believe there is broader value in one of my analytical concepts. Using Carl Binders' frameworks to refine and detail my model struck me as both a pleasingly congruent and surprisingly effective way to conceptualize the entire ID-to-PI transition process. This methodology gives my model both theoretical weight and a vocabulary well-suited to the purpose of illuminating the often shaded path from instructional design toward performance improvement. Where these concepts will fit into the literature around PI remains to be seen, but I am convinced that my work can be put to use in the most basic and practical way, as well. My three immediate actions that an ID can undertake to start the journey into PI don't rely on complex conceptual models or lengthy analysis; they are clear, practical pieces of advice.

Conclusion: From Ambiguity to Transparency

The research questions addressed in this thesis were designed to model the ID-to-PI transition, describe the *Immediate Actions* that facilitate it, and situate the entire process inside the best practices that define the performance space. With this basic system in view, I noticed how easily Binder's Performance Chain® and Six Boxes® frameworks could be used in the deeper analysis of my participant data as I progressed through my research questions. The result

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is a goal-aligned overall model of the ID-to-PI transition that both makes immediate recommendations and explains the transition process within a performance framework. I hope that this examination of an ambiguous process at steadily increasing levels of granularity will make this complex process more decipherable for instructional designers who hope to make the difficult but rewarding transition into performance improvement. With this study's research questions answered and my model updated, it is now appropriate to look at the limitations of this study.

Limitations of the Study

Despite many precautions and a great deal of planning, this study encountered its fair share of obstacles. Its findings are carefully argued and mutually supportive, but limitations remain as a legacy of the many challenges I encountered as it was researched and written.

Reliability

During the planning phase, this study was designed to ensure reliability through member checking, external audits, and validation through constant comparison. Unfortunately, two of these three strategies were not applied. .

- **Member Checking.** Member checking participants was part of the study's original plan. Thesis progress unfolded in an unexpected way, however, including unplanned multi-year moratoriums. When I re-engaged with my study, the world was well into the Coronavirus pandemic and my supervisor and I concurred that it was unreasonable to member check with study participants years after their interviews, during a public health emergency. The lack of member checking is an unexpected and unintended weakness of the study.

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- **External Auditing.** Due to the unforeseen circumstances mentioned above, external auditing was also impractical. This is another unexpected and unintended weakness of the study.

Possibly Missing Current Research

Long, unexpected breaks from the research resulted in the removal of member checking and external auditing. It is also entirely possible that new research relevant to my inquiry has been published since my initial literature review. A quick Google Scholar search of instructional design and performance improvement literature did not reveal any glaring omissions, but I cannot ignore the possibility that my study does not consider the most recent research in the field.

Sampling Limitations

The sampling approach I chose turned out to be a limitation for three reasons. Firstly, my sample consisted of the first six eligible people who volunteered to participate in the study, all of whom happened to be part of my immediate network. The participant profiles all aligned with one of the three profiles I initially targeted. My supervisor and I agreed that while exploring the other participant profiles was an area of interest for another study, it was not within the scope of this one. This leads to a second limitation related to my sampling approach. My recruitment process directly conflicted with “theoretical sampling”, a core concept of Charmaz’s grounded theory (Charmaz, 2015a). Ideally, data from one participant should have influenced the participant profile criteria for the next participant. This data-driven approach was not possible with all six participants selected immediately. Finally, it is also worth noting that all of my participants were members of ISPI, and the homogeneity of their memberships biases the study toward a single professional home.

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Frequency of Theoretical Categories in the Focused Phase of Coding

In my focused coding phase, I re-coded all six interviews using the emergent themes and theoretical categories, and logged their presence. Using these logged codes, I built a map of the theoretical codes, which appeared in each chapter of every participant's career story. I did not record code frequency, choosing instead to focus on the themes themselves. I accomplished this with a spreadsheet, a screen capture example of which can be seen in **Figure 16** and in more detail in **Appendix K Participant Maps**. In hindsight, I should have tracked both presence and frequency within each chapter of an interview. The map of my results could have been much more data-rich, and my more one-dimensional approach represents an opportunity lost in the form of missed insights. Excluding the frequency of theoretical categories and themes from my discussion limited the study.

Identity Protection at a Cost of Showcasing Storytelling Talent

The first emerging theme discussed at the beginning of this chapter is storytelling. This is explored through three perspectives: the participants themselves were good storytellers, they all leveraged storytelling to get the job done, and they universally reflected on their own stories to inform future decisions. Unfortunately, protecting the identity of my participants came at a cost of showcasing the very aspect I highlighted. This diminishes all in vivo codes leveraged to strengthen my emerging theme discussion, particularly my position about my participants' talent for storytelling. However, even when diluted and filtered, their quotes do tell a story that adequately supports my point, even missing some very vivid details.

Advances in Data Analytics

My thesis took a long time to complete, and in the intervening period advances have been made in the field of data analytics. If I were designing it today, I would certainly include a

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modern data-visualization tool. This was not a foreseeable weakness, but my study could definitely have benefitted from the dashboards currently available to analyze not just the results of the study, but also other influences, such as the relationships between referenced literature. As data analytics become more and more common, I anticipate visualization tools having a bigger presence in both quantitative and qualitative research.

Conclusion: Limited but Transferable

Given these limitations, the results of my study can only be generalized within the methodological approach implemented. Like all qualitative research, hallmarks of authenticity, trustworthiness, and deep description of context were implemented, informing the reader and allowing them to adjudicate the study's value. In addition, the completed Performance Chain® and Six Boxes® analysis, as well as the three *Immediate Actions* that form the answer to my first research question, are all likely transferable as both advice and a professional approach to instructional designers seeking a starting point for the ambiguous transition into performance improvement.

Further Research

With its research questions answered and their limitations identified, my study now looks at the further research suggested by both its constraints and conclusions. **Table 16** documents new areas of study suggested by my illumination of the ID-to-PI transition.

Table 16 *Possible Further Research Emerging from This Study*

Topic	Possible future approach
Theoretical Sampling	Repeat the study with true theoretical sampling.

