

## Session 15

### "e-Learning case analysis statement" – Power of e-learning by Dr. Shirley Waterhouse

#### 1.0 Target, purpose, and environment for usage

The purpose of this e-Learning case "Power of e-Learning" is to highlight basics of e-Learning. According to Chapter 1, it talks about e-Learning Fundamental. The ways in which to improve teaching and learning by applying instructional strategies that are enhanced through technologies. It also stated specific examples on how e-Learning can be used to improve teaching and learning inside a classroom.

According to Broadbent he argued that "The term *e-learning* (electronic learning) refers to training, education, coaching, and information that is delivered digitally. E-Learning may be synchronous/asynchronous, the Internet/CD-ROM/satellite/telephone, personal computers and wireless devices such as PDA, and such forms of learning that are assisted by multimedia, CBT, such forms of technology-assisted learning. (Broadbent, 2002, p. 9). (Suzuki, 2004, p.0-2).

This e-Learning topic is self-defined, "Power of e-learning: The Essential Guide for Teaching in the Digital Age" describe the purpose of this course which is to guide teachers, lecturers, instructors and learners on how to use technology to create better instructions in learning. In other words, it is promoting e-learning as part of the teaching methods that goes together with face-to-face or instructor led learning. Therefore, learners are also part of the target groups.

This e-learning type would be best described as Informal learning. According to the text, it stated that "Informal learning: This type of learning particularly tries to take advantage of Web sites from a viewpoint of how we design day to day learning experience which falls outside the scope of planned and organized learning opportunities (i.e., formal education). Although, up to this point of time, much emphasis has been placed on how we design organized/planned learning experience, it has become more and more important to support Web-based learning accessibility 24/7 (an abbreviation for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). (Suzuki, 2004, p.0-2).

According to the course content, I think this e-Learning case would be best suitable in an adult learning environment where you can study from anywhere at any time, as well as inside a classroom, where there are students and teachers interaction.

#### 2.0 System design (components, their appropriateness, etc.)

In this e-Learning case, Learning Management System (LMS) software tool is used, and is one of the major important tools in e-Learning. LMS software enables instructors to create and organize learning resources and monitor effectiveness of resources and help track

**students performance.** Since the e-Learning materials also target beginners, the contents and technology used has been tailored made to meet their specific needs.

After further analyzing the system design of this e-Learning case, I believed the use of LMS software is most appropriate and easy to use. This e-Learning course is the essential guide for beginners and therefore it is designed so that trainees can easily navigate through the course contents on what they need to learn as well as interactions with teachers and students.

### **3.0 Course design (structuring, grouping, learning control, etc.)**

The Power of e-Learning course contains free e-Learning content that describe basics of e-Learning and altogether there are 11 modules from e-Learning fundamentals to e-Learning evaluation. Each module has its introduction video clip, explanation with quiz, and related links. This allows the learner to easily navigate through the course contents.

I found the course contents as very user friendly and therefore the learner can begin from any particular chapter that he/she prefers. I also found out that the learners should be able to go through and understand the learning materials and contents easily. Some factors which I found that contribute to this are:

- Clearly articulated objectives and expectations
- An easily navigable web site
- An appropriate use of technologies to enhance and motivate learning
- The use of additional URL resources at the end of each chapter to enhance learning and understanding

On the other hand, though issues highlighted above are some advantages of the course design, I felt that it lacks the following:

- (i) Assignments and activities that facilitate participation and communication among students
- (ii) A discussion space for learners to talk openly about the course (expectations, uncertainty, what they like, dislike, their participation, progress etc.)

### **4.0 Learning support design (features of learning tasks, support conditions of learning processes, etc)**

In analyzing the learning support design, I found that Power of e-learning course structure does not have any clear order of learning. This order of learning could be classified under cluster analysis. It allows the learners to control his/her learning and move between the course contents freely. In this regard, I supported Clark & Mayer (2003) principles of learner control (2) and (3) that "(2) important events should be set as default options in navigation, (3) advice should be added to learner control."

Each chapter contains the three elements; Introduction, Contents and Additional Resources. I felt that the use of video lecture for introduction is appropriate and is a good system for retention of learning. The learning objectives and contents are clearly stated. **Therefore I believed this e-learning case has been developed using Gagne's nine events of instructions because of the following inclusion: introduction, development and conclusion.**

One area I felt that is lacking according to the learning support design of Power of e-Learning course is the feedback. According to each chapter there are no discussion forums so that the learner could express their feelings/opinions of each chapter. As highlighted in the text, "The "education-system-improvement point of view" is such evaluation that is used to improve educational system and/or programs and is concerned with collection of data in relation to curriculum, material, instructor, and learning environment to identify such areas that should be improved or strengthened. The "return-on-investment point of view" is concerned with judgment as to whether continuation of the program in question is justified from the business management point of view, measuring the return on investment; i.e., to what extent educational objectives have been achieved, in order to make the business decision of whether or not to continue the investment (i.e., training)." (Suzuki, 2004, p. 3-4).

