



Preparation of Distance- Learning Course

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“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

— ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Three Key Questions

Why are you attending today?

What do you hope to learn?

How do you aspire to utilize this knowledge?

SMART Analysis

S – Specific

M – Measurable

A – Assignable

R – Realistic

T – Time-bound

Specific

Your plan needs to be specific as possible.

Questions to be asked/answered:

What type of courses do you wish to offer?

What are your main goals? (Are you preparing learners for specific posts? Exams? Etc.?)

How many learners do you envisage participating in your program?

For how long will your program run? (Is it a one-time thing? Will it be repeated? Will it be continuous?)

How often will the trainings occur, and for how many hours will they last?

Measurable

You need to establish measurable targets so you can track progress and success.

How will your learners' progress be measured? (By examination? By certification?)

Do you consider participation to be a factor?

If yes, at which level is this achieved and by which factors (number of students, number of courses/number of learners/attendance)?

Assignable

The responsibilities/roles required to implement your project must be covered.

Do you already have the people required to cover each role?

Will you have to hire people? How many? Where can you locate them?

Are there roles which can be doubled?

Are all the roles required for your specific project to succeed?

Who will be responsible for what?

Who will coordinate with participants and trainers?

Who will handle any IT issues?

Who will create the materials?

Who will manage the trainers?

Who will pay for it? ;)

Realistic

Is this even possible?

Are there enough resources, both in terms of financial and human capital, for success?

Is there enough demand (interest) in the program?

Time-bound

Temporal limits must be established.

When would you like to start?

How long will the courses/program last?

By when should you have all roles assigned?

By when should your trainers be prepared to begin?

When should you pre-test the learners, if necessary?

When should registration start?

When should the groups be formed?

By when should your trainers and learners have completed their registration on the LMS?

What is an LMS?

A learning management system (LMS) is a software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, assessing, automation, and delivery of educational courses, training programs, or learning and development programs.

Popular examples include Moodle, Blackboard, Edmodo, Google Classroom, and Canvas.

Can we manage without one? --- Yes, but...

Communication and Monitoring will be missing.

What are the pros and cons of utilizing an LMS? (Going Online)

Pros:

Major advantages of LMS: interoperability, accessibility, reusability, durability, maintenance ability and adaptability, which in themselves constitute the concept of LMS. --- There are also other benefits such as time/financial/ecological factors, especially when larger distances between individuals are involved.

Cons:

Trainers must be willing to adapt their curricula from face-to-face to online encounters.

There is the potential for instructors to try to directly translate existing support materials into courses which can result in very low interactivity and engagement for learners if not done well.

Open-Source vs Proprietary LMS

Proprietary LMS: The defining feature of all proprietary LMS platforms is the licensing fees (paying per # of users) and 'closed code'. Subscriptions and license fees are required for access. These are normally paid on an annual basis, alongside other fees related to maintenance. --- Basically, it has all the bells and whistles, but with a cost (customization/add-ons). Safer via updates. Sometimes, they offer far more than is required.

Open-Source LMS: eLearning on an open-source platform is all about combining individual control with cost-efficiency. Open-source systems are freely distributed without licensing fees, can be run in-house, and maintained by the users themselves. This model has a number of distinct advantages, including the ability to create a truly bespoke, optimized learning platform. In addition, new functionalities or upgrades can be implemented immediately and for free, which is something not covered by every proprietary subscription. Security upgrades can be less frequent and some things may require an IT-type to implement.

LMS: External or Internal Server?

One question:

Does the training organization have the technical means AND a good enough working relationship with in-house IT to make it work?

A look at 2 LMS platforms:

Canvas vs. Edmodo

Which LMS is SMARTer?

Do you need a combine to mow your lawn?



Web Conferencing Solutions

Zoom

Google Meet

MS Teams

The keys:

Zoom: easily integrates with Canvas and is simple to navigate breakout rooms and whiteboards.

Meet: no private messages, needs Jamboard extension

Teams: wasn't designed for this, issues with "guests", file system issues, requires 365, private chat

Roles

There are two types of roles:

Pedagogical and Organizational.

The skills required here are not always useful in conventional training.

The roles needed will depend on the size, content and number of courses.



Pedagogical Roles

Subject-matter Trainer: The “content creator” who develops materials, lessons, tests, etc. from their area of expertise. --- Trainers with a broad understanding of the subject.

Course Designer: Works with the Subject-matter trainer (SMT) to understand training objectives, target audience, and convert face-2-face to the online environment. Proposes strategies and materials. Specialists in online techniques with good interpersonal skills in order to collaborate with SMTs.

Media Creator/Editor: Develops interactive online resources such as web pages, videos, etc. based on information provided by Course Designer



Organizational Roles



Course Administrator:

Manages enrolment, keeps records/statistics, communicates between parties

Tech Support Specialist:

- 1) Tech tutors
- 2) Pedagogical tutors
- 3) Administrative tutors
- 4) Colleague tutors (former students who finished program)

GDPR & Security

- E-learning systems run as projects and all projects have security risks
- All new systems introduce new threats
- **Trust** in the new system is **key** to user acceptance
- Always consult IT before installing
- EU-based institutions may use software and tools hosted in other countries as long as the platforms hold EU data protection approval (GDPR)
- Since the start of the pandemic, LMS and Web Conferencing firms have (mostly) become totally GDPR compliant. It requires a simple check.

Your turn:

You will now be given two scenarios to work on with colleagues. They contain some vague and some specific targets for an online educational program. Can you identify what is missing? How could you make it more SMART?