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Topic	Possible future approach
More themes and categories	This study explored only four of its nine emerging themes, and twelve of forty-six categories identified within those themes. See <i>Appendix M All Emerging Themes and Categories</i> . for a table describing all of the themes and categories that emerged in this study, and whether they were explored in this thesis. It would be interesting to explore the remaining categories.
Original research questions	Two of the four original questions were modified to align more closely with the experiences and perspectives of the study's participants, while the other two were removed entirely. These two potential future research questions are: "Does an ISD background provide an advantage or disadvantage to PI?" and, "Why and in what circumstance is PI and ID used interchangeably?"
Certification	An exploration of the impact of CPT certification, or comparable certification, on the ID-to-PI career transition.
Comparison of performance-focused professional homes	With the study only covering ISPI, a study examining how other organizations support the transition would be revealing.
Performance lens	The "performance lens" emerged in answering the first research question. The term was coined as participants described crossing a threshold of understanding performance improvement that fundamentally changed the way they looked at their work and their lives. The process by which the participants found this lens is as ambiguous as the career transition itself and warrants research all on its own.
Not all experienced ISDs become PIs	Some IDs make the shift to PI and some don't. This study focuses on successful transitions, but much useful information might be gleaned from studying transitions that do not work, or IDs who elect not to attempt the transition at all.
Strict definitions during the ID-to-PI transition are difficult	Further research could add clarity to how we formally define IDs and PIs, and examine to what extent expert instructional designers include performance solutions in their work.

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Topic	Possible future approach
Foshay et al's (2013) savvy instructional designer	How does the emergence of savvy instructional designer, a designer “who blend elements of ID and HPT in improving workplace performance” (Foshay et al., 2013, p. 46), fit in the career transition from ID-to-PI?
Early career ambiguity	All the study's participants experienced ambiguity in professional situations that came before they embarked on work as IDs. Further research could identify links between early-career experiences and subsequent comfort with ambiguous situations, or even establish the extent to which a tolerance for ambiguity is a necessary psychological prerequisite for ID or PI work.
Expertise	The role of expertise in the ID-to-PI transition could be more closely studied. This study saw a connection between advances in professional methodology and the transition to PI, but establishing whether or not there is a causal link between achieving mastery of an applied discipline and expanding into performance improvement could be a fruitful field of study.
Organizational, Departmental or Team perspective in the ID-to-PI transition	Adopting a team point of view had a serious effect on how the participants viewed their transitions into PI. Further study of the effects of making the ID-to-PI change within a corporate context might reveal a great deal about the role of organizations in the creation of performance professionals. Some publications on this topic already exist, but a deeper dive on the impact of these shifts in perspective on instructional designers in the workplace would be interesting.
Do expert instructional designers develop measurement and evaluation plans?	Measurable learning objectives and evaluation are integral to the ADDIE framework, but in practice it remains an open question how often learning objectives are written to be measured. If they are, how success is measured and evaluated is often similarly obscure. Further research is possible on the measurement and evaluation practices of instructional designers, and how this influences their procession from ID to PI.

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Topic	Possible future approach
One-way traffic between ID and PI	Current research suggests that the career transition from ID to PI is always one-way. Although PIs do work in the training realm, it is always through the lens of performance improvement, inasmuch as training is the best solution for the parameters of the project, or the client isn't yet ready to broaden the scope of solutions they will accept. It would be interesting to conduct research on the instances where PIs either choose or are forced into training solutions more common to IDs. This research could explain the one-way traffic, or at least clarify the differences between the ID and PI approaches to training solutions.
IDs who do not have a graduate degree(s)	The exact roles of CPT certification and higher learning degrees was only briefly touched on in this study. Further research could establish just how important graduate degrees are in the transition to PI, whether the lack of one is a hindrance, and perhaps even which degrees are the most useful.
Is there a pattern to how things occur?	Although presented all at once, the elements that make up the Performance Chain® and Six Boxes® don't happen in an instant. They may begin at different times and develop asynchronously. Further research could explore how these elements occur over time.
Will the teachers who transitioned to ID during COVID-19 eventually shift to PI?	The COVID-19 pandemic induced a massive migration of classroom teachers to ID. All but one of my participants held teaching roles before becoming an instructional designer, and this influx of new talent could be an opportunity to study the experience of transitioning into ID, the role of a teaching background in performance fields, and will the teachers that transitioned to ID during COVID eventually shift to PI?

With further possible research listed, I will now complete this write up with some final thoughts.

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Final Thoughts

This study started with me, as an instructional designer, wanting to learn more about what performance improvement professionals do, and what steps I could take to move my career towards that realm. My aim was to study how IDs navigated this complex, ambiguous process, and emerged at the other end as PIs. I sought to understand the journey not just for my own sake, but for emerging and experienced instructional designers interested in learning how to expand their own professional horizons, as well. The most vivid result of my study were the three *Immediate Actions* an instructional designer could take to improve their odds as they attempted this transition:

1. Performance story: Build a collection of performance stories.
2. Performance home: Be an active member in a performance-focused professional organization, such as the International Society of Performance Improvement (ISPI).
3. Performance lens: Find your performance lens to see the world.

These *Immediate Actions* are part of a model that isn't just theoretical, but serves as a practical guidebook for aspiring PIs.

Both this study and current knowledge about performance improvement is the output of researchers who stood on the shoulders of giants. I attempted to capture a snapshot of these giants in my literature review, narrating the origin stories of instructional design and performance improvement, and examining the similarities and differences between the two professions. I next looked into the widening of IDs' professional scope by way of Gilbert's Behavioral Engineering Model (BEM), and Carl Binder's Performance Chain® and Six Boxes® Model. Finally, the literature review covered the research methodology I used to conduct the study: Kathy Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory.

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Charmaz's constructivist GT was the perfect choice for my study. As I embarked on the same career journey I was studying, the grounded approach allowed me to become an active participant, embracing my own experiences as an influence on the research. Although my experiences affected the study, the career stories of my six participants remained paramount. I captured their amazing journeys using a "career story interview" technique that I based on Kuhlmann's application of Robert Atkinson's life story interview technique. Using these tools, and from a privileged vantage point, I interviewed professionals with the experience and know-how to elegantly describe their career journeys.

