

Copywriter's Toolbox Volume 1

The Step-By-Step Guide To Copywriting:

ONLINE LEARNING & COURSE DESIGN

Write an online training course using time-tested principles of Instructional Design. Become an authority and create passive income with a well-written course that people actually want to buy.

Sandra Shillington

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Volume 1

The Step-By-Step Guide To Copywriting: Online Learning & Course Design

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Introduction

Do you think of yourself as a subject matter authority? If you have experience in a subject area, chances are you're further along in that journey than many other people. You may have expertise in a certain type of business, or you may have mastered a skill that others may want to learn.

Whatever the subject, the eLearning industry is an enormous, modern-day opportunity to leverage your knowledge and generate income in an entirely new way.

If you're in business, your own online course can help you get your message out to the market and establish you as an authority in your industry. If you have a special talent or skill, you can share it with the world. Even better - you can create a passive income stream in the process.

If you have mastery or knowledge of a subject, you can teach it!

If your courses create true change for your students, then you're well on your way to success in the online training world. I wrote this book to help you do just that. As a professional writer and instructional designer, I've created corporate training courses in a variety of formats over the past twenty five years. I'm sharing my extensive real-world experience in course writing and design, along with time tested instructional design principles.

This book is for you if you're interested in creating and selling your own online training courses that facilitate true change for your students. Are you a freelance copywriter? The popularity of online learning has created a new opportunity for copywriters. This book will help you create courses for your clients. It's not a get rich quick scheme, but a reference on how to design a quality course that your students will be happy they purchased - bringing you rave reviews.

In this book we'll discuss:

- Actionable steps to help you begin designing your course today.

- How to build a training course that your students will love - a course that engages, transforms and brings you happy customers.
- Going beyond the hype of today's online learning boom and learn true, time tested best practices of instructional design. You'll learn how to present your training course in a way that students can easily learn and engage with your content.

Chapter 1: Planning Your Course

“Proper planning and preparation prevents poor performance.” - Stephen Keague

Step 1: Choose Your Topic

Start by making a list of all the things that you know how to do. Don't leave anything out. You'll be surprised at the volume of ideas you have. Try to write 100 ideas. It could be anything – this is just a brainstorm of ideas to get the ball rolling.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What do your friends say that you are good at? If you don't know, ask them.
- What do people ask you to help them with? Think about the value you bring to others.
- If people are already asking you about it, is there a potential market for you to tap into?
- Is there a subject area of your profession that is complex, misunderstood or could be presented in a new way?
- What special skills do you have that you could teach someone else about?
- What unique experiences do you have that might help someone else?

Many people get stuck choosing a topic because they're not sure if they're “expert enough” for the topic. They often lack the confidence to think they could actually teach others about the subject. If you feel this way, remember that you have a message to share! You simply need to be further ahead on the journey than others are. Think about where you were yesterday and where you are today. Many of your learners will be where you were

yesterday, and you can help them get to where they need to be today. Helping your student move from one stage to another is your goal. This facilitates change, and that's the goal for any course.

Once you get your list together you'll have something to work with. Start to eliminate the ideas that seem boring, uninteresting or that just don't interest you enough. Slowly begin to narrow down the list until you have four or five topics that excite you. Then make a final decision on your topic.

Step 2: Will People Buy This?

Once you've narrowed down your topic, you'll want to take some time to do some market research. Ask yourself these questions:

- Would someone pay money for this topic?
- Is there a demand for it?
- Are there any other courses out there on this topic?

If you can't find any other courses on this topic, you may want to choose another subject. There's probably a reason why there aren't any courses out there on this subject. Remember, competition is good! It means there is a demand for what you want to teach. It means people are paying for it. That means there's room for you too!

Here's an exercise to help you research your topic. Look up some books on Amazon that have been written on the topic you're considering. Read through the customer reviews. Notice why the readers loved the book, or why they didn't love the book. What did the book help them do? What problem did it solve?

Please note! This does not mean you should copy the chapter names or any of the information contained in these books. You should only use them as a guide to researching your topic.

Once you've located some courses on the topic, ask yourself these questions:

- What makes you different from the competition?
- How will you stand out?
- What is your unique perspective on the topic?

Remember, the style someone else has when teaching something is going to be totally different than the style in which you teach it! Everybody is

different. Here are some questions to help you define how you're different. Your answers will help you describe your special self.

- What matters most to you?
- What are five to ten random facts about you?
- What are some of your pet peeves?

Step 3: WHO is Your Audience?

Who is your ideal student? Who exactly are you teaching? You must thoroughly understand your ideal customer's struggles and desires. What does this person want most? Be very specific about who this person is.

If you take the time to research your audience, you'll ensure your course has value to your students. You must thoroughly understand your audience and their potential learning goals. You need answers to these questions:

- What do they need to learn?
- What are their interests?
- What are their experience levels?
- What is their educational level?

Step 4: WHAT Are Your Course Objectives?

People don't buy ideas, they don't buy a course... they buy transformation and change. They want to get from Point A to Point B. Your course must address the needs and pain points of your ideal student. That's why your course must have specific, measurable learning outcomes.

You must define what you want your course to accomplish. If you begin with the end in mind, you'll stay on topic as you write your course. Your potential students will know exactly what they'll learn from your course. You can also use these objectives to write your course introduction and course sales page.

- Write down your answers to these important questions:
- What specific problem will your course solve?
- What change will happen as a result of taking your course?
- What new skills, attitudes or behaviors will your students be able to demonstrate?
- Why should they take your course?
- What do you want your students to achieve by taking your course? What is your dream for them?

You can then use your answers to the above questions to write your learning outcomes. You'll want to write sentences that describe an action of what specifically the student will be able to do. For example, "By the end of this course you'll be able to cook a gourmet dinner from start to finish."

Step 5: OUTLINE Your Plan

Taking the knowledge out of your head and organizing the framework of your course can seem overwhelming at first. You might be asking yourself some of these questions:

“I have a topic, but how do I break it up?”

“I don’t want to leave anything out, but I’m not sure what to talk about first.”

“How do I talk about all this without being boring?”

The best way to start - is to just start!

An easy way to get started organizing your content is to just take your knowledge from your head to paper. Just do a brain dump and get everything on paper.

From there, you’ll begin to organize and clearly outline every piece of content, learning outcome and lesson that you’ll teach. This outline will eventually become your course topics and subtopics.

From your outline, you’ll create every module and lesson title. Once your course is complete, you’ll write a short summary of each lesson. You’ll use these later when you’re selling your course and offering free samples of your course.

Step 6: DETERMINE Your Course Modules

Think about where your course is going. From your outline, decide on what exactly you're planning to cover. Start by determining the scope of your topic. Then pick the larger subtopics - these will be your course modules. For example, if you were creating a course on "Making Delicious Dinners" the subtopics could be Salads, Soups and Main Dishes. The subtopics are your modules.

Step 7: CREATE Your Course Lessons

From there, each module will be further broken down into lessons. This is where the actual content of your course will be located. You'll include any video, pdf files, audio files, etc. into each lesson.

Let's continue with our course on "Making Delicious Dinners." In the module on "Salads" you might have three different lessons: Spinach Salad, Garden Salad, and Caesar Salad. The main idea is to create your modules and then break them down into lessons - keeping each lesson very specific.

How long should each lesson be?

In today's world, attention spans are getting shorter. People now have access to quick information available on the internet. This makes us impatient with anything that doesn't quickly get to the point and offer extreme value. This is good news for creating an online course, because you can reduce any extraneous content and get right to the information. Depending on the subject and how engaging you can make it, the general rule is between about three to seven minutes. That said, there's no hard and fast rule for how long a lesson should be - it's more important that it be active, engaging and transforming.

Step 8: HOW Will Students Access Your Course?

Once your course is complete, you'll determine how students will access your course. There are a number of choices available today. Let's talk about each.

Marketplace Platforms

In addition to providing ways to author and assemble courses, marketplace platforms provide an existing marketplace where you can sell online courses.

Here are the most widely used marketplace platforms today:

Udemy

Skillshare

Curious

Coggn

Edureka

Learning.ly

OfCourse

OpenSesame

Stack Commerce

Teachlr

WizIQ

Lynda (accepts proposals)

Host Your Own Platforms

These platforms are geared towards subject matter experts or small businesses who want a relatively easy way to set up their own branded site where they can sell their courses. There are small differences between each of these options, such as the resources they provide, support and educational content. Research the various sites, their pricing plans and features to determine which is best for you. Many of these platforms offer free trial options.

