eLearning Options and Design – Supplemental PDF

Contents

Welcome to the supplemental PDF resource for the online self-guided lesson, *eL*earning Options and Design. It serves to provide 1) a printable summary of the content covered, and 2) activities for you to reflect on it, make strategy decisions, and practice the new knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Once you have completed the lesson and its activities, you can print this PDF and use it to lead a discussion with others at your organization about your eLearning strategy. You can either fill out the reflective activity fields by typing and then printing, or you can print first and then hand-write your responses and notes.

Highlighted CBA Provider

Meet Deborah, she is the Director of Capacity Building and Training at CBA Provider X, which supports faith-based institutions and health departments in the areas of program design, implementation and evaluation. To date, CBA Provider X has offered informational webinars on topics like program evaluation and HIV basics. However, they would like to offer more interactive and engaging training, such as on-demand lessons. We'll follow Deborah and CBA Provider X throughout this online lesson.

Purpose and Value

The purpose of the lesson is to build the capacity of you the CBA Providers to further support and empower your clients by designing and offering their own online learning materials. This self-guided lesson exploratory in nature – there are questions for reflection and practice, but no formal quizzes to pass. So what is the need for and value of eLearning from a CBA Provider's perspective?

- The ability to offer capacity building with a reduction in time, travel, & resources. This is especially important given the limited training resources of many organizations.
- Consistent delivery of instruction and learning, and
- Opportunities to support and enhance CBA efforts.
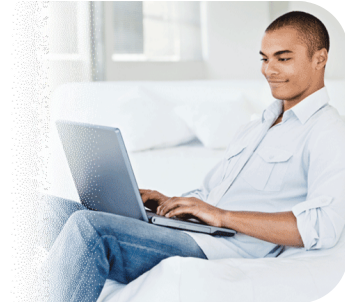
Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, learners will:
1. Review eLearning in general terms and identify types.
2. Determine best eLearning option(s), meeting the target audience's needs.
3. Recognize the importance of good eLearning design - to ensure the desired learning occurs.
4. Reflect on and practice using eLearning design strategies to create effective materials, increasing confidence.
5. Explore further resources to support online CBA efforts.

What is eLearning?

- eLearning includes all forms of electronically supported teaching and learning. In other words, it consists of learning experiences supported by technology tools.
- Fundamentally "e" is intended to denote electronic technologies. Most of the time this refers to the Internet, but can also include other electronic mediums, such as conference calls and phone SMS texting. They provide for degrees of speed, scale, and access that simply were not possible before.
- People often focus too much on the "e" technology and not enough on analysis and design to ensure the end goal – LEARNING.
- To ensure that the desired learning does occur, we use eLearning design, which we will cover in detail later on.
- The goal of eLearning is to create engaging learning environments that interest the learner, challenge her to think and reflect, and to practice new skills.
- It is important to remember that eLearning efforts are often part of a larger capacity building effort. eLearning can be combined with traditional face-to-face training, creating what is referred to as blended learning, which research shows to often be successful. More on this later.

Types of eLearning

eLearning environments can either be facilitated live by an instructor/facilitator, or accessed on-demand by the learner. Blended learning combines these eLearning environments with traditional face-to-face instruction.
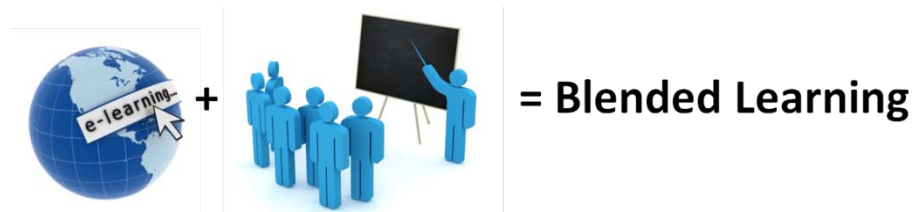
A. Live eLearning Environments

The most common live eLearning environment is the webinar. All CBA Providers are familiar with attending webinars, and many have hosted them. Webinars are essentially online conferences that allow for live group communication and collaboration through shared online visuals and audio. One can use free digital audio (VoIP) or pay for a phone-based conference line to be incorporated. The facilitator usually presents by walking through a PowerPoint presentation and/or sharing their screen and then responding to questions. However, it is possible to design and host more and interactive and collaborative webinars.