I analyzed this wealth of data and selected four emerging themes to define the ID-to-PI career transition, and modeled them into a system. I noticed substantial overlap between the system I was developing and Binder's Performance Chain® and Six Boxes®. Unifying my model with Binder's was an opportunity to present my conclusions about the ID-to-PI transformation through the lens of an established and practical framework. My growing understanding of performance improvement and the tools that PIs use to ply their trade prompted a focus on *Business Results*, *Work Outputs*, *Behaviours* and *Behaviour Influences*. This led me to apply both Six Boxes® and the Performance Chain® to answer my research questions, an approach in itself very much aligned with the very career transition I was studying. The answers to my research questions prompted a final update to my model to account for the iterative nature of the progression from instructional design to performance improvement consultancy.

These final thoughts come six years after my first participant interview. During that time, I navigated the research process in parallel with my own career journey towards performance improvement. My participants' stories were pivotal to both endeavours, and I learned that there is no singular path for instructional designers to follow as they transition toward performance

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improvement. I did discover, however, that there are practical principles that can serve as guideposts on the journey and improve the traveller's chances. The main contribution of this study being three immediate actions that an ID can undertake to start the journey into PI.

Beholden to the generosity of my participants, my Master's thesis draws a map making the journey from ID to PI less ambiguous.

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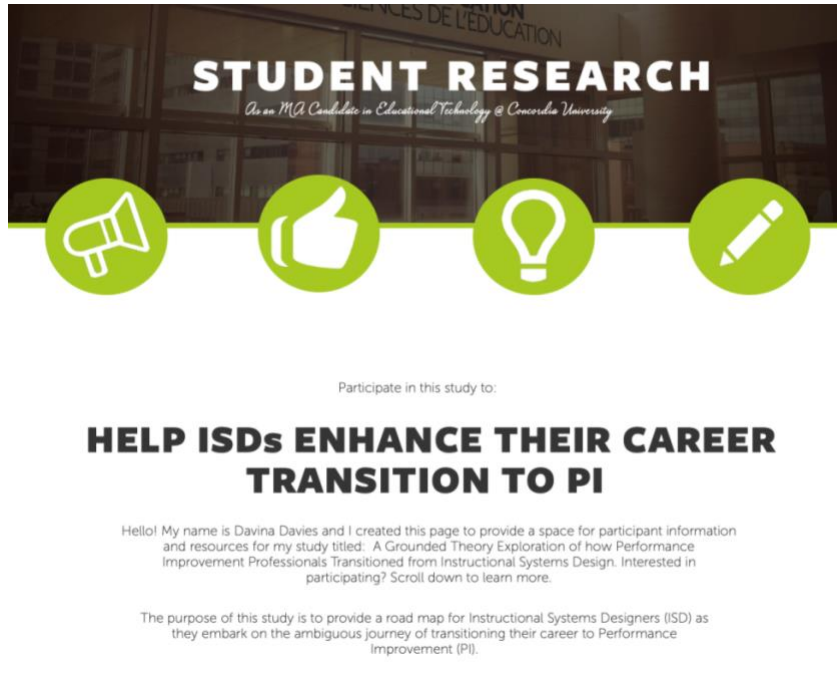
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Appendix A Snapshots of Recruitment Website



STUDENT RESEARCH
As an M.A. Candidate in Educational Technology @ Concordia University

Participate in this study to:

HELP ISDs ENHANCE THEIR CAREER TRANSITION TO PI

Hello! My name is Davina Davies and I created this page to provide a space for participant information and resources for my study titled: A Grounded Theory Exploration of how Performance Improvement Professionals Transitioned from Instructional Systems Design. Interested in participating? Scroll down to learn more.

The purpose of this study is to provide a road map for Instructional Systems Designers (ISD) as they embark on the ambiguous journey of transitioning their career to Performance Improvement (PI).



Call for Participants

This is the current call for participants. Note, this may change as data collection and analysis progresses.



Information and Consent to participate in a research study

This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate.



What to Expect

This document describes what to expect before, during and after your interview.



Career Story Interview Worksheet

Use this worksheet to help you organize the chapters of your career story.

I'm interested in participating in the study, but first, I want to learn more.

1. Review the four documents linked below.
 - Call for Participants
 - Information and Consent to participate in a research study
 - What to Expect
 - Career Story Interview Worksheet
2. Email the researcher (Davina Davies) at d_davies@education.concordia.ca to set up an introductory chat about any questions or concerns you may have.

Yes, I want to participate in the study! What's next?

3. Email **the researcher** to confirm your interest in participating in the study and schedule the interview date.
4. Carefully read Information and Consent to participate in a research study and provide the researcher a signed copy 24 hours before your scheduled interview.
5. Complete the Career Story Interview Worksheet and provide the researcher with a copy 24 hours before your scheduled interview.
6. Schedule 90 minutes for the interview.
7. Be prepared to answer some follow up questions via email within 3 weeks after your interview (this should take no longer than 30 minutes).
8. Be prepared to review the transcript and key takeaways of the interview.
9. The researcher will contact you if any published literature was derived from your interview.

<http://www.davies-designs.com/research.html>

HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

Appendix B *Call for Participants*

Are you a PI professional who began as an ID?

Call for research participants who transitioned from ID to PI.

A Grounded Theory Exploration of how Performance Improvement Professionals Transitioned from Instructional Systems Design

Davina Davies, Masters Student, Concordia University

The transition from ID to PI is ambiguous. Help others navigate this career transition by sharing your successes and challenges as you transitioned from ID to PI.

Potential participants: Expert performance improvement practitioners with an ID background.

Requirements to participate in the study as an expert PI:

- Practicing for five or more years.
- Previously worked as an instructional designer for a minimum of 3 years (this may overlap with your PI work).