Here are the most commonly used self-hosted platforms today:

Teachable

Thinkific

Digital Chalk

Educadium

LearnWorlds

Pathwright

Ruzuku

Zippy Courses

Kajabi

Academy of Mine

It's important to understand the distinction between webinars and online learning. Webinars are typically associated as a long lecture. Their purpose is to reach a large group of people all at once, and they usually cover broad topics and are not overly instructional. They usually do not create an online learning environment. Webinars are great for introducing your course, or starting the sales process to purchase your course, but they're not the best choice for delivering an entire course.

Here are the most widely used webinar services:

Webinar Platforms

Go to Meeting, Go To Webinar

Webinars On Air, Skype

Adobe Connect, Mega Meeting

ReadyTalk, AnyMeeting

OnStream, ClickWebinar

As with webinars, social media tools are a great way to introduce your course, or building a community to start the sales process to purchase your course, but they're not the best choice for delivering an entire course. Many course creators use social media as part of their course.

Social Media Platforms

YouTube

Facebook Live

Google Hangouts

How will people find your course?

When you're just getting started, marketplace platforms such as Udemy can help students locate you. With more than five million registered students, Udemy is one of the largest marketplaces for selling online courses. Udemy makes it very easy for instructors to get started, and they handle all the payment processing and video hosting. In return, you'll be sharing the revenue from the sales of your course. This may be well worth the cost since you'll have access to their five million registered students.

Whether you host the course from your own website or on a platform like

Udemy, don't assume "if you build it, they will come." You'll need to come up with a launch strategy and marketing plan. Most success stories of lucrative online courses start with a large email list of potential customers. For example, you may want to recruit some affiliate partners who have sizable email lists of their own - people with whom you've developed friendships with and helped in the past. They can create a special exclusive offer for their audiences that can be a win-win for everyone.

While marketing your course is a separate subject and outside the scope of this book, there are many useful resources to help you scale your online efforts. I highly recommend the book *Dotcom Secrets* by Russell Brunson for an in-depth practical guide on how to launch an online business.

Step 9: BUILD In Ways to Establish Rapport With Students

The most successful online courses empower students and allow them to openly communicate with the instructor. So how do you create an open environment in an online class since you're not meeting face to face? How do you make sure students are willing to talk to you?

You must establish rapport early. You must help your students feel comfortable, confident, and valued by you. Here's how:

Allow students to get to know you.

People like to connect with a human. Consider including a video introduction of yourself.

While you want to appear professional, show that you have other interests or a sense of humor. Don't be afraid to add some personality to your profile. This will help students to feel more comfortable communicating with you and will set a tone for an open environment.

For example, in your bio you might want to explain what you're passionate about and why you're teaching this course. Show your audience a little about who you are and that you have interests just like they do.

Include a quality photograph of yourself.

Make sure your bio picture clearly shows your face. You want students to be able to put a face with a name. Is it conveying the message that you want to be conveyed? Does it look friendly? Approachable?

Open the door to conversation.

Invite them to answer a question in the discussion area. Ask: "Where are you from?" and "Why did you decide to take this course?" This opens a conversation, and it helps you confirm the relevant aspects of your course. Make sure you let them know how long it takes for you to respond to any questions. While other students may provide answers, students will be

looking for your response as confirmation. The more conversation, the more the relationship will grow.

Create a social media group.

Create a Facebook group and host a Facebook Live session to introduce yourself and create a community of learners.

Chapter 2 Principles of Adult Learning

“The purpose of adult education is to help them learn, not to teach them all you know and thus stop them from learning.” - Carl Rogers

When you design a course effectively, students will finish your course feeling confident in their abilities and capable of achieving their goals. That’s why it’s important to assemble your course into the right format. Learning can take many forms, and adults learn in different ways.

You’ll also want to consider the type of subject you’re teaching. Different topics lend themselves to different types of presentation styles. How you present a course on “How to Use Photoshop” is going to be different than how you would teach a course on “How to Meditate.”

When you design a course that takes into account how adults learn, your students will be more likely to successfully complete your course and master the topic. They will be motivated to apply the lessons learned and to engage in your course material.

- Adults learn best when:
- They feel confident they can master the material.
- They have positive experiences while learning a concept.
- They receive feedback that reinforces their experience.

So how can you provide these experiences in your course? Give them the ability to experience success with the topic. Let them see examples of how someone else masters the subject. When other students share their experiences, and when we see other people succeed, we feel more confident. That’s why having your students share their progress is a great way to show new students that they too can have the same results by following your program.

Offer positive encouragement. Genuine, positive feedback goes a long way in boosting adult learning. Provide a positive, enthusiastic learning environment. This is contagious. If you're nervous, or you sound rigid or authoritative, your students will be nervous and intimidated. Don't speak in complicated jargon or make them feel less important.

Here are some other techniques to create an effective learning opportunities for adults:

- Establish a collaborative learning environment.
- Make it challenging yet not too difficult.
- Don't make it too rigid, but don't make it too flexible either.
- Encourage cooperative learning if applicable.
- Create short-term goals.
- Create opportunities for students to share their own progress.
- Tap into their passions.
- Give them control over their own learning.

Adult Learning Styles

Everyone learns differently, so your course must meet different learning styles and needs. There are four types of learning styles for adults, and many people are a combination of more than one. It doesn't mean they can't learn in a variety of ways, it just means that their preferred learning style is the strongest and most natural for them. When you're designing your course, it's important to include elements of your course that appeal to these different types of learners:

- Visual learners
- Auditory learners

- Experiential learners

Visual learners need to see things to best remember them. They need to watch, observe, or see images that depict the concept they're learning. That's why it's best to include the following elements in your course:

- Images, Videos, Animations, Demonstrations
- Note taking, highlighting text
- Illustrations, Slides, Charts, Diagrams

A variety of visual experiences within your course will make it more engaging and interesting for your audience. It will also keep your course from becoming repetitive and boring. Remember to keep it lively and include a variety visual elements. The rule of thumb for online learning is to have at least 60% of your course have some form of video.

The type of videos you create for your course will depend on your subject matter. For example, if you're demonstrating how to use a type of software, you'll want a screen capture type of video. Other subjects, such as sales training, would probably work best with a human speaking on camera as in a "talking head" format. Each video should be relatively short - not much more than five minutes at a time.

Auditory learners best retain knowledge by listening to concepts. You'll want to provide as much opportunity as possible for people to hear new information. Elements such as storytelling, verbal explanations, group discussions and question and answer forums are effective for auditory learners.

Experiential learners acquire skills through practicing and doing. That's why it's effective to provide hands on practice and maintain an active pace in your course. Instead of telling your audience how to do something, you can demonstrate it, and then have them practice the skill themselves. Here are some other ways to meet the needs of experiential learners:

- Screencast demonstrations, with opportunities to practice

- Practical activities or games related to the concepts
- Challenges or competitions
- Role plays
- Projects and case studies
- Field trips

To make sure you incorporate the different learning styles into a course, they should have all of the following qualities. I like to remember them using the acronym SERP:

Self-directed

Experiential

Relevant

Practice

Let's discuss more specifically how you can bring these elements into your course.

How To Make Your Course Self-Directed

Your course should help students achieve an outcome on their own, without any assistance. By their very nature, online courses are self-directed. Students typically complete online courses as their schedules allow and fit the learning into how it best meets their needs.

Most adults voluntarily enroll in an online course, unless it's required in their profession or by their employer. That's why courses that are designed with self-directed learning techniques in mind are very effective.

Self-directed learning is active in nature. Students make a conscious decision on the content they find useful or feel they have a need for. They

will automatically reject parts they feel they already understand or don't need. Your training course will be more interesting to your students if they immediately see how they can apply it to their own needs. Remember, people buy solutions to their problems - not courses. They are far more likely to sign up for your course if they can see how it will solve their problem.

This is where your market research is important. You'll know the results your audience is looking for. You can use this information to make sure your course solves that problem.

Here's an exercise to conduct some additional market research. Identify some people in your target market and ask them this question:

What is one of your biggest struggles as it relates to _____?

The answers to this question will help you build in solutions to their problems into your course. Adult learners like to feel like they are in charge of their own learning experience. That's why it's important to have clear learning outcomes so that they can decide if your course is right for them.

Flexible start and end times for your modules help learners determine how they can fit the course into their schedule. They should be able to start and stop the course at their own pace. They should be able to leave the course and easily pick up where they left off.

