

eLearning Course Writing Foundations

Module 1: Our Company and Our Process

Introduction to Our Company

[Proprietary Image Removed] 

Congratulations on receiving a contract as a content expert with Our Company!

We have developed this online course to help you learn our processes and procedures as well as to learn or review how to write an outstanding online course for adult learners.

This course is divided into four modules, each with a short quiz.

Start Tabs Interactive

Title: Module 1

Content: Introduction to Our Company

Title: Module 2

Content: Course Development

Title: Module 3

Content: Adult Learning

Title: Module 4

Content: Online Learning 

End Tabs Interactive

Prior to beginning course writing, you must complete all four sections and receive 100% on all four quizzes.

In this module, you will complete the following pages:

- Overview of Our Company
- Our Company's Content Expert Process



[Logo Image Removed]  **Overview of Our Company**

Click on the tabs to learn about Our Company.

Start Accordion Interactive

Tab Title: Who We Are

Content: Our Company is a provider of educational services and infrastructure with highly competitive pricing and service levels with unsurpassed integrity, transparency, and care. Whether you need a

simple consultation, managed services, or a turnkey fully outsourced solution, Our Company can support your company, division, or university to get started with a customized and cost-effective approach that ideally suits your needs. We help take education to a broader level to partner with businesses, organizations, and educational providers and institutions to meet the demands of current and future workforce needs. We draw upon the expertise and insights of our vast network of experts, incorporate the most advanced and efficient technology solutions available, and can provide credentialed faculty and proven experts to facilitate effective learning for online and adult learners.

Tab Title: What We Do

Content: Our Company provides customized, cost-effective educational services and infrastructure to support organizations. Whether they need expert consultation to determine the next best steps to meet their education and training goals, managed services in elearning, online learning technology, or a turnkey fully-outsourced solution, we can deliver practical and innovative solutions.

- Curriculum Development and Instructional Design
- Organizational Training
- Educational Technology
- Support and Consulting Services



Tab Title: Our Curriculum Team Structure

Content: A typical course development project leverages the combined expertise of a variety of professionals, including all of the following:

- Content Expert
- Instructional Designer
- Project Manager
- Multimedia Designer
- Quality Assurance Specialist



As the content expert, you work closely with an instructional designer to develop the course content and documentation. The project manager coordinates, schedules, and oversees timelines and deliverables. Once the course documentation is approved, the quality assurance specialist proofreads/edits it. Then, the multimedia designer converts everything for loading into the learning management system and then builds the course. Once it is loaded, all team members will have a chance to review it in its final state in the learning management system.

End Accordion Interactive



Our Content Expert Process

The following outline provides you with a step by step guide of the process you will follow as a content expert (CE). Note that some details may change based on the type of project it is. What is included here pertains to course development with our typical corporate/organizational clients.

Start Tabs Interactive

1. Our Company  agrees on contract and course parameters with your organization
2. Our Company works with your organization to appoint content experts to each contracted course and establish timelines
3. CE completes this Content Expert Training course in TalentLMS (Our Company's learning management system)
4. Kickoff call – A virtual conference occurs with all involved in the development project. Following brief introductions/overviews of the course requirements, the following is discussed:
 - a. Project team members and responsibilities
 - b. Course structure
 - b.i. A non-academic course is usually 3 modules in length
 - b.ii. Each module should take an hour or less to complete
 - b.iii. Each module will usually have 3 pages, 1-2 interactive activities, and a quiz/assessment
 - c. Course content details/requirements

- d. Deliverables and timelines
 - d.i. Course outline/map
 - d.ii. Course modules' content
 - d.iii. Quizzes, other assessments, misc. course materials
 - d.iv. Deliverable dates
5. CE receives templates and development materials
6. CE completes and submits outline/map to instructional designer (ID) for review
 - a. CE edits map as necessary based on feedback
 - b. It is recommended that the CE submits deliverables prior to deadlines in order to allow time to implement pressing issues identified by ID
7. Course outline/map is approved
8. CE completes and submits module scripts one at a time to instructional designer (ID)
 - a. CE edits them as necessary based on feedback
 - b. CE and ID work together to develop scripts for interactive activities
 - b.i. See the [H5P website](#) for the various options of ways to bring content to life
9. Module scripts and corresponding interactive activities are approved
10. CE completes and submits any miscellaneous required documentation, which can include presentations, tests, custom videos, etc.
11. Our Company QA team reviews and edits all course documentation
12. Our Company multimedia team builds the course in the learning management system
13. All stakeholders perform a final review of the finished product
 - a. All parties submit QA results and/or edits
 - b. Final edits are made
14. Completed eLearning course is delivered to client.