Common software tools are GoToMeeting and WebEx. An upside to webinars is that they tend to require less time and effort to prepare and run than on-demand eLearning lessons. A potential downside is difficulty scheduling a large numbers of learners—especially if they are in different time zones – and the need to repeat the presentation. For a good comparison of webinar tools see THIS article.

If you need something more like a virtual classroom, try GoToTraining or Blackboard Collaborate. They have additional features such as content libraries, breakout rooms, tests, and reports.

B. *On-Demand eLearning Environments*

The most common on-demand learning environment is the self-guided lesson or course that the learner can access online anytime, anywhere – like this one. We will be using the term lesson, not course. On-demand self-guided eLearning lessons allow for the consistent delivery of material to a large, geographically diverse audience, who can access them at their convenience. Lessons usually have multi-media, such as images, audio, and video. The absence of an instructor, however, means that the lessons need to be well designed so that the learner can process the new content alone. The time and effort needed to design and develop an eLearning lesson tends to be more than that needed for a live webinar. The good news is, though, is that once a lesson is built, it can be offered as many times as you like.

eLearning lessons are best suited when we want learners to change behavior and make better decisions. If the overall goal is "awareness" of new information that people can read, better solutions would be a broadcast email or informational PDF.

The last few years various user-friendly tools have made it easier and less expensive to create eLearning material in-house. This is often referred to as Rapid eLearning Design. You don't necessarily need a professional course developer or a tech-savvy programmer to create effective and informative eLearning anymore. While time and money can often be saved now on the actual building and development, good design is still essential and will largely determine whether the materials are useful and engaging. The best and most popular software for rapid eLearning development are Adobe Captivate, Lectora Inspire and Snap, and Articulate.

Two other types of on-demand eLearning that we will not be focusing on in this lesson are:

1. Recorded webinars, which can be made available to learner to replay and
2. Teacher-led courses, which are most often used for high-school, university, or certificate classes and follow a semester schedule. Teachers can post and students can access instructional content, students can upload their homework and take tests, and teachers can post grades. Also, students and teacher can communicate with email and share on discussion boards.
   - o Moodle is the largest and most popular free, open-source platform for teacher-led courses, and
   - o Blackboard is the largest private, pay one.

C. Blended Learning

As we discussed earlier, blended learning refers to a combination of traditional face-to-face and online learning environments. For example, one might want to take an existing in-person workshop or training of, let's say, 4 days, and shorten it to two days, saving money on travel and hotel. This might be achieved by offering, before the workshop, a self-guided lesson, webinar, and/or a survey to cover background material and find out where participants are in terms of interest, knowledge, and skills. At the workshop in-person, make the most of that time. It's silly and a waste to have participants watch PowerPoint presentations for hours. They should be active and engaged. After the workshop it could be valuable to provide follow-up discussion in webinars or discussion boards and just-in-time resources to access on the job, such as the eLearning lesson, recorded webinars, or supplemental documents.

Self-Guided Lesson → **Workshop** → **Webinar**

Answer the following questions to help decide the best eLearning strategy to pursue.

1. What are the current opportunities and challenges for building the capacity of your constituents? How could on-demand courses and/or webinars support and enhance your CBA efforts? Would they complement or replace face-to-face instruction? In other words, how does or could eLearning fit into your overall learning strategy?

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Note

If you are aiming to share new information with your clients where direct action and behavior change is *not* required, such as information on new CDC policies, it would likely make sense to spend less time and effort by offering a webinar or broadcast email or PDF. If you want to share complex procedures and strategies that your client will need to implement, such as adapting current HIV prevention interventions to incorporate HIP/NHAS activities, then an on-demand lesson may be worth the time and effort to allow for learning activities that are interactive, media-rich, and hopefully more effective.

2. How many learners will access the eLearning content and how often?

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Note

If the training will be delivered just a couple times to fifty learners or less, then it would likely make sense to spend less time and effort by offering a webinar or broadcast email or PDF. If the training will be delivered many times to many learners, then an on-demand lesson may be cost effective and worth the time and effort to allow any number of users to access the lesson anytime, anywhere.

eLearning Design

Let's now focus in on the design of on-demand, self-guided lessons. In order to ensure that the lessons lead to true learning, we will use eLearning design, the practice of creating technology driven educational tools and content to help facilitate learning most effectively. The process is based on the principles of instructional design and broadly consists of...