If you participate, you will be asked to:

- Complete a worksheet before the interview (15-30 minutes).
- Participate in a one-on-one interview (60-90 minutes) that will be recorded. The interview may take place virtually or face-to-face.
- Answer potential follow up questions after the interview by email (up to 30 minutes).
- Review the transcript and key takeaways of the interview (10-30 minutes). You will receive the interview transcripts and key takeaways within three weeks from the date of our interview.

In total, participating in this study will take approximately 2-3 hours spread over a month.

If you are willing to participate please contact Davina Davies.
Email: d_davies@education.concordia.ca Mobile: 514-887-7556.

If you have indicated interest, I will arrange an introductory call to answer questions and schedule the interview date.

This research is partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts (Educational Technology) and is supervised by Dr. Richard Schmid, Department of Education Chair.

Participant documents for the study: <http://www.davies-designs.com/research.html>

HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

Appendix C Information and Consent to Participate in a Research Study

INFORMATION AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Study Title: *A Grounded Theory Exploration of how Performance Improvement Professionals Transitioned from Instructional Systems Design*

Researcher: Davina Davies

Researcher's Contact Information: d_davies@education.concordia.ca / (514) 887-7556

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Richard F. Schmid

Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information: schmid@education.concordia.ca / (514) 848-2424, x2001

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to explore how instructional systems designers (ISD) transition to performance improvement practitioners (PIPs).

What is the difference between the two professions?

- an instructional designer specializes in one component: training interventions to improve skills and knowledge in the workplace.
- whereas the performance improvement practitioner looks at a bigger picture which includes the component covered by instructional designers. Performance improvement practitioners provide training and non-training interventions to improve workplace performance.

This research will explore the best practices and common steps an instructional designer would take to transition to performance improvement.

The main data source will be interviews. This study will help beginning instructional designers by providing best practices and common steps that can enhance their career transition to performance improvement.

B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be asked to:

HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

- Complete a worksheet before the interview (15-30 minutes).
- Participate in a one-on-one interview (60-90 minutes) that will be recorded. The interview may take place virtually or face-to-face.
- Answer potential follow up questions after the interview by email (up to 30 minutes).
- Review the transcript and key takeaways of the interview (10-30 minutes). You will receive the interview transcripts and key takeaways within three weeks from the date of our interview.

In total, participating in this study will take approximately 2-3 hours spread over a month.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

This research focuses on your professional practise, and may provide you with future development individually, or reflectively should you find yourselves in a mentorship position for preparing employees and colleagues.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

By participating, you agree to let the researchers have access to information about your career history. This information will be obtained from our interview and any supporting documents you chose to provide.

We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form. The information gathered will be identifiable. That means it will have your name directly on it. Note, however, that your identity will be known only to myself and my advisor.

We will protect the information by storing audio file(s) on secure drive with only two copies: the original and one back-up-copy. We will destroy the information five years after completion of the thesis. We intend to publish the results of the research, However, it will not be possible to identify you in the published results. Your name will never be revealed in any research report.

E. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you do participate, you can stop at any time without any negative consequences. You will be asked to review the transcript and key takeaways of the interview for accuracy (this is called member checking). If you find inaccuracies, please inform the researcher. You can also ask that certain information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. Your confirmation of the interview transcript and key takeaways (and any modifications you've requested) means you have agreed with the researcher's assessment of your data. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researchers no later than this point. There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

F. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print)	
SIGNATURE	
DATE	

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor. If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca .

HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

Appendix D *What to Expect*

WHAT TO EXPECT

A person's life, and career, can be written as a book. This study will look at the chapters that comprises your career story. The interview will focus on your career path to a performance improvement professional.

Before the Interview

Twenty-four hours before the scheduled interview, please provide the following to the researcher:

- [Signed consent form](#)
- [This career story worksheet](#)

During the Interview

- Interviews will be conducted by computer, phone, or face-to-face.
- Given your permission, the interview will be recorded.
- You will be asked the same four questions for each chapter of your career story.
- There will likely be follow up questions for each chapter.

Chapter Questions

1. Tell me about the significant events from this chapter.
2. Tell me about the kind of person you were during this chapter.
3. Who were the significant people for you during this chapter, and why?
4. How and why did this chapter end?

After the Interview

- Within twenty-four hours: you will receive a brief email outlining next steps, an open invitation to contact the researcher if you have any questions, concerns, additional details you'd like to provide and/or recommendations for a study participant(s).
- Within three weeks: You may be contacted with some follow up questions from the interview. You will be provided the transcript and key takeaways of the interview and invited to clarify any misunderstandings and confirm interpretations.
- Much later: the researcher will contact you if any published literature was derived from your interview.

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me, the researcher, Davina Davies by email d_davies@education.concordia.ca, or via text or phone call 514-887-7556.

Participant documents for the study: <http://www.davies-designs.com/research.html>

HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

Appendix E *Career Story Worksheet*

Think about the story of your career as if you were actually writing a book. First, think about the chapters of your book. Use the table on the next pages to help you in this task. Feel free to modify the format of the table.

Instructions:

1. Write down the period of your first chapter. What year did this chapter begin? In which year did this this chapter end?
2. What is the chapter title?
3. In a few keywords or bullet points, jot down a description or an outline of this chapter and its significance in your career path.
4. Repeat. Go on until you reach present day. You can use any number of chapters that you find suitable for your story.
5. Provide the researcher (Davina Davies) a copy of your completed worksheet.

Interview Details

Document interview details below

Date _____

Time _____

How? _____

Virtual, phone, face-to-face

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me, the researcher, Davina Davies by email d_davies@education.concordia.ca, or via text or phone call 514-887-7556.

HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

Ch	Period	Name of Chapter	Chapter description, or outline, or main ideas
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

Appendix F *Sample Introduction to Interview*

So, we are now recording. Before we start, I just wanted to say that today's date is DATE, it is just past TIME o'clock in INTERVIEWER'S TIME ZONE and TIME o'clock PARTICIPANT'S TIME ZONE (if different). This is an interview for a study that is partial fulfillment for the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Educational Technology and is supervised by Dr. Richard Schmid, Department of Education Chair. My name is Davina Davies, I am the researcher and the one who will be facilitating the interview and you PARTICIPANT's FIRST NAME are participant number X. Before we go forward, do you have any questions or concerns about the study?

