

Design Strategies: Course Setup

Design consistent modules – Prevent the whiplash experience that occurs when students—moving through a sequence of modules within a course—re buffeted by an unpredictable sequence of pedagogical designs, colors, navigation schemes, icons, writing styles, backgrounds, layouts, sound levels, media, and test questions. In developing course modules, the following should be standardized:

- Visual appearance
- Navigation schemes
- Instructional strategies
- Testing approaches

All courses will be designed as facilitated – Student sets pace, and the facilitator (instructor) monitors the progress (with the exception of setting deadlines).

Titles are crucial – The title is the first part of the module that students read. A good title efficiently tells the student what the module will cover. The title should match the course objectives (accreditation).

Introduction – A good introduction welcomes and orients the student. It helps the student see how the module relates to the previous module and to the course as a whole. It also serves as the hook to interest the student and provide the rationale for why they need to learn this material. Keep the introduction as short as possible. A good introduction does the following:

- Provides enough of a preview that students understand what the module will cover (list the learning objectives).
- Sets the context for the rest of the content within the module. Prepares students to interpret what they will read, see, and hear.
- Motivates deeper study.

Engagement by design – Following is a list of learning activities:

- **Intro Video** – Gives the student a glimpse at what they will be learning and doing in the module. This is written after the module has been created, so that it can be tailored to the activities within the module.
- **Readings** – A decision needs to be made in regards to what needs to be read prior to the pre-activities check.
 - **Textbook** – A selection of pages the student needs to read from the course textbook.
 - **Supplemental** – Information supplied by the instructor or SME for additional reading. It should be information that is not found in the textbook. This is downloaded or viewed from the Learning Management System (LMS) as a PDF.
 - **Insight** – A story that gives the student a more personal look at an aspect of the lesson. Created as a PDF.
 - **Web Links** – A link to a website. This should be accomplished by a paragraph that describes what the student is looking to learn from the site.

Pre-activities check – A series of questions that tests the student’s knowledge of the textbook and other readings, if required prior to beginning the module. The types of questions supported at this time are multiple choice, true/false, matching, and numerical answer.

- The content for the questions should come from the performance objectives created by the instructor or SME. The questions should come from Knowledge (remembering) and Integration (understanding) learning level.

Learning activities – The concepts for the type of learning activity that will need to be developed comes from the performance objectives created by the instructor or SME. Activities generally support higher-order thinking skills that come from Synthesis (analyzing), Evaluating, and Creating (caring) learning level.

- ***Activity Briefing Meeting*** – Developed by the instructor or SME, which describes the objective for the activity, the learning level, and learning strategy.
- ***Activity Briefing Meeting*** – This involves the instructional designer, graphic development team, and instructor or SME to begin the development phase of the learning activity.

Activities (Unique)

- ***Engaged Player*** – This refers to the window that plays the Flash activities.
- ***Interactive Game, Guided Learning*** – An activity that engages the student by allowing them to explore the activity with mouse clicks, dragging, etc. Format is SWF.
- ***Video*** – This is a movie that is created using AfterEffects, Final Cut, live footage, etc. (not Flash). Format is FLV or F4V.

Reusable Activities – These are components that can be used for learning that do not have to be created uniquely. These are built as templates that are quick to create. Examples: Crossword, Object Identifier, Slide Show, Jeopardy, Concentration, Timeline, and Gallery.

- Activities (native)
- Assignments
- Discussion (refer to the Discussion Design Strategy)
- Chat
- Wiki

Post-Activity Review – This is a review of the module in the form of a quiz or test. The answers are usually multiple choice, true or false, matching, and numerical.

- A majority of the questions will come from the activities, additional reading, and performance objectives not used in the pre-activities check.

Assessment – Ensure that there is alignment of the performance objectives (outcomes) with the learning activities.