1. Determining current state and needs of learner

3. Creating some learning experience to assist in the transition

2. Defining end goal of instruction

We will go through, in detail, the rapid eLearning design process later on. As we discussed earlier, eLearning efforts often miss the mark and the end goal – LEARNING. This often happens when eLearning replicates the worst forms of traditional education – creating a virtual boring classroom. What this looks like in traditional education is lecture by a teacher, students take notes, and then testing of short-term memorization, essentially regurgitating the content. This often leaves the learner bored, with cognitive over, and without the new learning. These observations are nothing new. John Dewey, famous American psychologist, philosopher, educator observed way back in 1916 that schools persist in TELLING students what they need to know despite research clearly showing that it rarely works.

In the eLearning environment what often happens is that manuals, training guides, and PowerPoint presentations are converted into boring online "page turners", where the learner essentially clicks next through a series of text-heavy pages with limited or no interactivity or graphics. Robert Shank, an eLearning guru, wrote that "everything that is wrong with training can be summed up in four words – it's just like school.

So How Do We Learn?

Practice of course! We learn by doing - practicing, failing, and improving. We learn when we have a genuine goal and desire. We can force people to attend a face-to-face training or a webinar, but we cannot force them to learn. If people are not motivated to learn, they will multi-task or zone out.
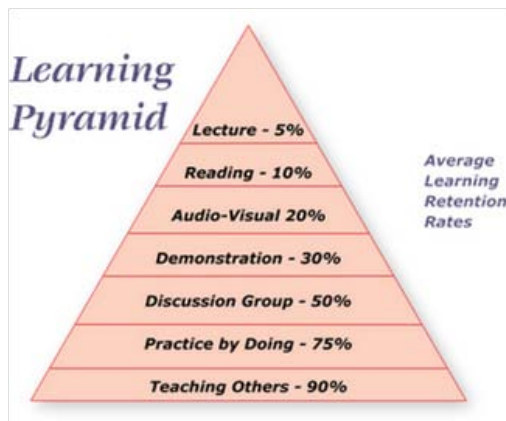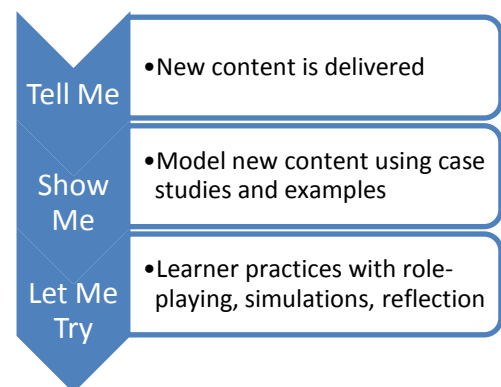
Most learning occurs outside of the classroom, in the real world, on the job, and online. When we look at retention rates, we tend to remember 5% of lectures, 10% reading, and 75% practicing by doing. Teaching others, which is difficult to replicate online, is up to 90%.

The **goal of eLearning** then, is to create engaging learning environments that interest the learner, challenge her to think and reflect, and to practice new skills.

How Do We Engage the Learner?

One of the keys is to make the instruction interactive. In summary, we do this by following the steps of tell me, show me, and let me try. After new content is delivered we model it, showing how it is best used with case studies and examples, and then allowing the learner to practice, using new KSAs with role playing, simulations, and reflection. More detail on this later when we look at the rapid elearning design process.

Tell Me
- New content is delivered

Show Me
- Model new content using case studies and examples

Let Me Try
- Learner practices with role-playing, simulations, reflection

eLearning Design Informed By…

eLearning design benefits from and is informed by advances in cognitive psychology, adult learning theory and computing. Constructivism and just-in-time learning emphasize the need to tie new learning to prior experience, avoid cognitive overload, and ground the learning in real-world scenarios and case studies.

Cognitive psychology - study of how people perceive, remember, think, speak, and solve problems

Adult learning theory – unlike children, adults already have established knowledge from experience and background. So, learning involves reflecting on prior knowledge and creating new understanding based on the new information. Adult learner tends to be more self-directing and internally motivated to learn subject matter that can be applied immediately to job or social role

Computing - increased speed of and access to computers and the internet at home and at work.

Constructivism – learner actively constructs their own understanding, linking new information to prior knowledge.

Just-in-time learning – delivers training to workers when and where they need it.