End Tabs Interactive

Congratulations! You have reached the end of Section 1. When you are ready, take the Module 1 Quiz.

- **Module 1 Quiz** 

Module 2: Course Development

Introduction to Course Development



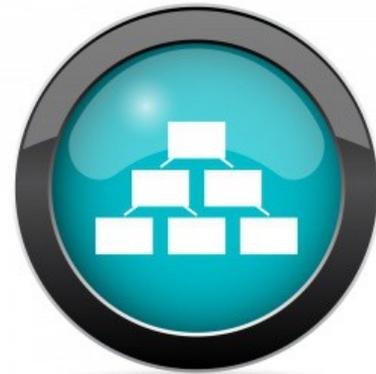
This module will provide an explanation of fundamental components of course development

After you complete the following pages, you will take a short quiz:

- Course Structure
- Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Course Structure

Course structure is often overlooked when developing online courses. Just as bridges need structural engineering, learning programs need structures most conducive for learning. All organizations want a return on their investments. Training and development programs require an investment of time, money, and personnel resources. Therefore, the goal is to provide effective learning experiences that produce positive results.



As you will see on the next page, there are various levels of learning. As a course writer, you want to facilitate the highest levels of learning possible to produce valuable results. Research has shown that strategically structuring a course can dramatically improve the quantity and quality of learning. Fundamental components of course structure include chunking and scaffolding.

Start Tabs Interactive

Tab Title: Chunking

Content: Chunking refers to the segmentation of the learning content into smaller, meaningful components. You are literally turning a pile of information into chunks of related content. Learning about each concept in a chunk allows for association in the brain, which enhances long-term recall. Watch the video to learn more about chunking:

Title: Chunking – A Learning Technique

URL: <https://youtu.be/hydCdGLAh00>

Embed: `<iframe width="425" height="239" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/hydCdGLAh00" frameborder="0" allow="autoplay; encrypted-media" allowfullscreen></iframe>`

Source: Sprouts. (2017, January 21). Chunking – A Learning Technique. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/hydCdGLAh00>

Tab Title: Scaffolding

Content: Scaffolding builds on the concept of chunking by aligning the chunks into a progressive sequence.

Scaffolding refers to a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process... When teachers scaffold instruction, they typically break up a learning experience, concept, or skill into discrete parts, and then give students the assistance they need to learn each part. For example, teachers may give students an excerpt of a longer text to read, engage them in a discussion of the excerpt to improve their understanding of its purpose, and teach them the vocabulary they need to comprehend the text before assigning them the full reading. ("Scaffolding," 2015, par. 1-2)

Watch the video to learn about four types of scaffolding that you can include in your course:

Title: Instructional Design – Scaffolding

URL: <https://youtu.be/b5Bj3aZWchl>

Embed: `<iframe width="425" height="239" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/b5Bj3aZWchl" frameborder="0" allow="autoplay; encrypted-media" allowfullscreen></iframe>`

Source: CIRT Lab. (2015, January 22). TOL6100 – Instructional Design – Scaffolding. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/b5Bj3aZWchl>

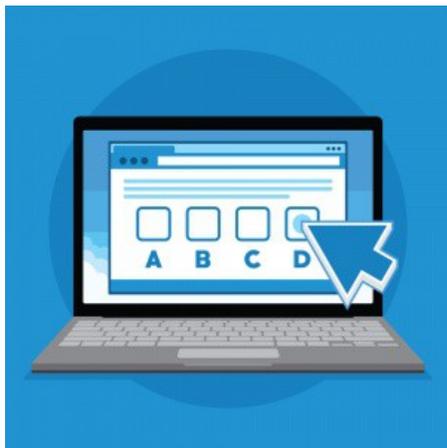
End Tabs Interactive

Another critical component of online course structure concerns length and timing. Unless your organization is paying your employees for full days of training, you will want your courses to be concise. A non-academic online course should have modules that can be completed in an hour or less. You as the content expert will often have much more useful content that you want to convey, but you must refrain from cognitive overload (giving the learner so much information that he/she cannot effectively retain and use it). When people try to drink from a firehose, they actually swallow very little of it.