How To Make Your Course Experiential

Adults learn best through direct experience. That means they must have active participation in their learning. They're not simply reading text or watching someone speak. How do you accomplish this in an online course? One of the best ways to make your online course experiential is to make it as visual as possible. Incorporating video into your course is one of the most effective ways to do this. You could include video demonstrations and screencasts of a computer screen with voice over. We'll discuss creating video in the next chapter. After completing a demonstration:

- Explain in real time what you did step by step after they have watched the demonstration. Break it down into steps, explaining what you did

at each step.

- Demonstrate the skill a second time more slowly. Don't explain it as in-depth this time, just repeated again at a slower pace.
- Imitate the demonstration. Offer the opportunity for students to follow along, do an activity and share their results.
- Encourage the students. Offer feedback or advice. Describe other scenarios where this skill may be helpful. Include alternative ways that may also be effective.
- Apply the skill. Offer a practical challenge, quiz, assessment or useful activity for students to complete.
- By applying learn-by-doing techniques to your course, you are sure to enhance the learning experience and receive rave reviews.

How to Make Your Course Relevant

Think back to your school days when you had no choice on the courses you took. Most people can remember asking themselves, “When will I ever need this information?” That's when it's the most difficult to maintain your concentration, even for the most motivated student. It's simple really. When we feel that information is not relevant to us, our brain tends to turn off. That's why your course must be meaningful and relevant to your student's life or business. Here are a few ways to accomplish this:

Set clear goals and outcomes.

Make sure your course sales page and description clearly outline your goals and outcomes. Describe this in as much detail as possible.

Break results down into the smallest parts.

Your students must clearly see how they can apply the course to solve their problems. Adults must see a reason for learning something.

How To Incorporate Practice Into Your Course

Once students have learned the skill in the course, they need the opportunity to put it into practice into their daily life or business. Offer the opportunity for students to follow along in a demonstration, do an activity and share their results. Offer feedback or advice. Describe other scenarios where this skill may also be helpful.

Here are some ideas to bring practice into your course:

Case studies can provide some context to the concept. You could teach the generic principle, and then give your students a situation to apply this knowledge. It can be as complex or simple as you choose to make it.

You can create fictional situations that directly match a situation that the student will be likely to face in the real world. You can present the scenario in the form of a written story, an audio, a video of a role play, or a video of a real situation. Once you present the scenario, ask the students to assess the situation, solve the problem or explain the process they would follow next.

Role plays allow students the ability to practice a situation that may be encountered in real life. Simply provide them a scenario and at least one side of the situation. Provide a series of follow up questions to make it relevant to the topic you are teaching. Participants could conduct peer role plays through video conferencing, Skype, Facebook Live, etc.

Projects give students the ability to practice the principle they've learned. They can be in a practical exercise, a written format, or video format. The main goal is that participants practice what they have been taught in your course.

Chapter 3 How to Write Learning Objectives

“A goal without a plan is just a wish.” - Antoine de Saint-Exuperys

If you want your course to be successful - something people will pay money for - you must create a quality course. That means it needs to be designed according to sound instructional design principles. Your students must have a valuable learning experience. Stating the outcome, or learning objective, of every lesson in your course helps you do just that. A learning objective states what the participant must be able to do at the end of the training. At the very least, you should write a learning objective for the entire course. Ideally, you should write a learning objective for each lesson. Without learning objectives, your course has no roadmap.

For example, if you're teaching a skill, your students need to know what they'll be able to demonstrate by the end of your course. If you're transferring knowledge on a certain subject, your students need to know what they'll be able to understand by the end of your course.

Every learning objective needs to be written so that students will know if the lesson was successful. What is the exact skill students should be able to perform? What is the exact knowledge they should have? How will they show this knowledge?

For example:

“By the end of this lesson, you should be able to demonstrate how to touch up a person's face in Photoshop.”

“By the end of this lesson, you should be able to list the five customer benefits of our product.”

When you write learning objectives in this way, it helps you define how you will teach the subject. That's why it's important to write these desired outcomes before you begin writing the content of your course. Make sure you

use verbs that are specific and measurable. Each objective should be no more than one sentence and should be written in easy to understand language.

Here is a list of verbs to use when writing learning objectives:

If your students need to remember something, they'll need to...

Memorize, show, pick, spell, list, quote, recall, repeat, catalogue, cite, state, relate, record, name.

If your students need to understand something, they'll need to...

Explain, restate, alter, outline, discuss, expand, identify, locate, report, express, recognize, discuss, qualify, covert, review, infer.

If your students need to apply something, they'll need to...

Translate, interpret, explain, practice, illustrate, operate, demonstrate, dramatize, sketch, put into action, complete, model, utilize, experiment, schedule, use.

If your students need to analyze something, they'll need to...

Distinguish, differentiate, separate, take apart, appraise, calculate, criticize, compare, contrast, examine, test, relate, search, classify, experiment.

If your students need to evaluate something, they'll need to...

Decide, appraise, revise, score, recommend, select, measure, argue, value, estimate, choose, discuss, rate, assess, think.

If your students need to create something, they'll need to...

Compose, plan, propose, produce, predict, design, assemble, prepare, formulate, organize, manage, construct, generate, imagine, set-up.

Here are the key points to remember about writing learning objectives:

Learning objectives should address **knowledge, skills or attitudes**. They

may identify what your learners can know, skills that they can perform, or attitudes they can possess.

Each learning objective should be SMART:

- **Specific**, meaning it's clearly stated and understandable to everyone.
- **Measurable**, meaning everyone can agree if the student satisfies it.
- **Achievable**, meaning the learner truly has a chance to satisfy it
- **Relevant**, meaning it's important to the student.
- **Time bound**, meaning it will be clear when the learner must be able to satisfy it.

Learning objectives should include four parts:

The **person** that will be performing the behavior. (The students you are teaching.) The **behavior** that should be performed. (Stated as a verb that defines the person's behavior, such as "recite.") The **conditions** under which the behavior should be performed. (When given a hammer you will be able to...) The **degree or frequency** the behavior must be performed. (You should be able to do this 85 times per hour.)

Meaningful Assessments

Once you've written your learning objectives, you must create ways to evaluate the learner's understanding of the lesson. These tools are known as assessments. They must relate directly back to the objectives. You can do this through quizzes, case studies, exercises and on-the-job observation. You can also include various types of progress checks, student check-in groups, such as online forums and discussions. There are also projects, simulations, or open ended questions for self-reflection. The verbs listed above can help you formulate your assessment questions. Engaging courses make learning meaningful and helps students retain and remember the information from the lesson. Objectives with assessments help you do just that. It's important to test their progress as they move through your course and/or at the end of each

lesson. Whatever the assessment method you use, make sure you have an opportunity to provide feedback for their answers. Most of us learn from our mistakes. That's why a well designed assessment can be a valuable tool. A meaningful assessment should link back to the objective and remind students of the key messages to take away from the lesson. At the same time, it should help learners know how to implement the lesson into their life or work.

Chapter 4: Tips For Audio and Video

“The only thing that is stopping you from where you are to where you want to go is your comfort zone.” - Dhaval Gaudier

It's clear that we must have elements of visual learning to create a quality online course. Adding video to your course is one of the most effective ways to engage students in a visual way. This can be in the form of:

- Animations
- Talking head person
- PowerPoint slides with voice-over
- Slideshow
- Facebook Live

People often learn best when they connect with a human being - even if it's on screen. By choosing to appear on screen yourself it allows you to personally engage with your audience. This is very effective for more classroom based or theoretical type subjects.

There are many choices of video editing software that you can use:

Camtasia - Widely used for all types of video with powerful editing features.

Screenflow - One of the more popular screencasting and video editing tools.

Adobe Captivate - Used by Instructional Designers, this is a true elearning authoring tool, with a slightly steeper learning curve.

Adobe Premiere Pro - A robust video editing tool. A bit more time

consuming to learn.

Movavi - Very affordable and very easy to use. Also does screen capture recording with voice over.

Vizia - A free tool that lets you add interactive quizzes, polls, response questions directly to video.

There are also several free video editing software and screen recording tools available:

- FFSplit
- Cam Studio
- iSpring FreeCam
- Ezvid
- MadCap Mimic
- Flashback
- Fraps
- Screencast-O-matic
- PicPick
- Bandicam

When creating video, you'll also need to consider where you will host your videos. Widely used choices include YouTube, Vimeo and Wistia.

How to Get Comfortable With Being on Camera

To appear on camera may seem intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. The voice in your head may be saying, "I look awful. I'm not attractive enough." This is simply not true. You bring your unique self to your course

along with your own style.