**Therefore, I would recommend Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation model; results, behaviour, learning and reaction for measuring the effectiveness of training programs.**  
**Results - What organizational benefits resulted from the training?**  
**Behaviour - To what extent did participants change their behavior back in the workplace as a result of the training?**  
**Learning - To what extent did participants improve knowledge and skills and change attitudes as a result of the training?**  
**Reaction - How did participants react to the program?**

## **5.0 Motivation design (characteristics of expected learners, appropriateness of motivation, etc.)**

Motivation design in e-Learning according to the text refers to "Motivation is an issue of "willingness," as well as an issue of desire for learning." (Suzuki, 2004, p.10-2). In analyzing the motivation design used for the Power of e-learning course, one of the reasons which I think motivate learners from learning this course is the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) software tools by Dr. Waterhouse to create and organize learning resources.

**The function of LMS includes:**

- (i) Distribution of course information**
- (ii) Student – instructor and student – student communications**
- (iii) Online testing and grading**
- (iv) Student interaction with course content**

Secondly, the design of the e-learning content motivates the learner from learning this program. The inclusion of introduction, contents and additional resources for each chapter

guide the learners through the learning process. Dr. Waterhouse's introductory movie makes the learner feel the presence of the instructor at the beginning of each module.

In addition, she clearly highlighted the objectives and brief details of each chapter. Therefore, I found out that this e-learning course is related to the four factors of Keller's ARCS Motivation Model. "The ARCS Model that Keller advocates is a framework to organize strategies to enhance appeal of instruction by looking at learning motivation from four aspects: Attention: Interesting, Relevance: I see the value, Confidence: I can do it if I try, and Satisfaction: I am glad I did it." (Suzuki, 2004, p. 10-3).

## **6.0 Self-supervised learning support (whether or not reform of learning view is supported, etc.)**

According to the text, e-Learning has been touted as a significant trend in which the independent learning activities of the learner (or organization member) tie in with the goals of the organization, as well as a major revolution seeking a transformation in the notion of human learning. (Suzuki, 2004, p.11-2).

According to Tobin (2000), he pointed out that "whether I am in a classroom, reading or taking a computer-based training program, I, as a learner, I decide what is important to me and, therefore, I choose what I learn. The learner may not have control over what is being *taught*, but the learner always has control over what is *learned* (p. vii)." (Suzuki, 2004, p.11-2).

The ways in which the instructions have been designed, supported the learners in understanding what is required in each chapter of the course. All instruction should have as objectives like: "Having received instruction, the learners choose to further deepen their learning concerning the content of instruction," and "The learners will have come to believe that they will be able to conduct continuous self-directed instruction." (Suzuki, 2004, p.11-5).

## **7.0 Proposal for Improvements**

Even though I supported the design of the e-learning material on 'Power of e-learning: The Essential Guide for Teaching in the Digital Age' a few areas which I think could be improved are as follows:

- (i) **Assignments and activities at the end of each chapter**  
This will facilitate participation and communication among students
- (ii) **Postings on discussion board**  
For learners to talk openly about the course (expectations, uncertainty, what they like, dislike, their participation, progress etc.)
- (iii) **Two-ways communication**

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Whilst going through this e-learning course, I found that there is only one way communication, from instructor to learner. In creating (i) and (ii) above, I think there will be more collaborations and interactions between the instructor & learner which will help learners in getting timely feedbacks. It would also motivate them.

## **Conclusion**

After analyzing the quality of the e-learning course on 'Power of e-learning: The Essential Guide for Teaching in the Digital Age' I found out that the material was "easy to use." Some of the elements which I believed were the objects of usability design including display layout that is comfortable to see and easy to understand, navigation design, utilization of appropriate media and access time.

Broadbent (2002) identifies the benefits of well designed e-Learning from the perspective of the learners, instructors, online developers and managers. To conclude, according to the text, "The effectiveness of e-Learning blended with group instruction depends on how well the e-Learning component is designed, in the same way that the effectiveness of group instruction depends on the quality of the instructor." (Suzuki, 2004, p.7-8).

## **References:**

Dr. Shirley Waterhouse, *The Power of e-Learning: The Essential Guide for Teaching in the Digital Age*, Available online. Retrieved on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2011 from <http://shirleywaterhouse.com/elearning/elearning.html>

Suzuki, K. (2004), *E-Learning Fundamentals*, (PDF version).