Initial eLearning Design Considerations

When designing an online course, here are some initial considerations and questions to ask. Please write responses and notes in the space provided.

1. Will you be converting existing face-to-face training content into an online format or creating new content (i.e. starting from scratch)?

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   Example: CBA Provider X will do both. They would like to build a lesson on the new affordable care act, explaining to their constituents the basic information and pointing out helpful resources. They would also like to build *a course using existing content, helping their constituents to select appropriate EBIs.*
   Note*: If you are converting existing content into an online format, you will need to adapt the learning activities to maintain the important interactive practice. Design strategies to do so will be covered later in this lesson.*

2. Is there already a set structure for the eLearning lesson or lessons, like the length, sequencing, types of activities and questions)?

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   Example: CBA Provider X does not have a set structure for their training. They do, however focus on the EBIs that they train and provide TA for, which helps them to market their CBA.
   Note*: If so, you will have fewer decisions to make in the design phase. For example, health departments may need to follow specific steps regarding CDC's guidance on Medical Adherence Models.*

3. Who at your organization will design and build the eLearning lessons?

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Example: CBA Provider X does not have a programmer, so Deborah, the Director of Training, will do both the design and building.
Note: While rapid elearning tools have made it possible for non-techies or programmers to create online lessons, the person responsible for designing and building them should have some solid experience creating effective training or capacity building.

4. Is there more than one subject-matter expert (SME) providing content for the lessons? If so, they will want to follow the same overall structure and design.

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Example: At CBA Provider X there will be more than one subject-matter expert. The CBA Specialist will serve as the expert for the affordable care act and NHAS. The director of faith and community mobilization will serve as the expert for an HIV basics lesson for clergy. Deborah, the director of training, will work with the various subject-matter experts in her organization to ensure an overall consistent look and feel to the lessons (ex. writing styles and formatting).
Note: Please note that if your organization does not have someone dedicated to training and capacity building, whoever is designing and building the courses will want to do the same.

5. How long will it take to create the lesson? You can come up with rough estimates using THIS link and THIS one.

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Example: CBA Provider X plans to start with several hour-long lessons with moderate interactivity. They estimate 150 hrs to design and develop each one.
Note: As you can see, while there is a rather large range of time estimations, it can be helpful to have a rough estimate when budgeting time and resources.

6. What type of multi-media might you use, such as images, audio, and video?

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Example: To start, CBA Provider X plan to use audio and stock photos, but not video. At future workshops they plan to take their own photos and videos to use in upcoming eLearning lessons, making sure to get permission from the people being shown. These will be more realistic and true to their constituents than stock photos.
Note: It is critical to use visuals that demonstrate and represent important concepts, helping participants to grasp them. Types of visuals include: photos, graphs, diagrams, flowchart, videos, and screenshots. More on this in the Rapid eLearning Design Process section later on.

7. What type of evaluation will you have? Do you need a more formal evaluation, with question, a passing grade, and printable certificates upon completion? Or will more informal reflection activities suffice for an exploratory lesson?

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Example: CBA Provider X has not had eLeanring lessons to evaluate yet, but in upcoming ones they plan for it to be more informal. They don't need detailed question response data, but want to know how many people have taken the lessons. They also feel that their constituents would be more likely to complete the lessons if they received certificates of completion, so they will offer them.
Note: For more formal evaluations, do you need to keep record of users' scores? If so, most rapid eLearning tools have the feature of users' scores being emailed to you. If you need to keep track of detailed results, you may need to use features of the content management system that the lesson resides on