I'm going to go ahead and let you tell me your chapter stories, and I'll interrupt as minimally as possible. Only if I have a really good question I want to ask. Also for each chapter, after you tell me about your chapter, I'll ask you the same four questions. These questions are:

1. Tell me about the significant events about this chapter.
2. Tell me the kind of person you were during this chapter.
3. Who were the significant people for you during this chapter and why?
4. How and why did this chapter end?

If at anytime you need a break, bio break, phone break, client break, any kind of break- just let me know. Do you have any questions, or do you need a break? Ok! Let's start with your first chapter!

HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

Appendix G Post Interview Email Template

(this was customized for each participant)

Dear ???,

Thank you so very much for taking the time from your very busy schedule to share with me the story behind your career. I've been looking forward for the weekend to begin so I can sit and transcribe our talk and begin to absorb as much information as possible.

Before embarking on this study, I felt that the topic would be very interesting and I am passionate about it. However, it wasn't until my first interview, did I realize how very privileged I am to hear the career stories of expert PIs, like yourself. This realization hits me every interview since, most recently our talk today. Thank you.

I feel so lucky that I fell upon the powerful Life Story/ Career Story interviewing methodology. Here is the reference to the articles that inspired my interview technique.

Kevill, A., Trehan, K., Easterby-Smith, M., & Higgins, D. (2015). Stick or twist? The practice of undertaking life story interviews in-the-moment. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 21(3), 448–471.

Kuhlmann, D. O., & Ardichvili, A. (2015). Becoming an expert: developing expertise in an applied discipline. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 39(4), 262–276.

You are participant X, I'm hoping to interview a few more people. If you know anyone who might appreciate the process, and is a practicing PI who once was an ISD, please feel free to refer them to the study. I'm happy to send you an email calling for participants hoping it makes the referral process easier for you.

If there are any gaps or 'opportunities for improvement' about the whole process from my initial email to this one, please let me know. Having been a high school teacher, I've developed thick skin and I'm always eager to improve my performance.

The next steps for this study is:

1. I will transcribe our interview and begin to analyze it.
2. I may contact you with additional questions, if you have the time it would be wonderful to hear your thoughts.
3. Sometime in the next 6-8 weeks I will send you the transcript and my key takeaways of the interview. I'll invite you to clarify any misunderstandings and confirm my interpretations.
4. Much later, I will contact you if any published literature was derived from our interview.

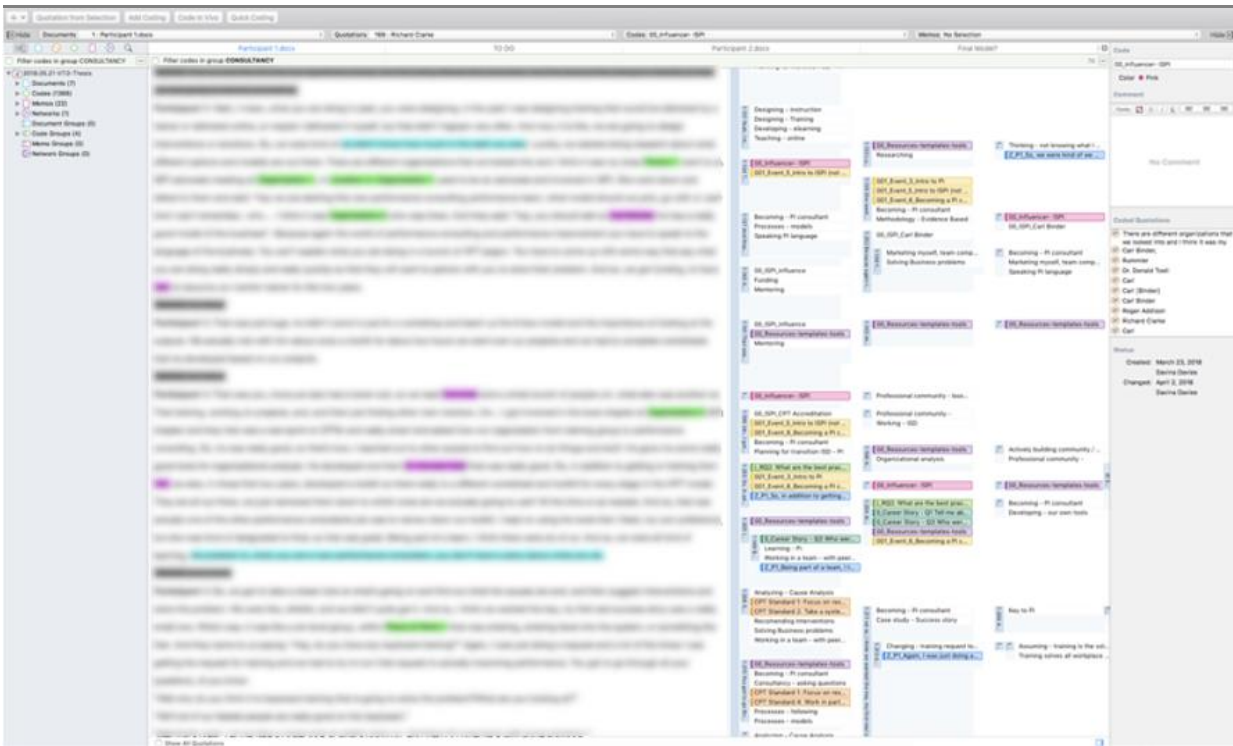
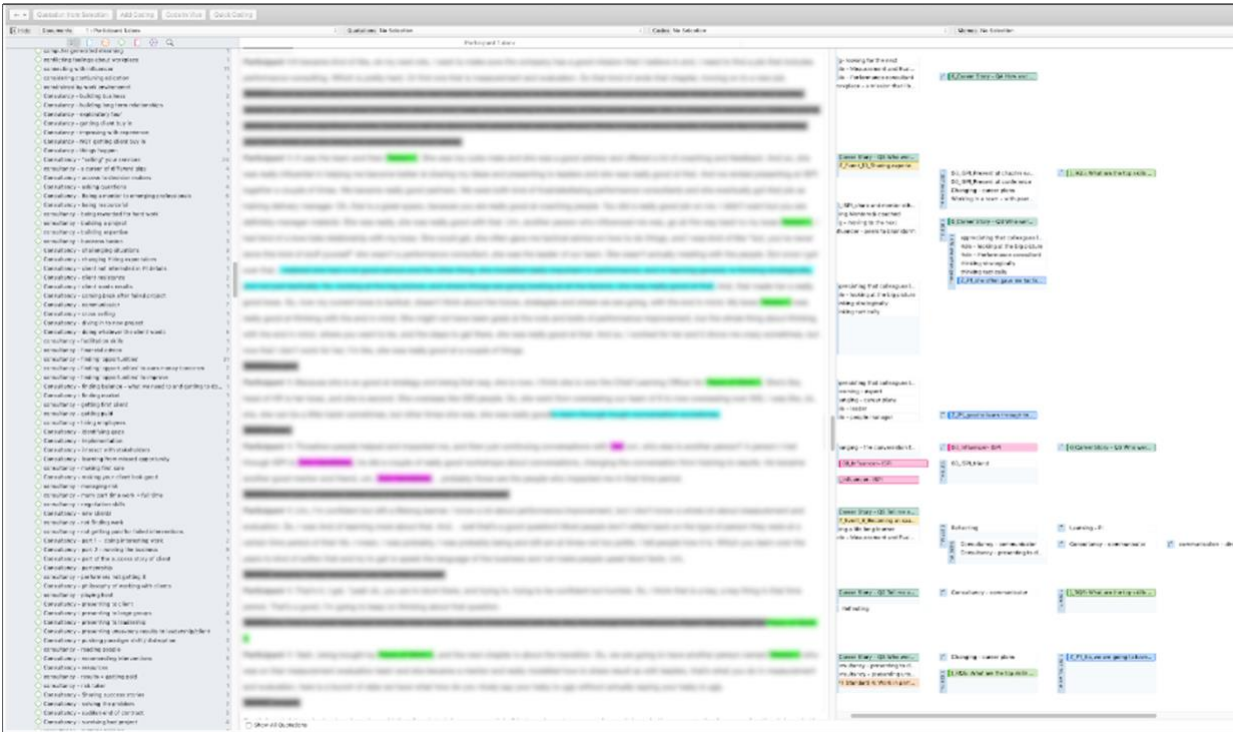
Although not a next step of the study, I hope that we meet face-to-face at the 2017 conference in Montréal, and/or at a future ISPI conference!