Reference:

Scaffolding. (2015, April 6th). The Glossary of Education Reform. Retrieved from <https://www.edglossary.org/scaffolding/>

Learning outcomes and assessment



As a content expert writing education materials, you will need a solid understanding of standard academic conventions. As previously mentioned, the goal of any educational project is to produce learning results. This requires asking and answering two fundamental questions:

1. What should participants/students learn?
2. How will we know if/when this learning has occurred?

The answers to these questions produce two critical elements in training and development:

1. Learning Outcomes/Objectives
2. Assessments

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes explicitly state what the participant/student will be able to do as a result of completing the educational material. A course on bicycle riding may have the following learning outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

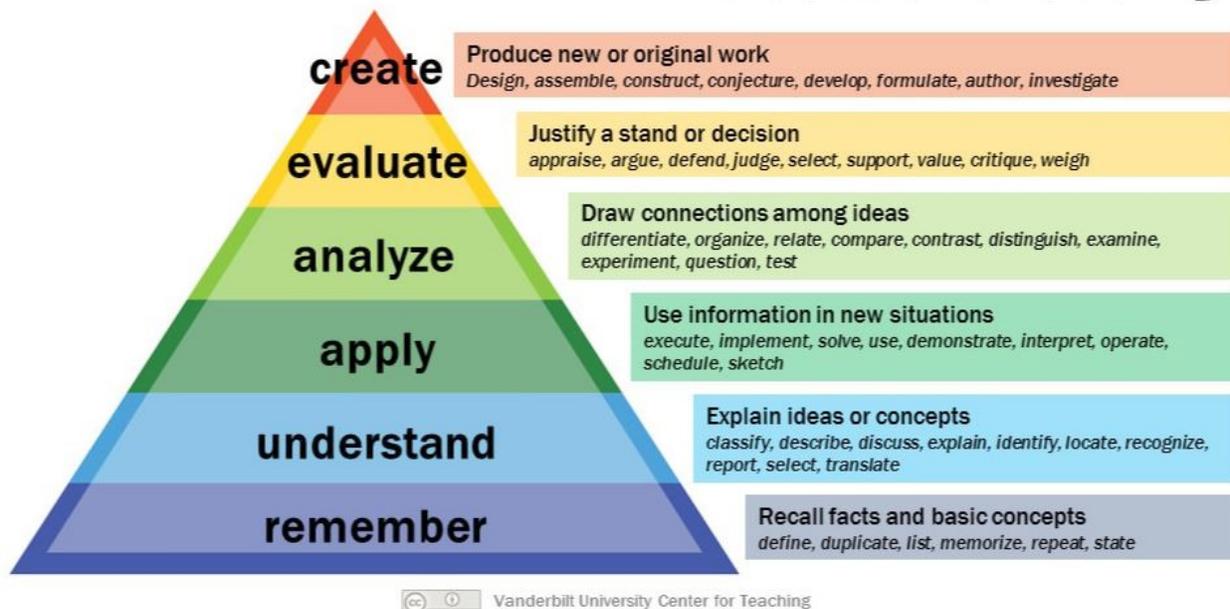
1. Describe the components of a 21-speed bicycle.

2. Explain the 5 major bicycle safety guidelines.
3. Operate a bicycle independently over a distance of 50 meters.

The first key to a quality learning outcome is the primary verb. In the examples above, Describe, Explain, and Operate are the primary verbs. They explicitly state what the student will be able to do. The verbs selected can span various levels of critical thinking. A great framework for this is Benjamin Bloom's Learning Taxonomy. It specifies 6 levels of learning, each successive level requiring higher order thinking than the previous. This is useful because the outcomes must be geared for the learning levels of the audience. Younger students or those just being introduced to the material should have lower levels of critical thinking. Advanced learners will need higher levels.

