

The 60-minute masters: Script for module 3

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4.1 Providing helpful examples

Screen 4.1.1

Graphic/animation: Photo of Sheila.

Narration or text:

Meet Sheila. She's busy putting together some materials for managers to explain a change that's been made to her organization's policy on the use of drugs and alcohol at work. The policy now makes a clear distinction between different types of incidents and how managers should deal with them.

Which of these tools could she use to help her managers understand the change more clearly and relate it to their jobs?

Question stem: Which of these tools could Sheila use to help her managers understand the change more clearly and relate it to their jobs? You can select more than one option.

Options and feedback:

A list of incident types and required actions by managers [Well, this would be useful, particularly as a reference source for later. More is required, though, to help managers relate the change to their jobs.]

A video showing a manager dealing with a fictitious incident [This could be helpful, although the real problem here is getting managers to understand the differences between types of incidents. More than one example is likely to be required.]

A series of textual case histories describing incidents that have happened in the past [This could work, although this is, of course, a new policy and therefore past incidents may not be relevant. A lot of care would also have to be taken to avoid individuals involved in previous incidents being recognizable.]

A decision tree showing the logical process that a manager must follow when an incident occurs [This would make an excellent job aid, but it won't be enough on its own.]

A series of brief scenarios, using text and graphics, illustrating how managers should act in typical situations [This should work really well. Managers are likely to need a series of examples if they are to fully understand how to act in each potential situation.]

Screen 4.1.2

Graphic/animation: Tariq.

Narration or text:

Here's Tariq. He's preparing some materials that will explain to electricians how to fit a new model of fuse box. Which of these tools could Tariq use to help electricians understand more clearly how to carry out this task?

Question stem: Which of these tools could Tariq use to help electricians understand more clearly how to carry out this task? You can select more than one option.

Options and feedback:

A sequence of steps presented as a table [This is going to be useful, particularly for later reference, but won't be enough.]

A video showing the fuse box being fitted [This could be really useful. It would be important that the video had controls that would allow the learner to review any part of the video they wanted to see again.]

A sequence of stills with accompanying audio or text, demonstrating the fuse box being fitted [This could be useful. Stills and text have an advantage over video in that the learner can easily step back and forwards through the screens. On the other hand, video can be useful if there is a physical element involved that really needs to be demonstrated in motion.]

Some examples of errors that could occur and how these can be corrected [These could be extremely valuable, although probably not enough on their own.]

An audio interview with an experienced fitter [This may have some marginal value, but this procedure is a visual one and so audio can only contribute so much.]

Screen 4.1.3

Graphic/animation: Vanessa.

Narration or text:

Here's another example. Vanessa is putting together some e-learning materials that will explain to a group of employees how to import, correct, crop and save digital photographs using a PC-based graphics package. Which of these tools could Vanessa use to help explain these procedures as clearly as possible?

Question stem: Which of these tools could Vanessa use to help explain these procedures as clearly as possible? You can select more than one option.

Options and feedback:

A textual description of the procedure [This is unlikely to be the best way to explain this procedure. A visual element is almost essential when teaching an IT procedure, and large blocks of text are not comfortable to read from the screen.]

A series of tables detailing the steps in the procedure [This may well be useful, but mainly as reference. More is likely to be needed.]

A series of screen shots with accompanying text or audio [This can work very well, as learners can easily step back and forwards through the screens. Some of the steps, however, may be more easily explained using video.]

A single screen capture video demonstrating the whole procedure [This would work well as long as the procedure was not too long and the learner could easily skip to the step they particularly wanted to see. As a general rule, screen capture videos are best presented in short chunks.]

A number of short screen capture videos showing each of the steps in the procedure [This would work extremely well. As a general rule, screen capture videos are best presented in short chunks.]

Screen 4.1.4

Graphic/animation: Erik.

Narration or text:

And one final example. Erik is responsible for putting together some materials to improve the ability of retail staff to handle customer complaints. Which of these tools could Erik use to help retail staff fully understand and relate to the complaint handling procedure?

Question stem: Which of these tools could Erik use to help retail staff fully understand and relate to the complaint handling procedure? You can select more than one option.

Options and feedback:

A table listing the steps to follow when a complaint occurs [This would be useful, but mainly for reference. More is required.]