Sincerely,

Davina

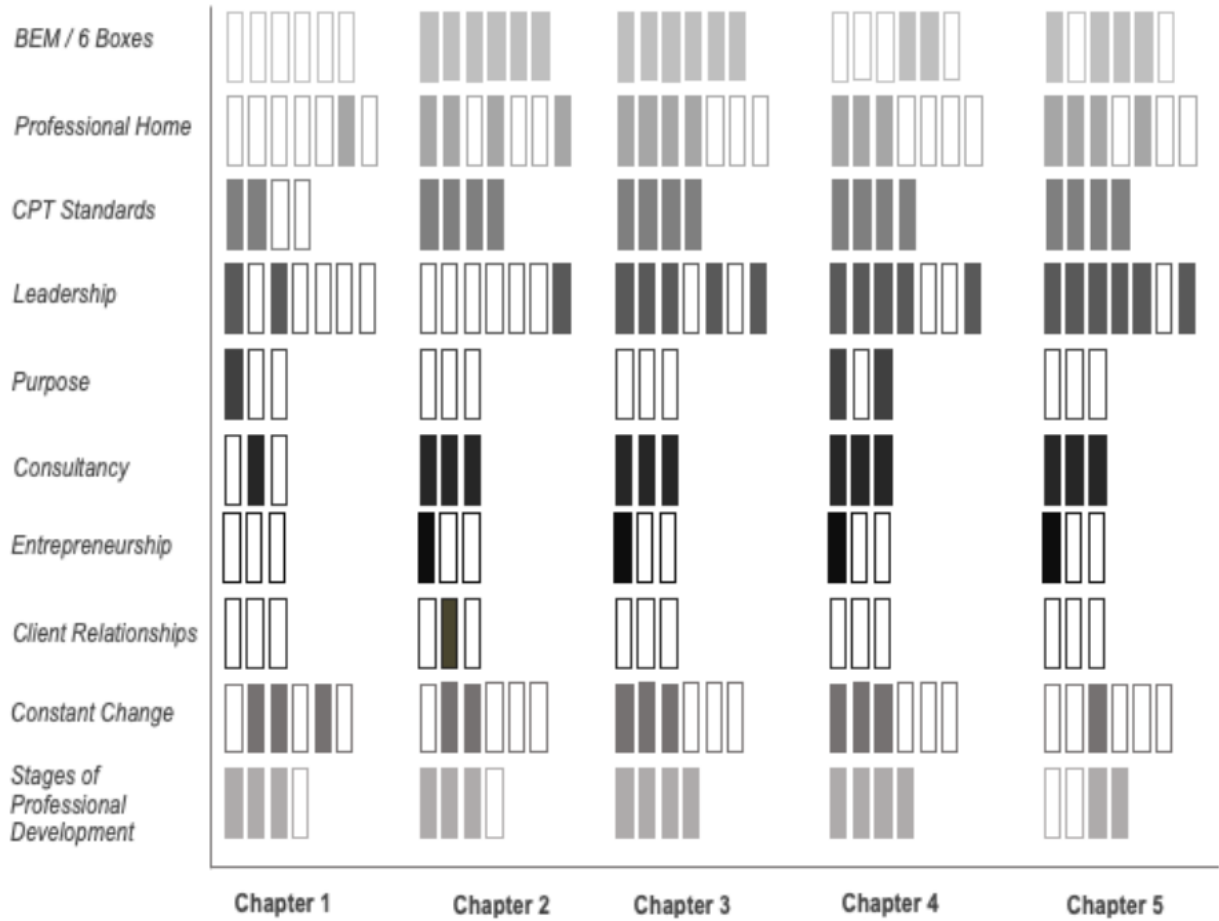
HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