Take a look at Bloom's Taxonomy. It shows the 6 levels along with corresponding outcome verbs:

Bloom's Taxonomy



It is a best practice to use one primary verb per learning outcome/objective in order to effectively assess it.

Assessment

The second key to writing a quality learning outcome is tying it to the method of assessment. The word "assessment" can refer to a variety of things in education. There are many forms and types of assessment. Program assessment is a holistic evaluation of an entire program regarding its performance in producing the program outcomes. For the sake of this training, student assessment is more relevant. The results of student assessment show how well the student met the associated learning outcome. The assessment needs to be tailored to the outcome, specifically the primary verb used in the outcome.

Resuming our bicycle riding course example, how could we craft corresponding assessments to measure the learning outcomes? Click the following cards to see corresponding assessments for the stated learning outcomes:

ECW101_Dialog_Cards_Mod2_P2.docx

One last element of assessment concerns the two major types used in assessing learning outcomes.

ECW101_Presentation_Mod2_P2.docx

Congratulations! You have reached the end of Section 2. When you are ready, take the Section 2 Quiz.

- Section 2 Quiz
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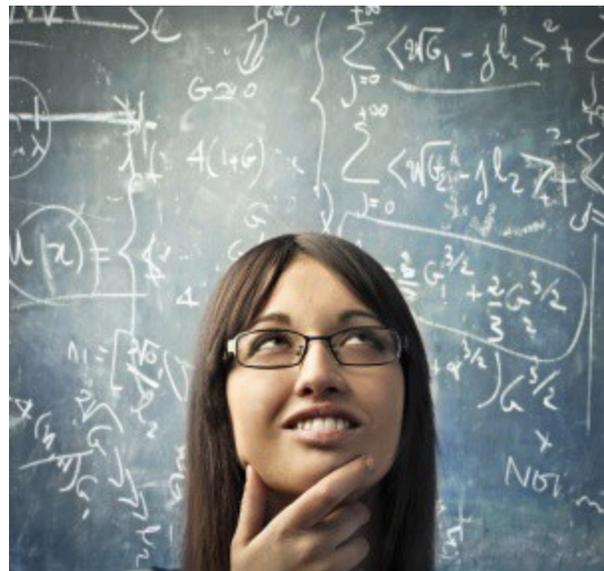
Module 3: Adult Learning

Introduction

This section will provide an overview of the key tenets to adult learning.

After you complete the following pages, you will take a short quiz.

- Androgogy
- Critical Thinking



Androgogy

You have most likely heard the term “pedagogy” regarding the art/study of teaching children. Over the course of the 20th century, a new field emerged that focused on the instruction of adults. Research demonstrated that adults require a modified form of instruction. One leading researcher of adult instruction, Malcolm Knowles, popularized the term “androgogy” in contrast to “pedagogy”.

Over the course of several decades, Knowles produced the following list of learning preferences that distinguish adults from youth:

Title: Self-Directed

Content: Adults have the capacity for self-directed learning

Title: Experienced

Content: Adults possess the experience to which they can connect the learning

Title: Social Stage of Life

Content: Adults have learning needs that relate to their roles in society

Title: Problem-Centered and Immediate Application

Content: Adults possess the ability to benefit from problem-centered learning approaches and the immediate application of material

Title: Intrinsic Motivation

Content: Adults have the drive to learn more by internal factors than external ones

Title: Relevance

Content: Adults possess a heightened need to know why they should learn the material 

The following video helps explain these concepts:

Title: The Six Adult Learning Principles

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLJ7cRwKI-I>

Embed: `<iframe width="425" height="239" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/vLJ7cRwKI-I" frameborder="0" allow="autoplay; encrypted-media" allowfullscreen></iframe>`

Source: Smith, C. (2014, October 2). The Six Adult Learning Principles [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/embed/vLJ7cRwKI-I> 

It is critical for a course writer/content expert to understand the audience and tailor the instruction accordingly. Because your audience consists of adult learners, your course needs to integrate as many of the six characteristics as possible.