It Doesn't Need To Be Perfect

Truth be told, most people are afraid of putting themselves on camera. It's normal. If you have these fears, they might keep you from starting. It's an obstacle that you'll need to overcome.

Once you bring your fears to the forefront of your mind, they instantly lose their power over you. The first step is to try it. You'll soon see that it's not so scary after all. It doesn't need to be perfect. People like to connect with a human. Your students will want to connect with you as a person.

Have Fun

A positive attitude is contagious. When you're happy, it's easy to transmit positive energy. When you smile, it makes other people smile.

When you're having fun, when you love sharing your story, people feel it. They're attracted to what you have to say because you make them feel good. They feel connected to you and are inspired to continue watching.

Everyone wants to learn from someone they like and trust. That's how you create genuine connections with students. When students love your teaching, they become students for life.

Practice On Camera

Don't wait until showtime to create your video. You don't want that kind of pressure. Even worse, you'll feel awkward and disappointed. It might also make you want to give up.

That's why it's best to practice ahead of time - as many times as you need to in order to get comfortable in camera.

Start with a few quick and easy videos for fun. Send a birthday video message to a friend. Go on Facebook Live with a group of friends. Do a Skype call to someone far away. Keep doing this until you feel comfortable.

Once you put yourself in front of a camera several times, you'll get more accustomed to how it feels.

Practice Looking Into The Camera

The next time you're on a Face Time or Skype call, look at the lens of the camera instead of the face of the person you are speaking to. Listen to how the person is reacting to you, but don't look at the actual person.

This will help you get comfortable speaking into the lens, without the visual clues of your audience. It might feel strange at first, but it works! Even though it doesn't feel like it, you'll be surprised to know that the person you are speaking to will feel like you're connecting.

Remember It's Not About You

Have you noticed when you speak with someone you know and like, you never think about what your hands are doing? You're simply engaged in the conversation, effortlessly connecting. Why? Because you're focused on the other person, and not on yourself. That's why speaking into the lens is important. It will feel strange at first, but when you focus on how you want your students to feel, you instantly take your attention off yourself.

This takes away the self-consciousness. When you're connected to the passion of your subject and your intention to help your students grow, your positive energy radiates from you effortlessly.

Prepare Your Words

While it may be tempting to "wing it," chances are you'll ramble on instead of delivering a confident and clear message. People have very short attention spans and will lose interest if you don't get to the point.

That's why you should make sure you map out exactly what you want to say in advance.

Whatever type of video you are creating, each video should have the following:

- Strong beginning - state what you intend to accomplish
- Two to three compelling ideas - this your main content
- Clear ending, or call to action - it should summarize and restate your intention

Dress For Success

We all feel better when we put a little extra effort into our appearance. What would you wear if you were teaching your students in person? Do you have a favorite shirt that makes you feel confident? Does your hair look better when you have it professionally styled? You'll want to look your best, so you can feel your best.

Add Interactive Features To Your Video

Interactive video helps your students learn more effectively and holds their attention longer. By asking questions at key points, you can highlight specific pieces of information that you want your students to remember. You can use a free tool called Vizia to add interactivity to your videos. Here are some ways to use it:

- Add periodic quizzes throughout your video, instead of at the end of the lesson.
- Add open ended response questions to your video.
- Include a poll directly in the video to learn more about your students. It's a great way to conduct an immediate assessment of their skill levels, goals and potential obstacles to learning.
- Create a promotional video with a quiz. You can show viewers the results of their quiz after they enter their email address. This can help you grow your email list prior to launching your course.
- For an effective call to action, add an external link directly on your video that takes them to a landing page, or any resources you

mention in your video.

Use Audio Effectively

Good quality audio narration helps reduce cognitive overload, and it enhances the learner's interest. Make sure it's in a friendly, conversational tone.

Here are a few tips to make the best use of audio:

- Use audio to explain visuals.
- Don't narrate the entire on screen text.
- Keep the narration succinct and on topic.
- Make sure it has good sound quality with no background noise.

Chapter 5: Image Is Everything

“Art is something that makes you breathe with a different kind of happiness.” - Anni Albers

One of the easiest things you can do to help your students learn is to include well planned visual aids. Quality visuals dramatically increase your learner’s comprehension, retention, and transfer of behaviors, especially for novice learners who are new to a particular subject.

In fact, a study by Richard Meyer shows that adding relevant graphics to training can increase learning by 89% compared to training that includes only text. However, If an image isn’t relevant to the training material, it can do the opposite. Irrelevant graphics can actually be distracting and depress learning. That’s why you must use relevant graphics in an appropriate manner.

Here are some do’s and don’ts for choosing effective graphics:

Don’t add graphics merely for decorative purposes. You may think it will draw attention, but it actually risks drawing attention away from what you’re trying to teach. Images should serve a purpose and stay on topic.

Do use an illustration of a concept you are teaching. A representational image is a “realistic” depiction of a person, place, thing, or symbol. It does not need to be a photograph. For example, you could add a simplified line drawing of a bicycle.

Do use visual displays of relationships between things, such as pie charts or bar graphs.

Do use graphics that illustrate a process or transformation from one stage to another, such as in a flowchart, or progressive images.

Do use graphics to help explain an abstract concept. A cell molecule becomes easier to understand with an illustration.

Do opt for quality images over quantity. Poor resolution images lead to a poor perception of the quality of the course. If you can't find any suitable images, then it may be worthwhile to design your own or have one created for you.

Although graphics especially appeal to the visual learner as we discussed in Chapter 2, they also support your message to all learners. Here are some important tips to make sure your graphics are effective:

- Organize your visuals so the learner can quickly scan important elements. Use features that pop out, such as different textures to draw attention.
- Direct the student's attention to the most important elements and provide visual cues.
- Use simplified visuals that are easier to process. Reduce clutter, use silhouetted figures or icons.
- Make abstract or obscure concepts easier to understand with easy-to-understand visuals of data, such as maps or representations of time.
- Present complex information visually in segments and/or sequences.
- Use emotions, storytelling, and humor to increase attention and learning. Add emotional elements to visuals, use visual storytelling techniques, create visual metaphors, and incorporate unexpected and/or humorous elements.
- Keep an appropriate balance of images in your course. Too much clipart or royalty free photos can actually overshadow your core content, while not making proper use of images will lead to dull or text heavy lessons.

These techniques make it easier for your learners to quickly focus their attention and draw out meaning when they first glance at a visual. Using them in your training materials will help your learners understand and remember more information.

You want your entire course to look cohesive, well organized, and consistent. Think of each image like a piece of the puzzle. If one doesn't fit in, then it can detract from the overall look and feel of the course. The goal is to create a flow that allows the learners to engage in a dynamic and informative course. As you're choosing each graphic or image, ask yourself whether it will serve the overall learning objective. If not, then you may want to leave it out and opt for a more suitable visual element.

Choosing Color for Your Course

Color influences our mental processes and emotions. That's why it's important to choose colors carefully when designing online training courses. Otherwise, we run the risk of creating confusion, instead of creating learning experiences that achieve the results we're looking for.

The color scheme you choose should align with any branding you may be using. For example, if your website colors are silver, red, and black, you should put this color trio into your course. When learners participate in your course, they will immediately know that it is an extension of your brand. This raises its credibility and adds cohesion and order. If you haven't really established your brand yet, then you may want to work on developing that first. This will save you a significant amount of time, as you won't have to redo the color scheme later.

Colors can stir both negative and positive emotions. It's important to keep this in mind when choosing colors. For example, blue typically has a calming effect, while yellow can make learners feel more optimistic and energetic.

Take a look at the majority of your graphics and images. You don't want colors that clash with most of your visual learning aids. Pay attention to the colors that are featured in your images and see if there is a common thread throughout most of your images. If most of your photos feature earth tones, then you may want to opt for a more natural color palette. If some of your images clash with your brand, then consider selecting new images that are more complementary.

Your colors should blend and convey a sense of unity. Select just a

handful of colors for your online training course. If you have more than five or six colors, you run the risk of cluttering your course design. This distracts from your subject matter and may prevent your course from achieving its goals and objectives.

Bold colors have their uses, but use them sparingly, as they have a tendency to overwhelm and distract learners. Instead of focusing on the ideas, eyes will drift toward the neon greens and blues. If you're using bolder colors, place them on neutral page backgrounds and make sure that the surrounding colors are more subdued. Avoid the use of fluorescent shades as they are more difficult to read.

Keep in mind that colors also guide learners' attention and highlight key takeaways. If you want them to focus on an important tip on top of the page, then make it an eye catching color and leave plenty of white space around it.

