



Chapter II

Responding to the Learner: Instructional Design of Custom-Built E-Learning

Neil Carrick

Instructional Design and E-Learning Consultant, Ireland

ABSTRACT

This chapter argues that the principal role of instructional design is to represent and advocate the needs of learners. It stresses the importance of needs analysis and requirements gathering in instructional design. As a case study to support these contentions, the chapter describes the instructional design of custom-built e-learning for adult learners working in the factory of a manufacturing plant. The case study reveals that the true value of instructional design lies in a learner-centered approach that prioritizes ease of use and facilitates learner control.

INTRODUCTION

The learner is the main beneficiary of sound instructional design. Understanding the link between the learner's needs and the design of instruction is vital to the effectiveness of that instruction. This chapter focuses on the

importance of needs' analysis and requirements' gathering in meeting the needs of learners. It describes the design of custom-built e-learning for adult learners in a unique working environment. An analysis of that design demonstrates how to safeguard learners' needs and requirements. It reveals that the true value of instructional design lies in a learner-centered approach that prioritizes ease of use and facilitates learner control.

The chapter has three sections:

1. A brief discussion of the benefits and demands of creating custom-built learning
2. A case study based on the experience of designing job aids for use in a manufacturing environment illustrating those benefits and demands—the burden of the chapter
3. A summary of the lessons learned and the implications for instructional designers

The discussion raises questions and considerations for instructional designers including:

- Whether to opt for custom-built versus off-the-shelf e-learning
- How to place the learner at the center of instructional and technical design
- How to allow the learner greater control (i.e., non-prescriptive learning)
- The need to understand learner motivation
- Why and how to determine the level of learner maturity (e.g., experienced versus novice learners)
- How to provide a context in which to place new learning
- The need to design an adaptable system that can be maintained by the user

When building customized e-learning as an instructional designer you do not have the luxury of imposing your ideal of a learner. You must consult, analyze a group of learners' needs, and build a solution that satisfies them. If you do not, the feedback will be immediate and negative. Designing a solution is not enough; a solution is only viable when it is used. Therefore, the fundamental requirement of any instructional design strategy is to concentrate on what learners need (to do their job). You cannot easily dictate to an adult learner. It is better to give guidance (where appropriate) and place him or her in a position of authority and control. If you do not, it is likely that the learner will, in any event, seize control and switch off. With e-learning it is especially hard to impose the discipline of the classroom. Moreover, it may not be desirable or necessary.

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/responding-learner-instructional-design-custom/23932

Related Content

Conceptualizing a New CMS Design

Ali Jafari (2005). *Course Management Systems for Learning: Beyond Accidental Pedagogy* (pp. 344-358).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/conceptualizing-new-cms-design/7191

The Art and Science of Designing and Developing an Online English Language Training Module for Adult Learners

Wan Zumusni Wan Mustapha (2012). *Instructional Technology Research, Design and Development: Lessons from the Field* (pp. 270-286).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/art-science-designing-developing-online/61275

A Technology-Acceptance-Model-Based Study of the Attitudes Towards Learning Management Systems Among Teachers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Tahani I. Aldosemani (2023). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 1-22).

www.irma-international.org/article/a-technology-acceptance-model-based-study-of-the-attitudes-towards-learning-management-systems-among-teachers-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/325240

A Proposed Cohesive Use of Online Discussion Board from the Aspects of Instructional and Social Interactions in Engineering Education

Yaming Tai, Yu-Liang Ting and Teng-Hui Tseng (2018). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 33-44).

www.irma-international.org/article/a-proposed-cohesive-use-of-online-discussion-board-from-the-aspects-of-instructional-and-social-interactions-in-engineering-education/204982

Learning and Performance Innovation

Jeff Allen, Pamela Bracey and Laura Pasquini (2012). *Encyclopedia of E-Leadership, Counseling and Training* (pp. 48-64).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/learning-performance-innovation/58427