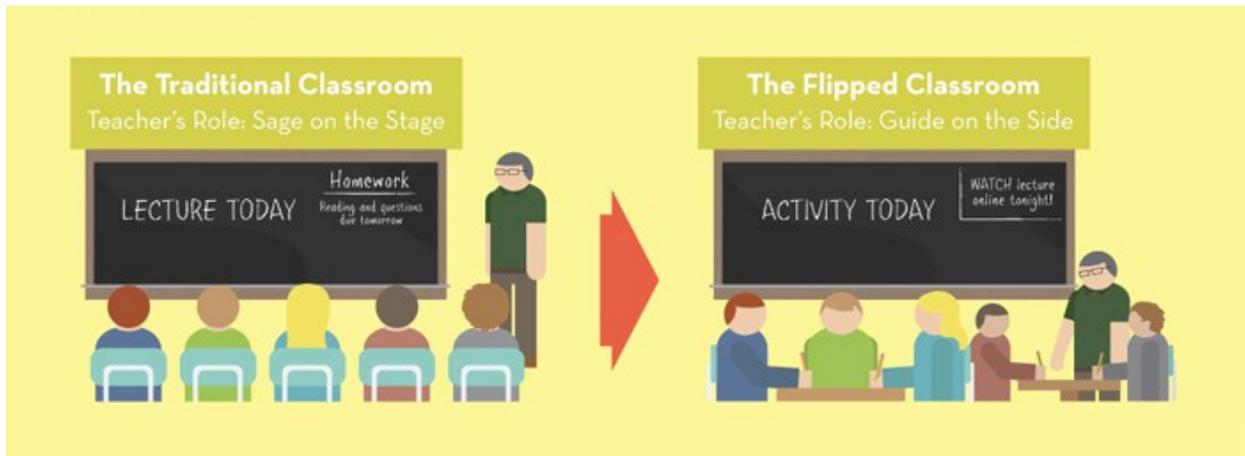
An additional concept to keep in mind regarding the distinctions between pedagogy and andragogy is represented in the following slogans regarding the role of the instructor:

Tab Title: Pedagogy

Content: Sage on the Stage

Tab Title: Andragogy

Content: Guide on the Side 



(Source: Suter, J. & Mangan, C. (2016, May). Blended, Hybrid, or Flipped Learning: Part II. Retrieved from <https://www.edupire.org/technology-blog-for-teachers/blended-hybrid-or-flipped-learning-part-ii/>)



Critical Thinking

Adult students should advance their learning beyond simple memorization. They should be able to internally process information and assimilate it with other information. They need to be able to create something new based on their unique application of the material. These are critical thinking skills (levels 4-6 of Bloom's Taxonomy).

As the course writer, you should develop assignments that require your learners to use critical thinking skills. This will help them learn the material better and train them to appropriately apply it.

Review the following article on critical thinking tools that are aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy:

Watanabe-Crockett, L. (2018, January 8). 26 critical thinking tools aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy. Retrieved from <https://globaldigitalcitizen.org/26-critical-thinking-tools-blooms-taxonomy>

Notice that there are specific assignment activities at each critical thinking level. This article/website is a great resource when devising assignments to ensure that they require the appropriate levels.

Take a few minutes to watch the following video on critical reflection:

Title: Learning styles & the importance of critical self-reflection

URL: <https://youtu.be/855Now8h5Rs>

Embed: <iframe width="425" height="239" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/855Now8h5Rs" frameborder="0" allow="autoplay; encrypted-media" allowfullscreen></iframe>

Source: Marshik, T. (2015, April 2). Learning styles & the importance of critical self-reflection [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/embed/855Now8h5Rs>

After viewing the video, jot down some notes on how you can stimulate critical reflection on key assignments in your course.

Congratulations! You have reached the end of Module 3. When you are ready, take the Module 3 Quiz.