Use colors to make the navigation icons or links more noticeable. Your color scheme should allow the main points and icons to pop out from the page.

Also make sure to choose colors that offer a contrast from your background color, so that your learners can actually read the text. You can also highlight the main ideas or concepts by using a different color that attracts the learner's eye. For example, your headers might be purple, your body font blue, and the background white in order to provide contrast and improve legibility.

Choosing the right colors for your course can be somewhat time consuming, especially if you're trying to create a specific look or feel - but planning your color scheme in advance will be well worth it.

Chapter 6: How To Make Sure Your Course Isn't Boring

“If you're going to be boring, please do it over there.” - Unknown

Remember your course will most likely be a voluntary choice for your students. If they're bored, the chances are very good that they will not finish it. There is nothing worse than sitting through a boring course. Your students must be actively engaged to stay interested in your course.

Involve Both Sides of the Brain

One of the best ways to do this is to involve both sides of the brain. Here are the differences between the left and right side of the brain:

The left side of the brain is more logical. It engages in analytical thinking and usually involves step by step instructions. That means that you need to deliver your message in the following ways:

- Include a logical and sequential organization of your topics.
- Break information down into step by step processes.
- Include statistics, facts and quotes
- Provide lectures
- Minimize distractions
- Keep it orderly
- Add in independent study

The right side of the brain is more visual, creative and conceptual. You'll want to include elements in your training that allow students to use this type

of thinking. Here are some methods that will help you do that:

- Encourage thinking outside the boundaries of your course curriculum.
- Provide ways for students to apply the concepts to other areas of their lives.
- Facilitate creative ideas and innovation.
- Present a variety of perspectives and viewpoints.
- Include visual images, color and shapes.
- Involve the senses. Allow them to read, write, listen and think at the same time.
- Encourage note taking. This can be as simple as providing a handout that includes an area for note taking. This gives them the option to translate what you're teaching into their own style.
- Create opportunities for open discussion and group projects.
- Incorporate creative problem solving activities.

By ensuring your course is delivered in a way that engages both sides of the brain, you are far less likely to have students turn off your course and far more likely to receive rave reviews.

Allow Students to Customize Their Own Learning

Some students like to complete tasks in a perfectly sequential order. Other students may prefer to scroll through all of the lesson titles and complete them out of order, based on what seems most applicable to them. When you provide a bird's eye view of the skills and knowledge you'll cover, learners have the opportunity to adapt your course to their needs and desires. Some students may wish to move ahead through different lessons in the course, while others will prefer to stay within its sequential order. This will provide a better learning experience for all types of students by keeping them engaged and preventing frustration.

Connect to Human Emotion

Most people remember information when it's tied to some form of emotion. It facilitates a passion for the subject and helps move people to action. Studies show that retention increases when courses appeal to emotion. That means that students are more likely to complete your course and give you a five star review.

Without story and experience, your message will fall flat and leave students feeling disengaged from the information.

Here are some tips to help connect your students through emotion:

- Rather than emphasizing only skills and knowledge, make sure some of your learning outcomes focus on how your students will feel after completing your course.
- Your course description should explain how it will improve the lives of your students.
- Utilize emotion packed words throughout your training course. Include the word “feel.”
- Appeal to the higher meaning and purpose your target audience may have.
- Provide relevant examples and case studies of real people and events. Make sure you connect it to the subject you're teaching.
- Include reflective activities such as journal reflections, and discussions in group forums.

Provide Opportunities for Self Assessment and Reflection

When students can draw upon their own experiences to go through a personal learning process, they can apply new knowledge to their own lives in a meaningful way. It also provides another way to access emotion within your course. You can accomplish this through a variety of exercises and

activities that encourage students to assess their own approaches to situations.

Here are some ideas on how to facilitate self-assessment in your course:

- Provide prompts for journaling and reviewing their journal entries.
- Include discussion opportunities within your course.
- Students could present a problem they had in the past and provide a summary of how they solved the problem. Have them explain the struggles they encountered, the emotions they experienced, and the strategies they used to overcome them.
- Create a questionnaire that causes students to personally reflect on specific topics in your course. For example, you could ask students how their thinking process has changed as a result of the course concepts.
- Create an action plan worksheet that encourages students to create their own plan for their personal progress in this subject area.

Understand Your Audience

Adults have a foundation of life experience and knowledge they draw upon when they learn something new. These experiences can be both good and bad. They can influence perceptions and cause differing expectations and biases. This means that you must make sure your course allows for differences among individuals and their past experiences. For example, some people may have a negative association with traditional classroom learning and require more time to learn by doing. This goes back to defining your ideal student. You must completely understand your audience so you can consider differences in educational levels, socio economic levels, culture and other important factors. By thoroughly understanding your audience, you can design your training with specific needs in mind and avoid student frustration and ultimately negative reviews.

Provide Familiar Analogies

By referencing concepts that are familiar to your students, you provide a way for them to connect to the subject in a way that has meaning to them. The language you use and the activities you include must be in a context they can relate to. This also helps you address the differences between individuals and find common ground. It means that you may adapt the way you present a certain topic to the needs of a particular audience. You might choose to capitalize on an interest such as football, where you would make a football analogy to describe the concept you're teaching. By adding some personal relevance to something outside of the course, it can engage students in the subject in a new way. This works particularly well when teaching complex subjects.

Rookie Mistakes to Avoid When Writing A Training Course

Mistake #1 - Not Knowing and Understanding Your Target Audience

Before you write your lesson plan, you must take the time to define your target audience. Once you fully understand your audience, you can focus on the overall aim of your course and develop your lesson plan.

Mistake #2 - Not Assigning Learning Objectives for Each Part of Your Course

Each module, each lesson, and each assignment in your course needs to have a purpose. When participants understand the value of the information and how they'll personally benefit from it, they're more likely to engage with your course and implement your teaching points. To keep your students motivated, they need mini-targets throughout the course. Write each objective in the personal active voice. For example: "Learn (how this works), so you can (achieve that)."

Mistake #3 - Creating Long Overwhelming Lessons

Because of your expertise in your subject area, it may be tempting to share everything you know about the topic - but this can lead to an overwhelming experience for your students. When you're writing your lesson plan, always check it against the overall objective of your course. Don't complicate your lessons by filling them with everything you know.

- Evaluate your lessons by asking the following questions:
- Can you eliminate any information that's not absolutely necessary?
- If you find you have too much material in one lesson, you might want to convert some of it into bonus material.
- Does each lesson have one, straightforward learning objective, or have you cluttered your course by sneaking multiple objectives into one lesson? If so, you may need to add new, smaller lessons.
- For any exercise or assignment, have you covered the corresponding knowledge and skills in that lesson?
- Do the learning objectives follow a logical order?
- What could prevent students from implementing your advice?
- How can you help overcome those obstacles?
- Have you warned students about common pitfalls or mistakes?
- Do your learning objectives match your introductory promise to your students?
- Too much information can lead to inaction, while too little information leaves students confused and ill prepared.
- Effective instructors inspire students by providing just the right amount of material.

Mistake #4 - Creating Pages Filled With Text

Learners can only absorb and retain information if it does not overload their mental capacity. If your students are burdened with pages of text, they will be overwhelmed, and the course will have no meaning. Effective courses break up concepts into short, digestible chunks and do not include irrelevant information. Instead of merely summarizing information, your course should

provide an enjoyable learning experience and engage the learner.

Mistake #5 - Including Irrelevant Graphics and Images

Low quality images that are not relevant to your information are distracting. Make sure your graphics are on-topic and enhance the student's learning.

Mistake #6 - Making Your Course Hard to Navigate

If your students are unable to navigate through your course, then the content becomes meaningless. When choosing how students access your course, make sure that the platform allows for easy navigation from page to page on any device.

Mistake #7 - Focusing Too Much On Technology

With all the tools available today, it's easy to let technology distract from the true learning objectives of your students. Relevant learning outcomes that apply to your human students are more important than the technology itself.

Mistake # 8 - Misunderstanding Classroom Training and Online Learning

While you can incorporate live video tools into your course, traditional classroom training and online learning are completely different methods of training. Online learning that can be leveraged across larger audiences and a wider variety of people. Even with larger audiences, online learning can provide more personalized learning experiences for each student than can be accomplished in a classroom setting.

Mistake #9 - Discounting the Value of Social Learning

Studies show that 80% of learning happens all around us in the informal learning space. Today's learners are accustomed to social media and are constantly getting information through social circles. Ignoring social learning can be a big mistake. That's why it's important to integrate informal, social learning experiences within your course in formats such as group forums, Facebook Live, etc.