Appendix I Snapshot of Coding in Atlas.ti



HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

Appendix J *Abandoned Attempt to Create Individual Maps in PowerPoint.*



HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

Appendix K Participant Maps

Participant 1

		PARTICIPANT 1				
Theme	Category	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
BEM / 6 Boxes	Environment: Expectations and Feedback					
	Environment: Tools and Resources					
	Environment: Consequences and Incentives					
	Individual: Skills and Knowledge					
	Individual: Selection and Assignment (capacity)					
	Individual: Motives and Preferences (attitude)					
Professional Home	Professional Growth					
	Networking and Engagement					
	Opportunity to Give Back					
	Certification					
	Publication					
	Recognition					
CPT Standards	Standard 1: Focus on Results or Outcomes					
	Standard 2: Take a Systemic View					
	Standard 3: Add Value					
	Standard 4: Work in Partnership with Clients and Stakeholders					
Leadership	Adaptability					
	Awareness					
	Curiosity					
	Empathy					
	Alignment					
	Collaboration					
Purpose	Personal purpose					
	Social Purpose					
	Societal purpose					
Consultancy	Skills: Communication, analytical, creativity					
	Strategic and tactical conceptual abilities: cognitive dexterity, business development mindset					
	Personality Traits: emotional stability, intellectual, integrity, agreeableness					
	Client as co-producer					
Client Relationships	Client has solution in mind. impossible client					
	Constant changes (and adapting to those changes)					
Constant changes & Career Decision-Triggers	Personal life triggers					
	Professional life triggers					
	Global triggers					
	Mindest Shift					
	Being a change agent / disruptor					
Stages of professional development	Stage 1: Apprentice					
	Stage 2: Colleague					
	Stage 3: Mentor					
	Stage 4: Sponsor					

Participant 2

		PARTICIPANT 2				
Theme	Category	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
BEM / 6 Boxes	Environment: Expectations and Feedback					
	Environment: Tools and Resources					
	Environment: Consequences and Incentives					
	Individual: Skills and Knowledge					
	Individual: Selection and Assignment (capacity)					
	Individual: Motives and Preferences (attitude)					
Professional Home	Professional Growth					
	Networking and Engagement					
	Opportunity to Give Back					
	Certification					
	Publication					
	Recognition					
CPT Standards	Standard 1: Focus on Results or Outcomes					
	Standard 2: Take a Systemic View					
	Standard 3: Add Value					
	Standard 4: Work in Partnership with Clients and Stakeholders					
Leadership	Adaptability					
	Awareness					
	Curiosity					
	Empathy					
	Alignment					
	Collaboration					
Purpose	Personal purpose					
	Social Purpose					
	Societal purpose					
Consultancy	Skills: Communication, analytical, creativity					
	Strategic and tactical conceptual abilities: cognitive dexterity, business development mindset					
	Personality Traits: emotional stability, intellectual, integrity, agreeableness					
	Client as co-producer					
Client Relationships	Client has solution in mind. impossible client					
	Constant changes (and adapting to those changes)					
Constant changes & Career Decision-Triggers	Personal life triggers					
	Professional life triggers					
	Global triggers					
	Mindest Shift					
	Being a change agent / disruptor					
Stages of professional development	Stage 1: Apprentice					
	Stage 2: Colleague					
	Stage 3: Mentor					
	Stage 4: Sponsor					

HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

Participant 3

		PARTICIPANT 3					
		Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6
Theme	Category						
BEM / 6 Boxes	Environment: Expectations and Feedback						
	Environment: Tools and Resources						
	Environment: Consequences and Incentives						
	Individual: Skills and Knowledge						
	Individual: Selection and Assignment (capacity)						
	Individual: Motives and Preferences (attitude)						
Professional Home	Professional Growth						
	Networking and Engagement						
	Opportunity to Give Back						
	Certification						
	Publication						
	Recognition						
CPT Standards	Standard 1: Focus on Results or Outcomes						
	Standard 2: Take a Systemic View						
	Standard 3: Add Value						
	Standard 4: Work in Partnership with Clients and Stakeholders						
Leadership	Adaptability						
	Awareness						
	Curiosity						
	Empathy						
	Alignment						
	Collaboration						
Purpose	Integration						
	Personal purpose						
	Social Purpose						
Consultancy	Societal purpose						
	Skills: Communication, analytical, creativity						
	Strategic and tactical conceptual abilities: cognitive dexterity, business development mindset						
Client Relationships	Personality Traits: emotional stability, intellectual, integrity, agreeableness						
	Client as co-producer						
Constant changes & Career Decision-Triggers	Client has solution in mind. impossible client						
	Constant changes (and adapting to those changes)						
	Personal life triggers						
	Professional life triggers						
	Global triggers						
Stages of professional development	Mindest Shift						
	Being a change agent / disruptor						
	Stage 1: Apprentice						
	Stage 2: Colleague						
	Stage 3: Mentor						
Stage 4: Sponsor							

Participant 4

		PARTICIPANT 4					
		Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6
Theme	Category						
BEM / 6 Boxes	Environment: Expectations and Feedback						
	Environment: Tools and Resources						
	Environment: Consequences and Incentives						
	Individual: Skills and Knowledge						
	Individual: Selection and Assignment (capacity)						
	Individual: Motives and Preferences (attitude)						
Professional Home	Professional Growth						
	Networking and Engagement						
	Opportunity to Give Back						
	Certification						
	Publication						
	Recognition						
CPT Standards	Career Planning						
	Standard 1: Focus on Results or Outcomes						
	Standard 2: Take a Systemic View						
	Standard 3: Add Value						
Leadership	Standard 4: Work in Partnership with Clients and Stakeholders						
	Adaptability						
	Awareness						
	Curiosity						
	Empathy						
	Alignment						
Purpose	Collaboration						
	Integration						
	Personal purpose						
Consultancy	Social Purpose						
	Societal purpose						
	Skills: Communication, analytical, creativity						
Client Relationships	Strategic and tactical conceptual abilities: cognitive dexterity, business development mindset						
	Personality Traits: emotional stability, intellectual, integrity, agreeableness						
Constant changes & Career Decision-Triggers	Client as co-producer						
	Client has solution in mind. impossible client						
	Constant changes (and adapting to those changes)						
	Personal life triggers						
	Professional life triggers						
Stages of professional development	Global triggers						
	Mindest Shift						
	Being a change agent / disruptor						
	Stage 1: Apprentice						
	Stage 2: Colleague						
Stage 3: Mentor							
Stage 4: Sponsor							

HOW DOES AN ID TRANSITION TO PI?

