

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN CRITERIA CHECKLIST

by
Michael Fors, Ph.D.
Microsoft
Redmond, USA

Instructional Design Criteria Checklist

Below is a very comprehensive criteria checklist to guide the process of curriculum design. Please note that this is an extensive list, and all items may not be applicable or useable for all readers. Use the criteria that you deem most applicable to ensure your design will meet your quality standards.

Key points/definitions are also highlighted in colour for your convenience.

	Yes?	No?	Comments
Fit within a Curriculum			
Does this course fit a priority need identified in the Curriculum?			
Is there a resource existing that already meets the need?			
Is there a resource being developed?			
Does the course have senior management support?			
Physical Aspects of the Course			
Has an analysis of costs been done to cover course design and development costs?			
Is the training funded by an existing budget?			
Will attendees be billed for attending the course? If so, how?			
Does course have min./max number of attendees that matches the skills being taught (for most kinds of training, min. of 15 and max of 25 works well)?			
Is the course able to be combined with or integrated with other course or non-course resources?			
Needs Assessment			
Was a needs analysis conducted in advance to determine that training is a necessary solution as part of the staff's performance needs?			
Was a needs analysis document created and shared with others working on the training?			
Has the target audience and their jobs been defined clearly?			
Is the overall need for the course defined in a way that relates to performance on the job?			
Are environmental factors that may affect staff performance identified and removed (lack of manager support, lack of reward in performance reviews, lack of time to apply the skills, etc.)			
Specific Design Criteria			
Are learning objectives stated as measurable and observable?			
Are the objectives, content, test items, and evaluation questions aligned? <i>Everything depends on the objectives.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The objectives should be measurable & observable,</i> - <i>content should teach to meet the objectives,</i> - <i>tests should measure ability to accomplish the objectives,</i> <i>and</i> - <i>the course evaluation should measure how well the course taught the objectives.</i> 			

	Yes?	No?	Comments
<p>Does the course begin by identifying a real-life need for participants related to the content (a problem identified by each participant at the beginning of the class – it should be tied to their reason for attending the session)?</p> <p>Do the learning objectives then help them to solve that problem, so at the end of the session, they feel they have solved a tangible, practical problem?</p> <p>Is there a check at the end of the course to ensure this problem was resolved?</p>			
<p>Do the objectives form the outline or agenda for the training?</p>			
<p>Is the content planned for each objective -- necessary and sufficient to teach the skill</p> <p><i>(there should be just enough content to teach the skill – not too little or the participants will not learn, and not too much content, or the skill being taught is lost)?</i></p>			
<p>Is the design interactive in a way that allows learners to engage in some type of activity/exercise for every learning objective?</p> <p>Does it simulate what they will need to do on their job?</p>			
<p>Is a learning test/check designed for each learning objective, to test if participants have gained the skill?</p>			
<p>Is the content designed in a way that is appropriate for the specific target audience?</p> <p>Has the target audience been specified?</p> <p>Have they been interviewed to understand their performance needs?</p>			
<p>Evaluation strategy includes AT LEAST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Level 1 (customer satisfaction: critique)</i> • <i>Level 2 (learning: tests, checklists, etc.)</i> • <i>Level 3 (application of learning to the job)</i> 			
<p>Is any new language, or terminology defined appropriately?</p>			
<p>Does the course flow smoothly for students?</p>			
<p>Is the implementation strategy defined and agreed to by the stakeholders and partners?</p>			
<p>Do the parts of the course add up to a complete picture of skills necessary to perform some topic/concept that ties to participant performance on the job?</p>			
<p>Does the course build up so that participants feel all parts coming together, and momentum/excitement grows to the end of the course?</p>			
<p>Is a one page job aid (job checklist) provided to participants summarizing what they learned, and reminding them how to perform key skills?</p>			
<p>Does the course contain an action plan – that has participants list 2-3 things they find useful and will take away from the course to apply to their jobs?</p>			

	Yes?	No?	Comments
Is the communication strategy defined to publicize the course?			
Instructor Delivery			
Is the delivery method appropriate for the content?			
Are instructional strategies based on the type of learning that is needed for each objective?			
Are the examples used by the instructor relevant for the audience and their performance on the job? Does it relate to their needs/experiences?			
Does the instructor draw out experiences of the participants to support the learning in the course? Is the instructor facilitative rather than a lecturer?			
Is the delivery method appropriate for the content type?			
Was there enough time for questions/comments from the participants?			
Was the pace brisk?			
Does an Instructor Guide exist, specifying for the instructor the content that should be taught and how it should be taught?			
Is the amount of time participants spend sharing experiences and solving issues high in relation to the amount of time the instructor talks (participant: instructor talk time ratio) <i>Participants should talk/interact more than 50% of the time</i>			
Stakeholder and Partner Approval			
Have all stakeholders approved the course design and all related implementation and communication plans?			
Tryout and Pilot			
Will a tryout/rehearsal be conducted to provide feedback on the content and skills gained and to provide feedback on the design and delivery?			
Have pilots been conducted with representative samples of the real target audience and feedback obtained?			
Evaluation			
Will the skills taught and resulting performance expected be tied to performance reviews? Will managers now expect participants to perform the skills as they were taught in the course?			
Is level I evaluation in place at the end of the session or in a follow up email? <i>(Level I evaluation is critique measuring participant satisfaction, & likelihood to apply the skills, through evaluation questionnaires)</i>			
Is level II evaluation built-in to the course? <i>(Level II evaluation is tests measuring skill gain and performance)</i>			

	Yes?	No?	Comments
<p>Is level III evaluation in place several months after participants take the course? <i>(Level III evaluation is measuring application of skills on the job through feedback from supervisors)</i></p>			
<p>Has review and revision been set for the course to check content, design and delivery?</p>			
<p>Does the course have other performance support <i>(job aids, checklists, a system to ensure people perform the skills as part of their jobs, the skills are tied to performance reviews, etc.)</i></p>			