

THE ONLINE SCIENTIST

E-LEARNING OPTIMIZER

When you are considering to develop an e-learning course, it's good practice to think about the purpose, your target audience, and the learning goals before you start building it. For this purpose we developed the e-learning optimizer that helps you to discover what you need before you start building an online tool. It helps you to define your ideas, and will help us understand you and help you better. So if you can, please fill out this optimizer for your project and take it to our first meeting! If you have no idea about any of the questions, just skip them and we'll talk about it.

TELL US ABOUT YOU!

Name:

Function:

Organization:

E-mail:

Phone number:

Address:

PURPOSE AND GOAL OF THE COURSE

It's important to think about *why* you want an online course. You can see it as a thought experiment; e-learning is nice, but sometimes it's better to use a dynamic PDF, a brochure, video, animation, poster or even a classic lecture. We ask this specifically, because e-learning is expensive, so it has to be worth it! The following questions help you to think about this and serve as a solid foundation for the (development of the) contents and design of your course.

Why do you want to develop an e-learning course?

What is the goal of this e-learning course? (and of making it an online course in general)

- Relieve the schedule of lecturers
- Reduce travelling
- Reduce training cost
- Diversify the learning process
- Create an in-depth connection with the target group (like students or patients)

What kind of e-learning do you want to develop?

- Online video or lecture (no added learning advantage beyond getting to watch the video at your own pace/in your own time/as many times as you like) also called Virtual Classroom. If saving time in the lecturer's schedule this is a good option. But it will not improve learning quality.
- Collaboration: online forum where teachers and students can interact, ask questions, get feedback.
- Online platform (Learning Management System): course materials online, sharing content, collaboration tools, video. This is also called curriculum management.
- Interactive course that offers a better learning experience for the participants.

What is the context of this course, and how will it fit into that?

Is it, for example, part of a course, or a course by itself? Is this an addition to another set of materials or a lecture, or perhaps the other way around and are there booklets supporting this course? Is it obligatory or voluntary?

Can you briefly describe the topic or subject of the e-learning module?

What are the **learning goals** of this course?

What will they know, be able to do, how will their thinking and behavior change as a result of the teaching/learning experience?

How are you going to fulfil these goals?

In case of a voluntary e-learning module, what will make it urgent or valuable? Why would people take it, and what will keep them motivated and invested?

Who are your students?

Describe their age, education level, relevant courses. For example: MSc students in their final year, with a background in biochemistry, that need to know how to apply biochemical theoretical knowledge in the field.

Do we need to take certain skillsets of the target group into account?

For example: if your target group is the elderly, you need to keep in mind that they often lack advanced computer skills.

What is/are the type(s) of learning you will be (or want to be) applying in your course? Answer if you know, or indicate those you know for sure.

- Show and tell (receptive)
- Show and do (directive)
- Problem solving (guided discovery)
- Inform: communicate information
- Perform procedure: skill building
- Perform task: strategic skills

How will you know whether the students have learned what you wanted them to learn?

- We want to do a pre-test and post-test and compare the scores.
- We want to keep track of the student's answers as they go through the course.
- We only want to test at the end of the module.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS

What does the organization of the module look like? Are there, for example, various modules that the participants will have to do in sequence (or in their own preferred sequence), is it a course with one module every week, or do they do everything in one session?

Do you have an idea of the size and contents of the course? If yes, please indicate as accurately as possible how many of each type of content you will need.

- Static pages with text
- Custom images
- Test questions with scoring
- Test questions without scoring
- Animations: moving images
- Pre-test questions with scoring
- Final test with scoring
- Interactive assignments
- (for example 'drag and drop'; these help to increase retention)
- Glossary
- References

If you can't be sure of how large the course will be, could you explain a little bit of what you expect from the course in terms of time?

For example: we want to make six weekly, one-hour courses.

Do you have anything that can be used as the basis for the parts mentioned in the question above?

Yes we already have...

- Complete texts written for the course
- A storyboard with texts, assignments, interactivity...
- Designs
- Rough information or sketches
- Published scientific articles
- Videos
- Animations
- Images (photos)
- Other ...

Which (design) elements do you want us to develop? (If you don't know yet, skip this question)

- Content architecture plan: developing a comprehensive plan for the structure of the content, including proposed interactive assignments etc.
 - (Re)writing of texts (which languages:)
 - Logo
 - Corporate identity for web
 - Animation or video
 - Infographic
 - Photos (stock photography)
 - Photos (custom photography)
 - PDFs made from Word documents
 - Other
-

Is there a corporate identity that we must use for the course?