Rapid eLearning Design Process

Let's look at the rapid eLearning design process, which has strategies to design high-impact materials quickly and reliably.
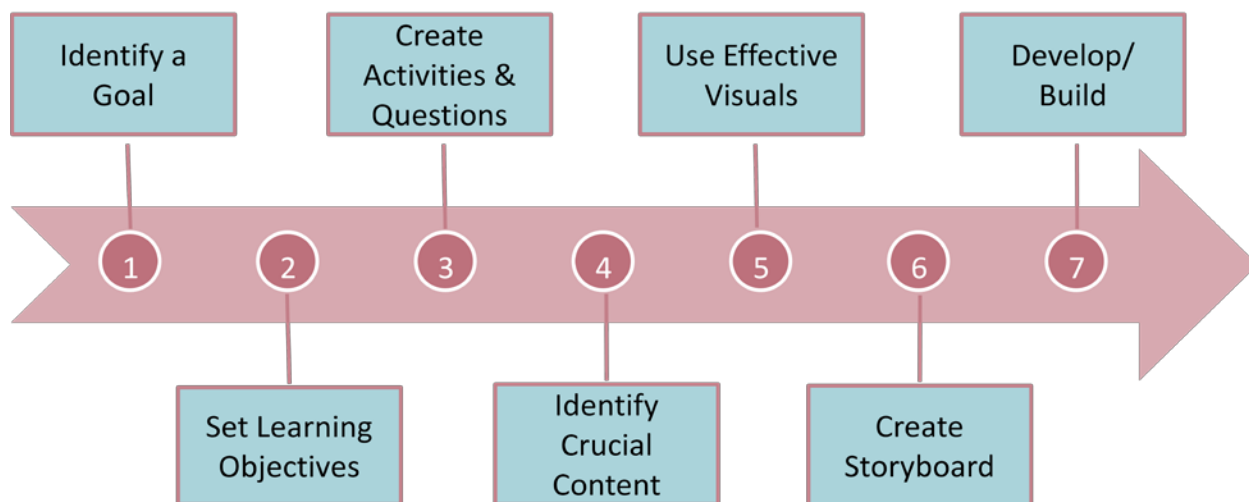
1. Identify a Goal

The first step in the rapid eLearning design process is to identify an overall goal for the educational materials. The goal should answer, "What is the educational material's reason to exist?"

- How will the training help close the gap between what the learners' performance is now and what it should be? Providing awareness about information (like a change in policy) is not reason alone to develop an interactive course. There are sometimes other, more appropriate and simpler ways to do this, like a broadcast email, PDF, or webinar.
- When determining the goal, consider how the educational materials fit into the larger learning and CBA strategy. They need to sync with other efforts.

For an example of an overall learning objective, CBA Provider X aims to create an online lesson whose goal is to help ten or more faith-based organizations and health departments select and implement appropriate EBIs by next June.

Please write a learning objective for a current or upcoming training that describes how your materials will help the target audience by improving their performance around a need or problem.

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2. **Set Learning Objectives and Decide Sequence**

The second step in the rapid eLearning design process is to create the Learning objectives and decide their sequence. Learning objectives state what the lesson will accomplish - what participants will learn and do to reach overall goal. Think of objectives as the *real-world actions* learners must take to reach the goal. Objectives should be SMART - S= specific, M=measurable, A=achievable, R=realistic, and T=timely.

- Note that in an online lesson we sometimes cannot achieve the same Los as in face-to-face instruction.
- (Avoid using terms like "know," "feel," or "understand" in your goal.)
- *For more information about writing learning objectives, see* [*THIS Quick Guide*](THIS Quick Guide)

Let's look at the learning objectives that CBA Provider X writes for the online lesson whose goal is to help ten or more faith-based organizations and health departments select and implement appropriate EBIs by next June. By the end of that lesson, learners will:

- Select two EBIs appropriate for their target audience to implement by January.
- Request CBA to learn the EBI and sign up for workshops, if available, by February.

Please write the learning objectives that describe in specific and measurable terms how your materials will cause a desired change in the learners, achieving the overall learning goal.

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3. Create Activities & Questions

Create activities and questions that will allow learners to reach the learning objectives and apply the new skills and knowledge to realistic situations. We learn by practicing and doing! So, create effective learning environments by involving users early and often. Keep information "push" to a minimum, and identify activities that support the learning objectives. Shoot for no more than 5 screens, and not more than 10 minutes before an interactive exercise. Ask an exemplar subject-matter expert to help you brainstorm draft activities and questions. Share these with 2-3 people in your target audience for feedback.

Learning activities can be categorized into three types:

    a. Practice and Do
    b. Connect, and
    c. Absorb

Practice and Do Activities

Practice and do activities are largely stories and games. People learn from stories, so we use role playing scenarios, case studies, and simulations. Stories illustrate the content and bring people in, enabling them to "experience" the material in an engaging, visual, and imaginative way. - a way they will remember. Stories have an emotional component and when you engage people's emotions, even just a little bit, you stand a better chance of them paying attention and remembering your point. Stories get our attention and make the learning real.