- **Module 3 Quiz**
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Module 4: Online Learning

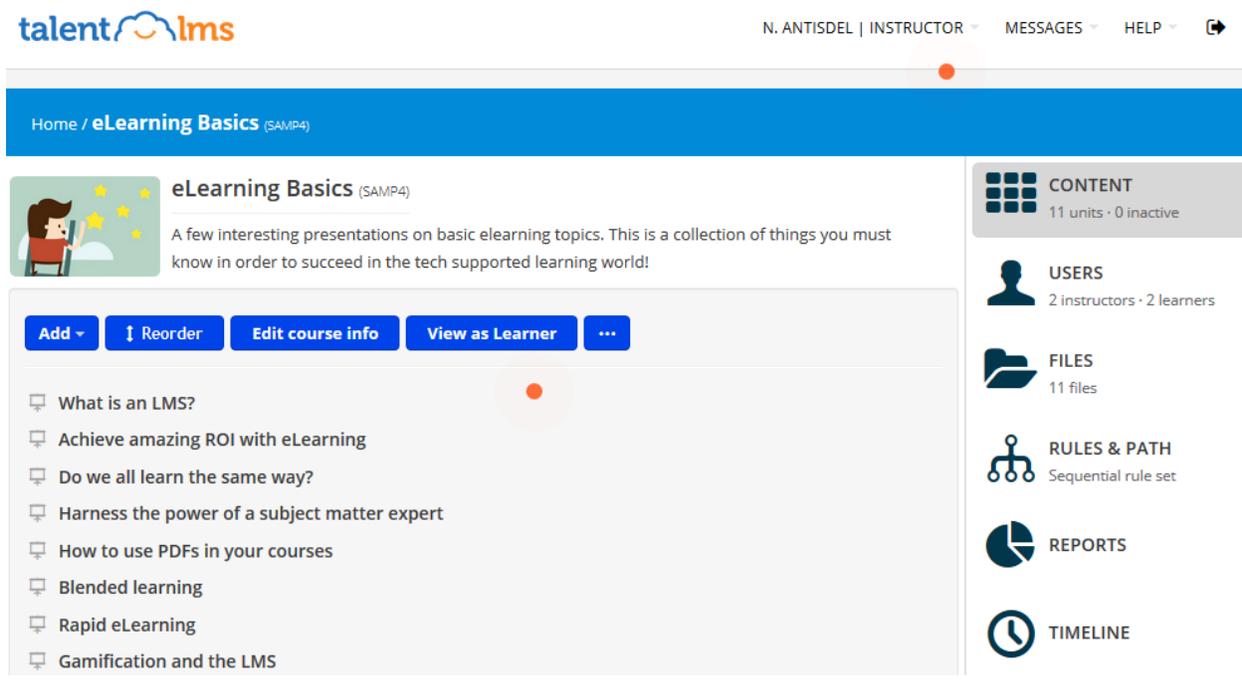
This section will provide an overview of the important concepts in online learning.

After you complete the following modules, you will take a short quiz.

- Learning Management Systems
- Instructional Technology
- Accessibility and the ADA



Learning Management Systems



The screenshot displays the TalentLMS interface. At the top, the logo 'talentlms' is on the left, and user information 'N. ANTISDEL | INSTRUCTOR' with 'MESSAGES' and 'HELP' links is on the right. Below this is a blue header bar with 'Home / eLearning Basics (SAMP4)'. The main content area features a course card for 'eLearning Basics (SAMP4)' with a description: 'A few interesting presentations on basic elearning topics. This is a collection of things you must know in order to succeed in the tech supported learning world!'. Below the description are buttons for 'Add', 'Reorder', 'Edit course info', 'View as Learner', and a menu icon. A list of course topics follows: 'What is an LMS?', 'Achieve amazing ROI with eLearning', 'Do we all learn the same way?', 'Harness the power of a subject matter expert', 'How to use PDFs in your courses', 'Blended learning', 'Rapid eLearning', and 'Gamification and the LMS'. On the right, a sidebar menu includes 'CONTENT' (11 units, 0 inactive), 'USERS' (2 instructors, 2 learners), 'FILES' (11 files), 'RULES & PATH' (Sequential rule set), 'REPORTS', and 'TIMELINE'. A yellow speech bubble icon is located to the right of the sidebar.