A walkthrough the procedure using stills and text or audio [This could be a useful first step in conveying the correct procedure. Because of the format, learners could easily step back and forwards through the procedure.]

A case history of a complaint that was poorly handled and with negative consequences [This would help to identify the importance of the procedure and hook the learners in emotionally.]

A video demonstration showing a fairly straightforward complaint being dealt with [Yes, this would be a valuable ingredient in the course.]

Video demonstrations showing more difficult or unusual situations being handled [These could make a valuable addition to the materials. Learners need to know about the exceptional cases as well as the routine ones.]

Screen 4.1.5

Graphic/animation: Learner looking puzzled with thought bubble showing an algebraic formula. Another pic shows the same learner looking enlightened with a speech bubble showing something more concrete like cars on a race track.

Narration or text:

Learners find abstractions difficult to digest and hard to relate to, so provide them with plenty of examples and case histories that are as relevant as possible to their circumstances.

Screen 4.1.6

Graphic/animation: A teacher demonstrating a chemical process or something similar.

Narration or text:

Use demonstrations to bring procedures to life, taking care to explain what decisions have to be made at each step. Start by showing how the procedure should be followed in a straightforward situation, but back this up with demonstrations of more difficult or complex scenarios, including how to recover from common mistakes.

4.2 Engaging learners with challenging interactions

Screen 4.2.1

<a challenging but irrelevant interaction>

Graphic/animation: An entertaining and challenging short and simple Flash game.

Narration or text:

This is the first of three interactions for you to explore. When you're ready, move on to the next one.

Screen 4.2.2

<a relevant but unchallenging interaction, with poor feedback>

Narration or text:

Here's the second interaction. When you're ready, move on to the third and last.

Question stem: What does the 'e' stand for in e-learning?

Options and feedback:

Experiential [Wrong! Try again.]

Electronic [Correct!]

Exploratory [Wrong! Try again.]

Everlasting [Wrong! Try again.]

Screen 4.2.3

<a relevant, but over-challenging interaction>

Graphic/animation: BF Skinner

Narration or text:

And here's the last of the three interactions for you to explore.

Question stem: Which of these perspectives on learning is most associated with the psychologist B F Skinner?

Options and feedback:

Behaviorism [Well done, that's right. According to the Wikipedia, 'Fred' Skinner was a highly influential American psychologist, author, inventor, advocate for social reform and poet. He was the Edgar Pierce Professor of Psychology at Harvard University from 1958 until retirement in 1974. He invented the operant conditioning chamber, innovated his own philosophy of science called Radical Behaviorism, and founded his own school of experimental research psychology - the experimental analysis of behavior.]

Cognitivism [No. In psychology, cognitivism is a theoretical approach to understanding the mind, which argues that mental function can be understood by quantitative, positivist and scientific methods, and that such functions can be described as information processing models. B F Skinner was less concerned with what went on inside the brain and instead concentrated on observable behavior.]

Constructivism [No. Constructivism values developmentally-appropriate, facilitator-supported learning that is initiated and directed by the learner. B F Skinner was more interested in how the teacher controlled the learning process.]

Connectivism [No. Connectivism, "a learning theory for the digital age," has been developed by George Siemens based on his analysis of the limitations of behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism to explain the effect technology has had on how we live, how we communicate, and how we learn. B F Skinner, by comparison, was 'old school'.]

Screen 4.2.4

Graphic/animation: A big question mark, with the text, "What makes a really good interaction?"

Narration or text:

OK. Your task now is to reflect back on the three interactions and to gather your thoughts about what it is that makes a really good interaction. There were probably some things you liked and some things you didn't. So, what were they?

Screen 4.2.5

Graphic/animation: Heading: "What makes a really good interaction?"

Narration or text:

Here's our list. Which of these did you come up with as well?

Question stem: Check any item on the list that you came up with when you reflected on the three interactions.

Options and feedback:

The interaction must be relevant [Agreed. The first interaction may have been fun, but it had nothing whatsoever to do with the topic of this course.]

The interaction must be sufficiently challenging [Agreed. The second interaction was probably far too easy. There's a danger of patronizing learners by setting them tasks which are too easy.]

The interaction must not be too challenging [Agreed. The third interaction, for example, was at far too advanced a level for the target audience of this course.]