When possible, use characters that represent the target audience, facing a problem or challenging situation. Offer choices to proceed, which prompt the learner to reflect on and apply their new knowledge. Then show realistic consequences to their choices, and provide feedback. By following a case study, we can model the most common mistakes made in a situation and show negative consequences without offending the learner or an organization. If you create a third-person scenario in which the user gives advice to someone else, they act on it, and the consequences are shown, she feels more comfortable to make decisions and possible mistakes. And this creates learning opportunities where you can provide feedback to the decisions and choices made. This is key since we all learn the same way - from experiences of failure – failure of our current understanding and expectations, which leads us to reflect and create new expectations. In other words, failure causes us to rewrite the rules. We do differ in that some prefer to figure it out, while others want guidance and help. With different personalities, some people need to be coaxed to learn, others prodded, and others want to dive right in on their own.

Games let people learn by playing. While they can be fun, their primary purpose is to teach.

- Quiz-show games can make tests less intimidating and more engaging

- Word games, such as crossword puzzles, make learning terminology fun. Most are just fill-in-the-blank tests dressed up as a game, and
- Jigsaw puzzles offer a way to let learners discover whole-to-part relationships and organization

Connect Activities

Connect activities lead learners to link new content to prior learning and to situations in which they will apply the new knowledge. Connect activities include:

- Brainstorming, which asks learners to generate lots of new ideas and solutions,
- Categorizing, which asks learners to put items into groups or categories,
- Prioritizing, which asks learners to put items in order of importance,
- Evaluations, which ask learners to judge the value or importance of an item being studied, and
- Summarizing, which asks learners to recap what they have learned.

Absorb Activities

In absorb-type activities the learner reads, listens, and watches.
Absorb activities include:

- Presentations, which supply needed information in a clear, well-organized and logical sequence.
- Demos, which can include physical demos, where learners see a person performing a procedure, like performing a dance move, or software demos to introduce computer procedures,
- guided tours, which resemble a personal travel diary with pertinent information and illustrated with snapshots,
- informational films, which present factual information in a visual narrative, and
- readings, which direct learners to individual libraries or make entire libraries available

Types of Questions:

- True/false questions test learners' ability to make judgments.
- There are two types of multiple choice questions - pick-one questions have just one right answer, and pick-multiple have one or more correct answers.
- Fill-in-the-blank questions require learners to type in the answer to a question.
- Matching list questions require learners to specify which items in one list correspond to items in another.
- Sequencing questions ask learners to put items into a sequence from beginning to end according to some rule or principle.
- Performance questions require learners to perform actual work.

If you need to demonstrate that learners have acquired specific knowledge, skills, and abilities, record scores of questions in a more formal test or quiz. If not, questions around a scenario can be nuanced, so that there is not one correct answer, but choices with different consequences and feedback.

For example CBA Provider X might present the learning activity of a case study of an imaginary faith-based organization that has had two members of their congregation diagnosed with HIV in the past year. They urgently want to select and implement appropriate EBIs to help prevent any more infections. Questions offer choices to proceed in this process, which prompts the learner to reflect on and apply their new knowledge. In the supplemental PDF write some possible activities and questions that will allow learners to reach the learning objectives and apply the new skills and knowledge to realistic situations.

Please reflect on and write the types of activities and questions that will allow your learners to reach the learning objectives that you defined.

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4. Identify Crucial Content

What is the essential information users need to reach the learning objectives and complete the activities and questions? It is a common mistake to include too much information and detail, overwhelming the learner, causing them to have cognitive overload and to remember very little.

So, provide the minimum content necessary to help learners take the required actions. For additional details, you can point them to existing resources in the 'real-world', such as guidelines, reports, video tutorials and other job aids to reference on-demand. If there is lots of existing information outside the lesson, it may best serve as a guide to these real-world resources. No need to re-invent the wheel and put all the content in the lesson.
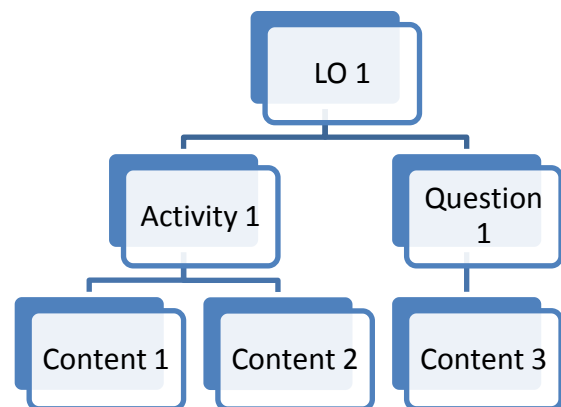
For example, as we reviewed, CBA Provider X has the learning activity of a case study of an imaginary faith-based organization that has had two members of their congregation diagnosed with HIV in the past year, and wants to select and implement appropriate EBIs to help prevent any more infections. There

are questions about how to proceed in this process, which prompts the learner to reflect on and apply their new knowledge. The crucial content to complete these activities and questions might include results of a community assessment and an agency readiness self-assessment, and details of the EBIs activities, behavioral determinants, and intended outcome.