Mistake #10 - Ignoring the Emotional Journey of the Student

Through the use of appropriate strategies, online learning courses can develop an emotional connection with learners. Completion rate is one of the biggest problems in online learning courses. If you are able to solve your students' pain points and connect your course to solving their problems, the chances of successful completion increase.

Mistake #11 - Creating Assessments That Aren't Meaningful

Periodic assessments throughout your course allow your students to see its relevance to their lives. If they can see how your course will bring about transformation, they will become more committed to your course.

Mistake #12 - Not Providing Ways To Implement the Lessons

Students must have frequent opportunities to implement and practice what they learn in order to receive true value from your course. This is the difference between simply consuming information and true learning. At the end of every lesson, there must be an exercise or assignment that encourages them to implement what they've learned. This is how you facilitate transformation in the lives of your students - taking it from the course into real life.

Chapter 7: How To Design A Course Evaluation

Before beginning the design of your course evaluation, you need to decide what you want to learn from the results. What information would you like to acquire? What will you use this information for? Do you want feedback on student satisfaction with the course structure? Do you want to know if they achieved the goals of the course? Whatever the feedback you decide to gather through your course evaluations, you need to write properly worded questions to draw out the feedback you're trying to obtain.

Here are some guidelines to make sure your questions are worded effectively:

- They must be clear and direct. Your questions must be concise and directly related to the feedback you are trying to gain. The more clear the question, the less likely it will be open to interpretation. This will lead to more accurate answers.
- Use several question styles. Use a combination of styles such as short answer, and multi-choice questions, and rating-scale questions to gather specific answers. Also include some open-ended (short, comment questions) to gather direct comments from students.
- Define rating scales. If you choose to include rating-scales, clearly define the scale for the answers. For instance, if you choose a 1 to 5 rating-scale, clearly define each numeric rating to avoid confusion or skewing of results. For example, 1 – Very good; 2 – Good; 3 – Neutral; 4 – Poor; 5 – Very poor.
- Keep it short. Ask only the most necessary questions. The shorter the evaluation, the more likely it will be that students complete it. A short course evaluation can result in higher response rates.

The information you gather from your evaluation can help you make

improvements and changes to your course, so it's an important step. Below is a list of potential questions that you can choose for your course.

Rate your understanding of the course expectations and assignments.

What topics were you expecting, that were not covered?

Did the course cover the content you were expecting? Why or why not?

Rate your understanding of the course structure/flow.

How consistent was the course content with the objectives?

How relevant was the subject matter or course content?

Was the content arranged in a clear and logical way?

Did the content adequately explain the knowledge, skills and concepts it presented?

Rate your confidence level for completing the knowledge or skill presented.

How would you rate the amount of material covered?

Did any of the activities help you gain a clearer understanding of the subject?

Did the use of case studies and scenarios help you gain a clearer understanding of the content?

Rate how well the following items helped you remember key information: Scenarios, Quizzes, Exams, Games

Rate the quality of the examples presented in the course.

What part of the course did you find most useful and interesting?

What additional material would you like presented in the course?

Rate the availability of the instructor via email or online discussion.

Rate your opportunity to interact with other virtual students in discussion.

Rate how isolated you felt from other students.

Rate how much you missed direct, in-person interaction with other students.

Rate your enjoyment of the course.

Rate the course workload.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this course?

Rate the relevancy of assignments, quizzes, and tests.

Rate the quality of the questions asked in the quizzes.

Was there enough variety in the types of quizzes?

Was the quiz feedback timely and relevant?

Did the quiz feedback present new knowledge?

Were the quizzes presented in adequate intervals?

Did the quizzes appropriately test the material presented in the course?

How could the exams be improved?

Were the review sections before the quizzes useful?

Did the practice questions make good learning tools?

How many hours did you spend completing activities related to the course? (Forums, chat rooms, emails, etc.)

Did you feel the amount of time it took to complete this course was

appropriate for this content?

How would you rate the pace at which the course advanced?

How would you rate the ease of navigation?

Did the course unfold in a clear direction?

Did you understand where you had to click to move forward? If not, why not?

Rate access to the course.

Rate the amount of multimedia (audio, video, and animation) used in the course.

Rate the quality of multimedia (audio, video, and animation) used in the course.

Rate the amount of photography used in the course.

Rate the quality of the photography used in the course.

Rate the amount of audio used in the course.

Rate the quality of audio used in the course.

Rate the amount of narration used in the course.

Rate the voice and quality of the narration used in this course.

Rate how satisfied you are with the narration in this course.

Did the narration add value to this course?

Were the animations in the course useful?

How can the animations be improved?

If you did some group work, did you enjoy working with your group?

What was the most frustrating technical problem you encountered during the course?

This e-learning course contained opportunities for interactive learning. Agree or Disagree?

Was the interactivity appropriate for the content? Why or why not?

Rate the overall aesthetic of the course content and materials.

What comments do you have about the visual design of the course?

Rate the legibility of the text and fonts in this course.

Rate the quality of corporate branding (logos, colors) used in the course.

Rate the technical quality of the course materials.

Rate how confident you feel about your knowledge on the subject.

List three important concepts or ideas that you learned in this course.

Identify three ways to improve this course.

Based on this experience, would you take another course from this company? Why or why not?

Chapter 8: The Right Teaching Style For The Subject

"The essence of strategy is choosing what not to be." - Professor Michael Porter

When training people, you are essentially helping them know things and/or teaching them to use or apply that knowledge. What type of information are you teaching? Are you teaching facts? Are you communicating concepts? Are you teaching processes? Are you teaching procedures? Are you sharing principles? Are you showing how to troubleshoot something? Let's talk about the differences of each.

When Teaching Facts

You train people on facts because you want them to know specific information about something. You'll want them to be able to show that they remember the facts by having them list them, repeat them, or state them. It's difficult for the brain to remember a lot of facts when they're not organized and easy to reference. Instead of embedding facts into a paragraph, it's helpful to use the following tools:

- Charts help organize information into a digestible format.
- Diagrams with labels help display the facts of a concrete object.
- Tables and lists help present data and make it easier for the eyes to scan and process.

Remember, when you present facts in a passive manner you run the risk of boring the learner. So instead of listing facts in a lecture format, present the facts in a visual way and let the student become an active participant.

Here's an example:

If you were teaching a customer service representative how to process

payments, you could first provide a chart showing the accepted types of payment. You could then present a scenario with a customer paying by check. Then ask, “Can you take this customer’s form of payment?”

Learners will retain facts more easily if you provide plenty of practice to allow the brain process the facts multiple times.

Here’s how:

- Provide a visual reference for facts.
- Allow them to refer to the visual reference at any time during the training.
- Weave practice and drills into the training, but be careful to not get repetitive and boring. Games are an effective alternative to passively presenting factual information.
- Use mnemonic devices. It can be easier to remember facts when you associate them with something else. If you took music lessons, maybe you remember learning “Every Good Boy Does Fine.” Create your own mnemonic devices to help your learners associate a fact with something they already know.

When Teaching Concepts, Processes, Procedures and Principles

When teaching these types of subjects, you want learners to know and apply that knowledge.

How To Teach Concepts

Concepts are set of items or ideas that share several things in common. You typically don’t teach concepts just so a person can remember or restate them. Instead, you’ll usually want them to apply the concept. When teaching concepts, you want to provide a definition and some examples of the concept. It’s also effective to provide analogies, or examples that are closely related but are not part of the concept. Analogies help the learner compare something they don’t know with something they already know. Use scenarios to provide

practice by providing examples and non examples of the concept and allow them to identify which is correct and which is not correct.

How To Teach Processes

Processes are essentially how something works. Understanding a process helps learners know why certain steps are important or what specifically is important to them in each step. In some cases, your students will simply need to understand a process. In other cases, they will need to both understand and apply the process.

If your goal is just for the students to understand a process, then you can keep the training superficial and expect them only to be able to know or explain the process.

If you want them to apply the concept, so that it fits into an overall product or to troubleshoot a process, your training should teach them to apply - not just remember and restate it.

Here's how:

- If there are facts they must know while learning the process, explain those first. Explain the process in a combination of words, images, and tables, diagrams or charts.
- Present the process using an organized chart, diagram, or flow chart. Make sure to clearly order the different steps.
- Use images to represent the different stages of the process.