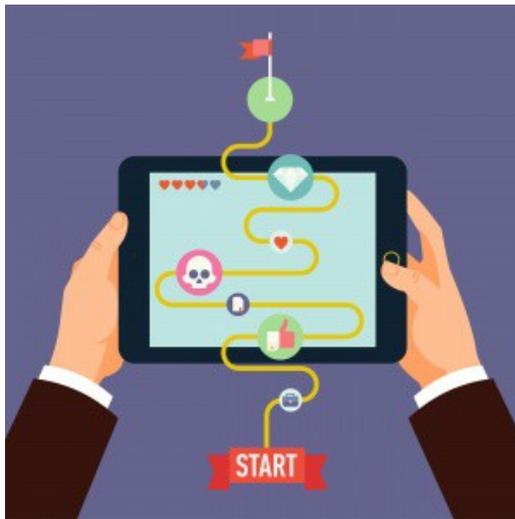
It is likely that most online courses you have ever taken used a Learning Management System (LMS). This course writer training uses the TalentLMS LMS. Other popular examples include Blackboard, Canvas, Desire2Learn, eCollege, Google Classroom, Moodle, Schoology, and 360Learning.

Learning Management System – Online application used to build, store, deploy, track, and evaluate eLearning initiatives.

There is a wide spectrum of capabilities built into the various LMS applications. Most include file/image repositories, grading systems, ability to integrate various forms of media, and the capacity to build distinct courses, modules, and assignments. As a course writer/content expert, you should familiarize yourself with functionality of the LMS that will house your course. This will help you better leverage the learning technologies to enhance optimal learning outcome achievement and minimize instructor requirements. Most university systems include the capacity to integrate grading rubrics, which helps with alignment, consistency, and student achievement. Most systems also include automated grading for many types of assessments.

Check with your Instructional Designer or perform a quick internet search to learn more about the LMS your course will use. Then build the course, interactive activities, assignments, and media accordingly to leverage the capabilities of the LMS.

Instructional Technology



Instructional Technology is a term that can apply to a wide variety of technologies used for educational purposes, including both hardware and software. Instructional technologies are rapidly changing the educational landscape at all levels of education and training. Many of these are used almost exclusively in eLearning. Because of the innovative and research-driven instructional technologies, learning outcome achievement in eLearning often exceeds those of traditional, in-seat alternatives.

Most of your course development will occur in word processing applications (like Microsoft Word or Google Docs). Some may also occur in other office applications, such as presentation software (like PowerPoint), or spreadsheet software (like Excel or Google Sheets). These are all forms of instructional technology.

Ambitious course writers will take their development a step further by using richer media, such as pre-recorded audiovisual presentations (videos). These videos can provide a more engaging method of conveying content to students in the LMS. When the content is conveyed visually, audibly, and textually (in the form of captions), students can learn more effectively than when just one method is used. Course writers can create educational videos with digital cameras, webcams, or even their phones. These videos can be produced in a variety of software applications such as Microsoft MovieMaker, Camtasia, Captivate; and web applications such as [YouTube](#), [Vimeo](#), [ScreenCast-o-matic](#), and [Zoom](#).

The most ambitious course developers can take it one step further by producing interactive videos, in which students interact with the content. The videos can include navigational options, practice scenarios, quizzes, games, and many other features that require students to engage with the video. Some screen capture applications have these capabilities built in, like Camtasia and Captivate. Others can link to interactive activities stored on other sites, such as through the use of [H5P](#). Our Company uses a variety of these methods to develop state-of-the-art, interactive videos.

Review the H5P Interactives Overview (pdf)  learn about the options you can build into your course.