Participant 5

		PARTICIPANT 5						
		Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7
Theme	Category							
BEM / 6 Boxes	Environment: Expectations and Feedback							
	Environment: Tools and Resources							
	Environment: Consequences and Incentives							
	Individual: Skills and Knowledge							
	Individual: Selection and Assignment (capacity)							
Professional Home	Individual: Motives and Preferences (attitude)							
	Professional Growth							
	Networking and Engagement							
	Opportunity to Give Back							
	Certification							
CPT Standards	Publication							
	Recognition							
	Career Planning							
	Standard 1: Focus on Results or Outcomes							
	Standard 2: Take a Systemic View							
Leadership	Standard 3: Add Value							
	Standard 4: Work in Partnership with Clients and Stakeholders							
	Adaptability							
	Awareness							
	Curiosity							
Purpose	Empathy							
	Alignment							
	Collaboration							
Consultancy	Integration							
	Personal purpose							
	Social Purpose							
Client Relationships	Societal purpose							
	Skills: Communication, analytical, creativity							
	Strategic and tactical conceptual abilities: cognitive dexterity, business development mindset							
Constant changes & Career Decision-Triggers	Personality Traits: emotional stability, intellectual, integrity, agreeableness							
	Client as co-producer							
	Client has solution in mind. impossible client							
Stages of professional development	Constant changes (and adapting to those changes)							
	Personal life triggers							
	Professional life triggers							
	Global triggers							
	Mindest Shift							
	Being a change agent / disruptor							
	Stage 1: Apprentice							
	Stage 2: Colleague							
	Stage 3: Mentor							
	Stage 4: Sponsor							

Participant 6

		PARTICIPANT 6		
		Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
Theme	Category			
BEM / 6 Boxes	Environment: Expectations and Feedback			
	Environment: Tools and Resources			
	Environment: Consequences and Incentives			
	Individual: Skills and Knowledge			
	Individual: Selection and Assignment (capacity)			
Professional Home	Individual: Motives and Preferences (attitude)			
	Professional Growth			
	Networking and Engagement			
	Opportunity to Give Back			
	Certification			
CPT Standards	Publication			
	Recognition			
	Career Planning			
	Standard 1: Focus on Results or Outcomes			
	Standard 2: Take a Systemic View			
Leadership	Standard 3: Add Value			
	Standard 4: Work in Partnership with Clients and Stakeholders			
	Adaptability			
	Awareness			
	Curiosity			
Purpose	Empathy			
	Alignment			
	Collaboration			
Consultancy	Integration			
	Personal purpose			
	Social Purpose			
Client Relationships	Societal purpose			
	Skills: Communication, analytical, creativity			
	Strategic and tactical conceptual abilities: cognitive dexterity, business development mindset			
Constant changes & Career Decision-Triggers	Personality Traits: emotional stability, intellectual, integrity, agreeableness			
	Client as co-producer			
	Client has solution in mind. impossible client			
Stages of professional development	Constant changes (and adapting to those changes)			
	Personal life triggers			
	Professional life triggers			
	Global triggers			
	Mindest Shift			
	Being a change agent / disruptor			
	Stage 1: Apprentice			
	Stage 2: Colleague			
	Stage 3: Mentor			
	Stage 4: Sponsor			

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Appendix L *Academic Knowledge*

Here is a list of all the books, articles and authors mentioned throughout the participants' career stories.

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Appendix M *All Emerging Themes and Categories.*

Theme	Category	Explored in this write up?
Storytelling*	The participants of this study are good storytellers*	Y
	Leveraging storytelling to get the job done*	Y
	Participants reflect on their stories to inform future decisions and behaviors*	Y
BEM / 6 Boxes	Environment: Expectations and Feedback	N
	Environment: Tools and Resources	N
	Environment: Consequences and Incentives	N
	Individual: Skills and Knowledge	N
	Individual: Selection and Assignment (capacity)	N
	Individual: Motives and Preferences (attitude)	N
Professional Home	Professional Growth	Y
	Networking and Engagement	Y
	Opportunity to Give Back	Y
	Certification	N
	Publication	N
	Recognition	N
	Career Planning	N
CPT Standards	Standard 1: Focus on Results or Outcomes	N
	Standard 2: Take a Systemic View	N
	Standard 3: Add Value	N
	Standard 4: Work in Partnership with Clients and Stakeholders	N
Future Ready	Adaptability	Y
	Awareness	N
	Curiosity	N
	Empathy	N
	Alignment	N
	Collaboration	Y
	Integration	N
Purpose	Personal purpose	N
	Social Purpose	N
	Societal purpose	N

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Theme	Category	Explored in this write up?
Consultancy	Knowledge and Skills	Partially
	Strategic and tactical conceptual abilities	Partially
	Personality Traits	Partially
Client Relationships	Client as co-producer	N
	Client has solution in mind	N
	Impossible client	N
Constant changes & Career Decision-Triggers	Constant changes (and adapting to those changes)	N
	Personal life triggers	N
	Professional life triggers	N
	Global triggers	N
	Mindset Shift	N
Stages of professional development	Being a change agent/disruptor	N
	Stage 1: Apprentice	N
	Stage 2: Colleague	N
	Stage 3: Mentor	N
	Stage 4: Sponsor	N

*Storytelling emerged much later in the research process the categories were not coded for in the focused phase of coding nor were they directly tied to literature.