In some cases It won't be necessary to let students practice with their understanding of a process. If identifying the different steps of the process isn't something they really need to do, then don't set up an opportunity for practice. If you've explained a process just so they'll understand the bigger picture, there's no real need for practice.

In other cases, your students will need to use their understanding of a process. For example, if a Photoshop user has to troubleshoot a problem,

he/she will have to use that process understanding to troubleshoot effectively. In that case, you should set up practice scenarios that allow the learner to practice using the information to perform the troubleshooting. Don't just ask for a list of the steps of the process.

The same is true when evaluating learners' understanding of processes. If they only need an overview of a process so they understand how their work fits into a bigger picture, you probably don't need to evaluate them on the process. However, if they'll need to use their understanding of the process in a specific situation, then don't just ask them to list the steps or explain the process. Evaluate them on their ability to perform a task that requires them to understand the process.

How to Teach Procedures

A procedure is a simple list of actions that the learner must perform.

It can sometimes be difficult to correctly identify all the steps of a procedure before you teach the procedure to others. If you're not an expert on the procedure, then talk with people who know the procedure well and have them help you identify the steps.

It can also be helpful to watch someone performing the procedure, so you can observe what they're doing.

Keep in mind, many experts know a procedure so well that it can become automatic to them. When they tell you the different steps, they may leave some out. This is when observing or videotaping the expert can really help.

When you're identifying the steps of a procedure, think about your audience. How much do they know? Sometimes what's only a single step for an experienced person should be presented as multiple steps for those who are entirely new to the material. For example, someone who has baked a lot, using an automatic mixer familiar is a simple step in the procedure of baking a cake. But for people who aren't familiar with baking or mixers, that's multiple steps - insert the beaters, turn on the machine, fold in the batter, etc.

Remember your goal is not to just have students state the steps of a

procedure. Instead, you want them to be able to perform the steps as well. Whenever possible, provide a job aid that explains the steps of the procedure and let them use that job aid during training.

Here's how:

- Include a clear explanation of the different steps of the procedure. Use a table, diagram, or chart, and include a photo, video, or other image.
- Provide a demonstration on how to perform the procedure.
- Create an opportunity to practice performing the procedure, so they can practice doing it themselves
- Offer feedback to the learners as they practice performing the procedure. Make sure you explain what they're doing right and what they're doing wrong. Always provide feedback in a friendly, non-threatening, supportive manner.

As with most of the other subject types we've talked about - except for facts - your students can both know and perform a procedure. Knowing means they can list the steps. Being able to perform means they can complete the procedure. If this is a job related course, they will likely need to perform the procedure. That's why you'll usually want to evaluate if they can perform a procedure, not just simply list the steps.

How To Teach Principles

When you're training a person to apply a principle, situations won't be the same every time. You want your student to follow or apply a set of guidelines to apply principles in a number of different circumstances, each of which will be different from the others. There won't be a set order or exact duplication of steps.

As with the other types of subjects we've discussed in this chapter, students can either just remember the principles or apply the principles. In most cases, it's more effective to do more than just assess if they can restate the principles. You should write learning objectives that require them to

apply the principles and provide opportunities to apply the principles. Finally, you'll want to assess your students' learning by evaluating their application of the principles.

When training students to apply principles, your course should:

Present and explain the principles and guidelines clearly.

Provide demonstrations or examples of the guidelines being applied in different scenarios. Provide these demonstrations in a realistic environment - as close to the actual conditions the student will experience.

- Ask students questions about what they see in different example scenarios, such as:
 - Can they identify which principles are being applied, and when?
 - What do the scenarios have in common? How are they different?
 - What worked? What didn't?
 - How could the examples that didn't work be improved?

Give students several opportunities to practice applying the guidelines within different situations in a case-study format in conditions that are the same as or as close as possible to the conditions they'll experience.

Provide helpful, supportive feedback as they work through their practice scenarios; ask other learners to help with assessment and feedback.

Chapter 9: Instructional Design Best Practices

“Practice is the best of all instructors.” - Publilius Syrus

An engaging course does not just happen. It requires careful planning using certain instructional design strategies to create a learner centered course. While we’ve covered instructional design strategies throughout this book, this chapter will focus on best practices most often used by instructional designers to create first rate training courses.

Use *Bulleted Lists* - Transform large text blocks into visually appealing bulleted lists. Use custom fonts, graphics and visual aids to make them even more powerful. Bold certain words or phrases that the student must remember. Remember to keep your lists simple. They should only contain essential information in order to avoid cognitive overwhelm. You can always add links for students to learn more about a certain item on the list.

Add *Creative Headers* - While subheaders tell learners it’s time to move on to the next subject, a header with a creative font or color helps set the tone for the subject you’re about to discuss. For example, a red, bold header tells the learner to pay attention and conveys a sense of urgency.

Provide *Side Note Tips and Tricks* - Instead of providing tips at the end of a lesson, provide special tips and tricks along the way. Side note hints provide better understanding and help clarify any confusion more quickly.

Take *Short Story Breaks* - Storytelling gives online learners the chance to connect with the subject on a deeper level. Real world examples put what they’re learning into context and simplifies the concept.

Include *Supplemental Resources* - You can help online learners connect with your subject more fully by providing additional resources that give them the opportunity to learn more or explore the topic further.

Highlight Important Quotes - Use creative fonts or pull quotes to emphasize key discussion points, facts or figures that you want your learners to remember. Make sure you're selective about choosing them, as too many highlighted points can cause informational overload.

Chunk Content - Break your topics into subtopics. Focus on one learning objective at a time and start another text block for every new idea.

Use Scenarios - Much like storytelling, scenarios make the content come to life. They help learners go through a decision process and think more deeply. By making scenarios interactive you engage and motivate learners. For example, if you are teaching a sales process, you could create a scenario of a salesperson trying to close a sale. This gives learners a chance to use the knowledge from the course

Include Challenging Quizzes - You've probably seen the all too often true or false quiz used in online courses. These are not challenging. When using quizzes, it's important to vary the question type and use open ended, multiple choice, matching, etc. It's also important to pose challenging questions so that the learner's understanding is truly measured.

Provide Quick Explanations and Feedback - By telling the learners why they are correct or incorrect, you motivate them to keep moving forward. Provide a brief explanation of the answer in order to reinforce the concept even further.

Provide Rewards - People love receiving recognition after putting forth effort. It engages them and fosters a sense of achievement. Something as simple as a certificate after completing a course helps learners feel satisfied and motivated.

Chapter 10: Instructional Design Models

“Quality is more important than quantity. One home run is much better than two doubles.” - Steve Jobs

The discipline known as “instructional design” originated during World War II, when the military developed training materials based on principles of instruction, learning and human behavior. After the success of these programs, psychologists began developing various instruction methods with specific strategies to accomplish different learning outcomes. The model for much of today’s instructional design models came from B.F. Skinner’s 1954 article titled “The Science of Learning and the Art of Teaching.” Skinner suggested that instructional materials should allow for self-pacing and include small steps, frequent questions and immediate feedback.

Since then, the practice of instructional design has evolved into what we see today with the integration of technology, the internet and interactive elearning. In fact, many universities have established undergraduate and graduate degrees in technology centered methods of designing and delivering education. According to Branch and Merrill (2002), there are several characteristics that should be present in all instructional design models:

- Learner Centered - The learner and his/her performance are the focal point.
- Goal Oriented - Well defined goals are essential.
- Focused on Real World Performance - Helps learners perform the behaviors that will be expected of them in the real world.
- Outcome Focused - Must lead to outcomes that can be measured in a reliable and valid way. Creating valid and reliable measurement instrument is essential.
- Empirical - Data is at the heart of the process.

- Team Effort - The process to create results oriented courses involves teamwork.

There are several instructional design models that are used to organize information into effective learning experiences. These models provide a framework on how to guide and plan the overall process of creating a course. Some of the most widely accepted instructional design models are:

- ADDIE
- Dick & Carey
- Assure
- Kemp Design Model
- The Kirkpatrick Model

Let's review each of the models to understand their similarities and differences.

The ADDIE Model

Originally developed in 1975 for the U.S. Military, educators and Instructional Designers have widely used The ADDIE Model as a basis for designing and developing educational and training programs. ADDIE stands for Analysis, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate. When following this model, course creators today are not necessarily expected to follow a strict linear progression through these steps. Most people use variations of the model and view it as a cycle that can be continually refined. This approach is useful because its clearly defined stages help training to be more effective. The influence of The ADDIE Model can be seen in most of the instructional design models being used today. The 5 phases of ADDIE are as follows:

Phase 1 - Analysis

The Analysis phase is considered the goal setting stage. This is the stage involves defining your target audience and ensuring that the program matches

the skill level and educational level of your audience. It's important to understand the audience so that what they already know won't be duplicated and that the focus will be on topics that students have yet to explore and learn. In this phase, instructors distinguish between what the students already know and what they should know after completing the course.