Watch the following video on Instructional Technology:

Title: TLED Updates: Instructional Technology

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LteCNsdGYAw>

Embed: `<iframe width="425" height="239" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/LteCNsdGYAw" frameborder="0" allow="autoplay; encrypted-media" allowfullscreen></iframe>`

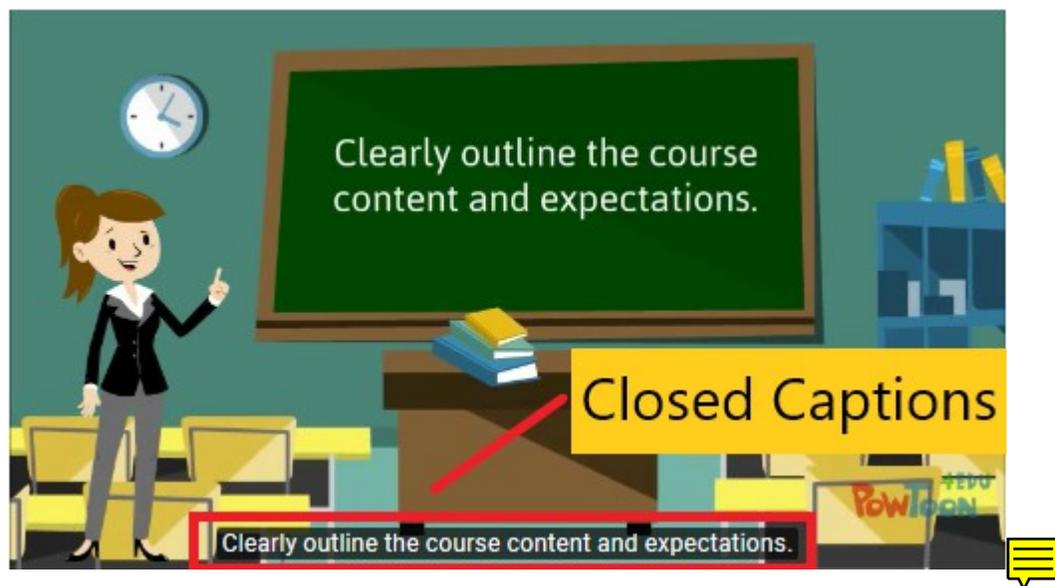
Source: ACC Teaching & Learning. (2018, April 4). TLED Updates: Instructional Technology. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LteCNsdGYAw> 

Accessibility and the ADA

In educational terms, “accessibility” refers to the ability of disabled people to complete the learning activities. Using the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a foundation, the government continuously mandates additional requirements for eLearning accessibility. In general, disabled learners must receive an equivalent educational experience.

Probably the two most common accessibility accommodations apply to visual and auditory impairments. For the low vision and blind learners, all educational materials must be readable by screen-reader technology (such as JAWS). Microsoft Office applications and Adobe now include automated accessibility checkers that identify all issues and provide tips on how to fix them so that low vision learners using screen-readers can understand the content and the flow of content on a page or slide. One key is to accurately label and describe all images in the alt txt field.

To help those with auditory impairments, transcripts or captions must accompany all audibly communicated content. This means that we need to include accurate closed captions (CC) on all videos. You may have seen the CC button on YouTube videos. In some cases, these captions are autogenerated and very inaccurate. Educational videos must reach about 99% accuracy in captioning (including punctuation). Autogenerated captions do not meet this standard.



For a greater understanding of the importance, benefits, and legislation surrounding captioning, review the following handbook: [A Captioning Handbook for Higher Education \(pdf\)](#).

There are a number of other disabilities that require accommodations in eLearning. Some of these pertain to brain disorders/injuries and require adjustments in the use of colors and contrasts. Fortunately, eLearning is already a great accommodation for many physical limitations related to mobility. eLearning can also accommodate those with learning disorders who need more time or differentiated instruction.

Review the following website for greater detail on accessibility requirements (you may want to bookmark it): [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#).

Watch the following one-minute tutorial on accessible eLearning:

Title: Accessible e-Learning

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBjQkF5ZrE0>

Embed: `<iframe width="425" height="239" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/YBjQkF5ZrE0" frameborder="0" allow="autoplay; encrypted-media" allowfullscreen></iframe>`

Source: Thiessen, T. (2015, December 1). Accessible e-Learning. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBjQkF5ZrE0> 

As mentioned in the video, a great strategy for accessibility is using Universal Design for Learning. Review the [CAST page on UDL, including their short video: UDL at a Glance](#).

Congratulations! You have reached the end of Module 4. When you are ready, take the Module 4 Quiz.

- **Module 4 Quiz** 
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