The interaction must be supported by helpful feedback [Agreed. The second interaction was hopeless in this respect, providing no help at all if you got the question wrong. Feedback provides an ideal opportunity to correct misunderstandings and reinforce successes.]

Screen 4.2.6

Graphic/animation: A diagram showing five e-learning screens stacked behind each other. The first, third and fifth are highlighted.

Narration or text:

At what stage, or stages, in an e-learning module, do you believe it's effective to ask questions or provide other forms of interaction?

Question stem: At what stage(s) in an e-learning module do you believe it is effective to ask questions or provide other forms of interaction?

Options and feedback:

The beginning [Yes, that can work well, as I hope you'll agree from this course. The aim here is to build on the learner's existing knowledge and help them on the way to a new piece of learning.]

As the module progresses [That's right. Questions and other interactions can be used throughout the module to continue to build on the learner's existing knowledge and to provide opportunities for practice.]

The end [This can work well, although hopefully this is not the only place where you'll find interactions. If you place questions at the end as a form of assessment, then try to avoid simply checking what's in short-term memory - this is no real indicator of success.]

Screen 4.2.7

Graphic/animation: A diagram showing a learner and a computer. The computer asks a question; the learner gives an answer; the computer gives feedback.

Narration or text:

Unless you're developing materials that are intended purely for reference, you'll achieve far better results if you engage your learners with meaningful, challenging interactions. These interactions can be used to build on the learner's prior knowledge and help them on the path to new learning; they can provide opportunities for practice; they can also be used to assess progress. Without meaningful and challenging interaction, your materials could easily be ignored or forgotten.

4.3 Ending with a call to action

Screen 4.3.1

Graphic/animation: The end

Narration or text:

That's it. Thanks for all your hard work. Goodbye and good luck!

Screen 4.3.2

Graphic/animation: Big question mark plus the text "How can you keep the learning going?"

Narration or text:

Oh good, you stuck around. That really was no way to finish a course, now was it?

Before moving on, take a moment to think of what can be done to keep the learning process going long after the learner finishes the last page of your materials.

Screen 4.3.3

Graphic/animation: Heading: "Keeping the learning going"

Narration or text:

Here's our list. Which of these did you come up with as well?

Question stem: Check any item on the list that you also came up with.

Options and feedback:

A call to 'use it or lose it' [Agreed, even if this is only the start. Learners do need reminding that if they don't make use of their new learning quickly, much of it will fade.]

Provide handouts and other job aids [Agreed. This will certainly be appreciated by your learners. In many cases, it's simply not feasible for learners to recall all your material. Handouts and job aids should be formatted for the easiest possible access. You'll be pleased to know that we have some handouts available for this course.]

Provide an online forum that allows learners to ask any questions they may have or follow-up on issues [Agreed. Hopefully you'll make use of the forum we've set up for this course.]

Include an evaluation form [Agreed. Don't forget to complete the questionnaire we've created for this course.]

Provide links to additional materials and other sources of information [Agreed. Some learners will want to follow-up their interest by further reading and exploration and you won't want to include the really detailed information within your e-learning materials. We've provided some links to further information as part of this course.]

Provide a help desk [Agreed. If you can resource this, then a help desk will provide your learners with a place to call if ever they get in trouble.]

Provide coaching on-the-job [Agreed. Some skills take some bedding in, so a coach can play a valuable role in supporting the learner through this process.]

Something else [Well done, there's far more that can be done than we could fit on our list.]

Screen 4.3.4

Graphic/animation: A soldier blowing a trumpet

Narration or text:

You'll want to end your course with a call to action. It's very unlikely that your materials will be an end in themselves, so point your learners towards the next step.

Screen 4.3.5

Graphic/animation: Homework.

Narration or text:

That's it - you really have finished all the materials we have to offer you. To make sure you don't lose any of the benefit from this module, take some time to think ahead to a project you have coming up, and consider the questions listed here.

Text:

Consider these questions in the context of an upcoming project:

- What demos and examples can I provide that will help learners to clearly understand my material and relate it to their own jobs?
- What interactions can I include that will build on the learner's prior knowledge?
- What interactions can I include to provide the learner with the opportunity to practice?
- What interactions can I include to help the learner assess what they have learned?
- What will be my 'call to action'?
- What else can I do to ensure that the learning doesn't get lost?
- What can I do to support learners once they're back to work?