Phase 2 - Design

The Design phase plans the strategy for the course design. It determines goals, identifies how to assess performance and the resources that will be used. The focus is on writing learning objectives, developing the content, analyzing the subject matter, lesson planning, assessment tools to be used and selecting media.

Phase 3 - Development

The Development phase starts putting the previous two phases into action. Instructional designers use the data collected from the two previous stages to create a program that fits the needs of the participants. This phase includes writing, production and evaluation.

Phase 4 - Implementation

The Implementation phase continuously modifies the program to ensure it achieves maximum efficiency and positive results. Instructional designers strive to redesign, update, and edit the course to make sure it can be delivered effectively. The majority of work in this phase is continually revising and evaluating for further improvement. Effective courses are never implemented in isolation. Through feedback from instructional designers and participants, much can be learned and addressed.

Phase 5 - Evaluation

The final stage of the ADDIE method is Evaluation. The course now goes through meticulous final testing to determine was accomplished and how. The main goal of the evaluation phase is to determine if the goals have been met and to establish what will be required moving forward.

The Dick & Carey Model

The Dick & Carey is much more detailed with more phases. It focuses on the delivery of the content itself, rather than on how to make the lesson plans. It is not as linear as the ADDIE model, and it includes revision throughout. The Dick & Carey Model consists of the following 10 phases:

Phase 1 - Instructional Goals

Phase 2- Instructional Analysis

Phase 3 - Entry Behaviors and Learner Characteristics

Phase 4 - Performance Objectives

Phase 5 - Criterion Referenced Test Items

Phase 6- Instructional Strategy

Phase 7 - Instructional Materials

Phase 8 - Formative Evaluation

Phase 9 - Revision

Phase 10 - Summative Evaluation

Clear and measurable learning objectives must be identified in order to use this model. Without them, this model could not be used effectively.

The ASSURE Model

The ASSURE Model is focused on designing and developing the most appropriate learning environment for students. The following is a breakdown of each step:

A – Analyze Learners

The first step is to analyze the attributes of learners. The information

gathered will help in the decisions for the other steps in the process.

S – State Standards and Objectives

After the analysis of the learner attributes, it's time to state the standards and objectives for the lesson. You specify what the learners will be able to do as a result of the instruction.

It will focus on what the learner will know or be able to do as a result of the instruction. For example, the learners will be able to name at least two databases and two search techniques that they can use to locate medical evidence for particular cases. The objectives can be used to assess the success of the students. You can also use them to let the learners know what they will accomplish through the class.

S – Select Strategies, Technology, Media, and Materials

Once you have determined your learning objectives, it's necessary to pick instructional strategies, technology, and media that will facilitate the results that you want. You'll first need to determine which delivery method will be best for your course. How much of your instruction will be instructor centered and how much will be student centered? Will they be lecture, demonstration or video? If they're more student centered, a group discussion. Once you select your teaching strategy, then it's time to figure out which technology, media, and materials best support the method of teaching that you're using. This ranges from simple tools such as chalk and blackboard to more sophisticated ones such as power-point presentations.

U – Utilize Technology, Media, and Materials

How you will utilize the technology, media, and materials that you have selected? As with all of the steps, make sure that your plans contribute towards producing the objectives that you have identified.

E – Evaluate and Revise

In the final step you evaluate the impact of your teaching on learning. This includes an evaluation of your teaching strategies and the technology,

media, and materials that you used. The final step focuses on feedback from students. Was their experience positive? Do they feel that they have reached your objectives and their own personal objectives? How will you determine whether or not your performance was effective?

The Kemp Design Model

The Kemp Design model adopts a circular structure and is an innovative approach to instructional design with a non-linear structure and interrelated components. The 9 core elements of the model are interdependent rather than independent. This allows for more flexibility because you can begin the design process at any of the 9 phases, rather than being constrained to work in a linear fashion. Depending on the process, a number of phases can be addressed simultaneously, while some phases may not be needed at all. This makes the design process more cyclical and open to ongoing revisions and adjustments. The learning objectives, must be considered along with the needs and characteristics of the learner, the content and activities, resources and support services, and learner assessment tools.

The 9 core elements of the Kemp Design Model are:

1. Determine the specific goals and identify potential areas for instruction
2. Identify characteristics of learners to be considered during the planning process
3. Clarify course content, and analyze the tasks involved
4. Define instructional objectives and desired learning outcomes
5. Ensure that content for each instructional unit is sequential and logical
6. Design instructional strategies for learners to achieve desired learning outcomes
7. Plan the instructional message and the appropriate mode of delivery
8. Develop evaluation tools to measure and assess learners' progress
9. Choose appropriate resources to support learning activities

The Kirkpatrick Model

The Kirkpatrick Model is one of the best known models for analyzing and evaluating the results of training. It has been used for over 30 years by many types of organizations for training evaluations. It takes into account any style of training to determine aptitude. It's based on four levels of criteria:

Level 1 - Reaction

This level evaluates how individuals react to the training model by asking questions that discover the learners' thoughts. Questions determine if participants enjoyed their experience, and if they found the material in the program useful. This form of evaluation is typically referred to as a "smile sheet." It helps improve for the future and helps determine how invested they will be in learning the next level. Even though an optimistic reaction does not ensure learning, an unfavorable one makes it less likely that the learner will pay attention to the training.

Level 2 - Learning

Evaluating at this level measures how much expertise, or knowledge participants gained from the course. This is far more challenging and time consuming compared to level one. Techniques vary from informal to formal tests and self-assessment to team assessment. Ideally, individuals take the evaluation prior to the training and following the training to determine how much the participant comprehended.

Level 3 - Behavior

This level analyzes the differences in the participant's behavior after completing the program and starts 3–6 months after training. Assessing the change makes it possible to learn if the knowledge or skills the program taught are being used. For the majority of people this offers the truest evaluation of a program's usefulness. However, testing is challenging since it is generally impossible to anticipate when a person will begin to properly utilize what they've learned. This makes it more difficult to determine when and how often to evaluate a participant.

Level 4 - Results

Often regarded as the primary goal of the program, this level determines the overall success of the training. For example, in business settings, it measures reduced spending, higher returns on investments, improved quality of products, less accidents in the workplace, greater efficiency, and higher sales.

Conclusion

The world of adult learning and training is constantly evolving. People have many choices today on how they access training - whether it's from their computer or mobile device, in a classroom, or through individual coaching. They can customize their learning according to their unique needs and on their own schedule. That's why quality training is essential.

The instructional design concepts presented in the book are by no means exhaustive. There is a great deal of research in the field of training and development, e-learning and instructional design available to draw from. My goal was to provide you a solid foundation of time tested principles to build into your course, make it more effective, and ultimately, make a difference in the lives of your students. The online learning marketplace has created new opportunities for subject matter authorities to generate income in a new way. Hopefully this book has helped you learned how to create a quality course that will help make this possible.

Join The Mighty Online Creators Community

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I'd love to see you there!

Appendix

Outsourcing Tools

There may be times when you need to outsource or use off the shelf tools for some of the elements of your course design.

For outsourcing copywriting, video production, graphic design, and more:

- Upwork
- Fiverr
- CrowdSpring
- 99Designs
- Scripted
- Rev

Audio and visual resources that you can use in your courses:

- Google Images
- iStockPhoto
- PicJumbo
- Pexels
- 123RF
- Videvo
- Flickr Creative Commons
- Stock.XCHNG

- [WikiMedia Commons](#)
- [Music Bakery](#)
- [Audio Jungle](#)
- [Epidemic Sound](#)
- [FreeSound](#)
- [Google Music](#)

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As a copywriter and instructional designer, Sandra has been writing content for businesses since 1987. Her specialty: long-form content such as ebooks, authority guides, white papers, and training courses. While earning her Bachelor's degree in Business at Pepperdine University, she could not ignore her passion for writing. In the midst of economics, finance, and accounting, she also studied public relations, business writing, and creative nonfiction writing. After college, she worked in the corporate world as an Instructional Designer, writing and designing training courses. She went on to write advertising copy, web content, blog posts and courses for both large and small companies — leading her to start Writerrr.com.

Books By This Author

[The Author Effect: Write a Book for Your Business and Become an Industry Authority](#)

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