

E-Learning Needs Analysis

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Analysis Sources and Methods

Sources

When conducting a needs analysis for e-learning, we use a variety of sources. Below is a list of possible source material:

- Defined competencies for the program or department
- Curriculum blueprint for the program or department
- Strategic vision or mission
- Grant proposal or aims
- Existing instructional materials (syllabus, learning objectives, class outlines, readings, lectures, videos, websites, PowerPoint slides)
- Evaluations of existing instruction (existing surveys, questionnaires or other evaluations from previous offerings of course, program, or workshop)
- Content experts (practitioners or faculty)

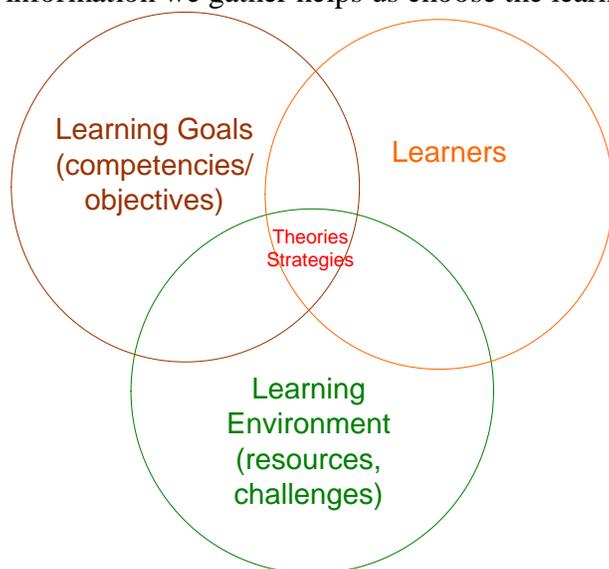
Methods

Below are some of the methods we may use to gather analysis information.

- Review of existing resources—instructional materials—as listed in Sources above
- Interviews with experts
- Observation of audience (i.e. learners in existing in-person course)
- Task analysis
- Usability testing
- Surveys with learners, instructors, administrators
- Focus groups with learners, instructors, administrators

Overall Perspective

In our analysis, we consider the learning goals, the learners, and the learning environment. All of the information we gather helps us choose the learning theories and strategies appropriate for the project.



Analysis Questions

This section includes a detailed list of questions that we select from when conducting an analysis.

Stakeholders

1. Who are the key stakeholders in this project? What are their roles?
2. What are the decisions we will need to make and who will make them?
3. Who will own the finished product? What agreements are there around intellectual property for online courses or resources?

Goals

1. Why are we interested in this e-learning project? What do we hope it will accomplish? What problems are we trying to solve or what opportunities are we addressing?
2. What specific learner competencies will this project address?
3. When marketing this product, what will be the key points we should emphasize to increase its appeal?
4. What is the most important driver on this project—time, cost, or quality? Why?
5. How will we judge the success of the project?

Learning Objectives

1. How does this project fit into the curriculum? How does it relate to other current and projected courses? Is it a prerequisite? Does it have prerequisites?
2. What are the skills and knowledge that the learner must have at the end of the e-learning?
3. What are the associated competencies?
4. What skills and knowledge are particularly difficult to master?
5. Are there any regulations that determine what must be taught?
6. How should the learner demonstrate in the e-learning that they have mastered each objective?
7. What criteria does the learner need to meet to demonstrate mastery?
8. Are there any affective objectives?

Learners

This analysis is more than merely identifying the main and secondary audiences. The answers to these questions help us: identify the prerequisite skills and knowledge; establish a creative look and other motivational methods to appeal to the audience; and identify instructional strategies that will work well.

Initial Identification

1. Who is our audience—give a quick description. (If we indicate more than one main audience, complete the following questions for each audience.)
2. Where are they in their lives?
3. What do they already know about our topic?

Identifying Motivations

1. What are their motivations to complete the e-learning? Why are they interested in this content? What will they gain from doing the e-learning?
2. What will make the elearning relevant?
3. If students, what are they studying to become (specific specialties or majors)?
4. What are their attitudes to their courses?
5. What are their interests, preferences, hot buttons, hobbies, and associations?
6. What are their turn-offs, dislikes, and zones of discomfort?
7. How can we make this e-learning as appealing and motivating as possible?
8. What types of instruction do they prefer? Instructor-lead classroom, Clinical courses Videotapes, Print-based courses, E-learning?
9. What do they like about each of these types of instruction and what not like?

Demographics and Numbers

1. What is the estimated number of people who will take the e-learning?
2. What is the minimum reading level? The common reading level?
3. What is the minimum educational level? The most common educational level?
4. What is the learner's experience with computers, browsers, WBT?
5. What is the age range and most common age?
6. What are the gender ratios?
7. What percentage has English as their second language?

Learning Environment

Instructional Theories and Strategies

1. What instructional and motivational theories should we consider?
2. Are there any particular instructional strategies used in current courses that we should consider?
3. What factors will influence the interface design? (Existing standards, brand guidelines, input from faculty or students, etc)
4. What do stakeholders like about other online courses?
5. What don't they like?

Challenges

What challenges are we aware of with this project?

- Content
- Learners
- Culture
- Other environmental factors
- Technology

Accreditation

1. Will any of the learners taking the e-learning be eligible for continuing education credit?
 - a. If so, what do we need to do to make the course CE eligible?
 - b. How will we track that a learner has completed the e-learning or passed the assessment?
 - c. Where will we store results?
 - d. What reports will we need?

Assessment Requirements

1. Will there be a final assessment for this course?
2. Will there be a pre-assessment for this course?
3. What data do we want recorded for each assessment? (score, pass/fail value, amount of time spent, etc?)
4. Do the assessment items need to be tested to ensure validity and reliability and are we willing to pay for this testing?

Technology and Delivery Platform

1. What technologies are the learners comfortable with?
2. What is available?
3. What are the affordances and limitations of each?
4. What are the costs?
5. What developer skills do we have available?
6. How will we deliver this elearning?

Questions about Possible Technologies

- Do they work on both PC and Mac?
- What operating systems are supported?
- What browsers are supported, recommended?
- Are any plugins needed?
- Are soundcard, speakers needed?
- Is a microphone needed?
- Is a video camera on computer needed?
- Will we require other equipment, such as a phone with conference calling ability? Video camera?

Scope

Course

1. Will this elearning offer credits? How many?
2. What is the budget?
3. When does this need to be completed? Why? What is the driver?

Current Resources

1. What content is already available (and is it available in digital form?) Is there an standup course? Publications? PowerPoint presentation?
2. Are we satisfied with any existing materials? How accurate are they? Is the quality of instruction good? Are all the materials consistent?
3. When is the subject matter expert available?

Graphics

1. What media do we want to use (audio, video, illustrations, photos, animations)?
2. How much is already available (and how much in digital form, or could be delivered in digital form)?

Functionality

1. What tools do we want? (Online discussions, self-study questions and feedback, chats, etc)

2. What tracking and learner management do we want—what data are we capturing, where are we sending it, and what reporting is required?

Evaluation

1. At what points in development will we conduct formative evaluations?
2. What evaluation methods should we use?
3. What type of data do we want to capture?
4. What summative evaluation should we conduct?
5. Do we want to possibility publish some of this data, and if so, do we need IRB approval?