Please identify the crucial content that users of your lesson will need in order to reach the learning objectives and complete the activities and questions. You will most likely need more space on a blank document to flush out all the content.

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5. Use Effective Visuals

It is critical to use visuals and graphics that demonstrate and represent important concepts, helping participants to grasp them. Types of visuals include: photos, graphs, diagrams, flowchart, videos, and screenshots.

Like with face-to-face presentations and training, many rapid eLearning tools use and produce PowerPoint-like screens to share visuals. Similarly, they can be just as torturous. The main reason that they can be so horrible in both cases is that there is too much text, and not enough effective visuals. This is a sure way for the audience to get overwhelmed, bored, and likely stop paying attention or to begin multi-task; all mean that they are not learning.

The same basic tips and no-no's apply to online lessons as to PowerPoint presentations:

- Like we said, use minimal text. On that note, don't use text as a teleprompter - people know how to read. Actually, studies show that we retain less when someone reads aloud text that is on the screen.
- Remember that you can make your own diagrams and charts quite easily in PowerPoint.
- Avoid too much animation.
- Use templates when possible.
- Use transition screens/slides.

There are lots of other resources about how to use PowerPoint out there, just Google PowerPoint tips.

To date, CBA Provider X has only done webinars and used stock images and diagrams. For their upcoming eLearning lessons they plan to use audio and stock photos, but not video. At future workshops, they plan to take their own photos and videos to use in upcoming eLearning lessons, making sure to get permission from the people being shown. These will be more realistic and true to their constituents than stock photos.

Please reflect on and write the types of visuals that you will use in your lesson (s) to demonstrate and represent important concepts.

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6. **Create storyboard**

   Create a storyboard of the lesson for your client to review before you start building or programming. A storyboard is a highly visual document that maps out in detail and "on paper" what material appears on the lesson screen, like text, images, audio, and video, and in what sequence. It is to the eLearning design team what a blueprint is to an architect and builder. In the online lesson click the attachments link in the upper right to download and view an editable sample storyboard in Word format.

7. **Develop/ Build**

Once an eLearning lesson has been well designed, you can move on to the development phase, creating and building it based on the storyboard. Popular and effective software tools for rapid eLearning development are (click links for details):

- Adobe Captivate
- Lectora Inspire and Snap!
  - While its features are limited, Lectora Snap is by far the least expensive, at $99.
- Articulate Studio and Storyline
- All have free month trails.

In addition to the main rapid eLearning development tool, you may want or need:

- Stock Image libraries
    - Pay sites like iStockPhoto.com and hutterstock.com
    - Free sites like, stock.xchng, WikiMedia Commons,
- Image editors,
    - Paid ones like Photoshop
    - Free ones like Aviary and Google+,
- Audio editors
    - Adobe Soundbooth
    - Free ones like WavePad and Audacity,
- Video editors.
    - Adobe Premier and VideoPad
    - Free like Avidemux Video Edit Master, and Windows Live Movie Maker
- Diagram creators, like gliffy

Please reflect on and write any notes about the software tools you might use to create your lessons.

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End - Additional Resources

Congratulations on completing the lesson! Here are some additional resources for and examples of effective eLearning for further exploration.

Additional eLearning Resources:

- *Rapid eLearning Blog*
- *The eLearning Coach*
- *Some more eLearning blogs…*
- *Idealware – software for non-profits*

Examples of effective eLearning:

- [Type 2 Diabetes](#)
- [Samples](#)
- [Psyched in 10](#)
- [Mission Turfgrass](#)

Finally, market and enhance your eLearning efforts with social media. [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) are two big social media networks now. Beyond those two there are other specialized social network sites that cater to specific communities, like [YouTube](#), [Linkedin](#), and [flickr](#).