- Yes, we can send you our style guides.
- No, but only a logo is enough for us.
- No, we would like The Online Scientist to develop a full style guide (interesting if you want to develop multiple courses).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE E-LEARNING MODULE

The development of an e-learning module is done in three steps. It starts with the learning goals and the content, which are collected and aligned. This information will be used by a didactic party like The Online Scientist to develop a storyboard that outlines the course, the various pages and how they will be filled with text, images, assignments etc. The third step is designing and building the course.

A perfect*, comprehensive storyboard comprises:

- ✓ A structured document (such as PowerPoint) containing all the pages of the e-learning module
- ✓ All texts (succinctly), titles, questions and feedback
- ✓ Images (duty free) or suggestions for images (plain)
- ✓ All questions and assignments
- ✓ Feedback for each possible answer
- ✓ (optional) Instructions for applying interactivity such as mouse-overs, hyperlinks, animations. e.g. "When you move the mouse over the information icon, it triggers a pop-up text"

*) We know perfect doesn't exist.

Which roles do you have in house? Inversely; if you don't have these experts, we can take over these roles.

- We have **content experts** that will deliver all the contents and learning goals (this is probably you!).
- We have a **didactic team** that can assess which learning methods are needed and how to test knowledge throughout the site – in short; they can develop the storyboard.
- We have a **technical team** that can build the e-learning course
- We have **designers** that can design the course.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Where will you publish the module?

- On our own website, as separate HTML pages.
- On our e-learning Learning Management System (LMS) as SCORM/Tin Can package. (Examples of this are Docebo and Blackboard)
- We want to get a website that contains just the e-learning module(s).
- We want to have a website that contains the e-learning module(s) as a part of it (in a compatible Content Management System (CMS)).

Who is going to maintain the course, both technically and in terms of content?

Technical maintenance includes changes to the website, technical updates, fixing bugs and crashes and updated to design and functionality. Content maintenance includes new course materials or updates questions.

- We will maintain, update, and fix technical issues of the course ourselves.
- We like some support for maintenance when we need it, but not on a regular basis.
- We will update the content of the e-learning course, but want technical support from The Online Scientist.
- We would like The Online Scientist to take care of all technical maintenance and content updates.

If you chose the third option in the previous question; do you need training on how to update the e-learning course?

- No, training is not necessary, we have developers in house.
- Yes, in the form of an online tutorial, e-learning or a video.
- Yes, in the form of a live workshop.

Do you already have an authoring tool you want to use?

At The Online Scientist we normally work with Lectora, a solid authoring tool that is SCORM and Tin Can compliant and can deliver great courses.

- No, we want to use whatever you are using.
- Yes, we have our own authoring software we need you to use:
 - o Name of the authoring tool:

Are there technical requirements for the course? (Skip this if you don't know)

- SCORM compliant
- Tin Can compliant
- Mobile version
- Web-only version
- Open Source
- Tracking of student's progress and grades
- Limited access to a course (e.g. only one month)
- Forum to communicate with teachers
- Other.....

PRACTICAL ASPECTS

Will you be selling the course to students, or is it part of an existing education? How will students be able to log in?

How many modules (separate lessons) does the course exist of?

Do you want to monitor or analyse the results of the course?

- No, we don't need to know how many people do the course.
- Yes, we want to keep track of who participates in the course
- Yes, we want to keep track of who participates in the course and know what their scores are.
- Yes to both tracking participation and scores, and we also want to be able to communicate with the students.

Where can students ask questions about questions about the e-learning course?

For example: via a dedicated email address, a forum or on your website.

COLLABORATION WITH THE ONLINE SCIENTIST

How quickly (or when) should the course be finished?

Do you have a specific budget for this project?

It's good to know in advance what you can/want to spend on a course. There are restrictions to what can be done for specific budgets. If the budget is a limiting factor, it's good to know in advance so we can work out how we can make the best of the budget available. For larger projects (>€10.000), we require a 50% deposit.

- No, we do not have an indication of a budget, we would like to know how much it would cost first.
- Yes, we have a ballpark budget:
 - o €.....
- Yes, we have a specific maximum budget that cannot be exceeded:
 - o €.....

Do you want other (offline) products that match the design of the course?

- Workbook for the course
- Poster
- Brochure
- Presentation
- Other (such as a pen, business card, notebook):

Who is our contact person for direct communication and who is able to make decisions?

Name:

Contact information:

How quickly can you, generally, give feedback?

- 1 day
- 2 days
- 3-5 days
- A week or more

How would you like us to stay in touch?

- E-mail
- Phone
- WhatsApp call
- Google Hangout
- Skype
- Face to face

And finally ... When do you consider the e-learning course a success?

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