

The 60-minute masters: Script for module 2

Anyone can build their own 60-minute masters course based in whole or in part on these materials. If you wish you can even sell this course to others. However, in fairness to those who have contributed their efforts freely to create these materials, you should (1) not claim ownership or authorship of the materials, and (2) you should include the following credit prominently on your materials: 'This course draws upon materials created as part of the 60-minute masters project,' along with a link to www.onlignment/the-60-minute-masters.

3.1 Hook learners in emotionally

Screen 3.1.1

Graphic/animation: Some kind of animation demonstrating excitement. Perhaps use the introductory animation and music from the Above and Beyond courses.

SFX: If possible, to accompany the animation and create a feel of excitement.

Narration or text:

Try your best, as early as you can, to hook your learners in emotionally.

Screen 3.1.2

Graphic/animation: A pic of a load of really eager looking people, perhaps kids.

Narration or text:

If you do, you'll have an audience that's attentive, excited, curious.

Screen 3.1.3

Graphic/animation: A pic of a load of very bored looking people (I have this from a previous project).

Narration or text: But if you don't, you risk them just going through the motions, <gradually getting slower and lazier> doing as little as they can get away with, getting distracted by other things, gradually ... falling ... asleep. <snoring sounds>

Screen 3.1.4

Graphic/animation: 'So how do you do it?' animating on and flashing.

SFX: Loud musical sting.

Narration or text:

So, how do you hook your learners in? Take a minute to write down a few ideas before moving on to the next screen.

Screen 3.1.5

Graphic/animation: Build 1 of 4 - a mini-graphic to represent reward.

Narration or text:

Here are our ideas. First off, you can make clear just how they can benefit from what you've got to say - what's in it for them.

Screen 3.1.6

Graphic/animation: Build 2 of 4 - a mini-graphic to represent threat.

Narration or text:

You might also make them aware of the risks - what might just happen if they don't take notice.

Screen 3.1.7

Graphic/animation: Build 3 of 4 - a mini-cartoon.

Narration or text:

You might find a little humour helps.

Screen 3.1.8

Graphic/animation: Build 4 of 4 - a mini-graphic to represent drama (an ambulance with siren going?)

Narration or text:

Or maybe a touch of drama. Keep it relevant and don't overdo it - just make sure you hook those learners in ... emotionally.

3.2 Present your material clearly and simply

Screen 3.2.1

Graphic/animation: Two mock-ups of screens, side by side (or, if necessary, on two successive screens). The first has one really long paragraph and a highly complex chart next to it. The second has one short para, perhaps with a short numbered list and a link to further information in a PDF. Next to it is a much simplified chart. The text doesn't have to be readable.

Narration or text:

Take a look at these two screens from an imaginary e-learning programme. Which do you prefer?

Options and feedback:

This one [I think you'd be in the minority. Because in the second example there's much less text. And the key points are clearly shown in list form. If you really want more detail, there's a link to a separate, printable document. And the chart's been greatly simplified. After all, it's not what a chart says about you that counts - it's what it says.

Or this one [Not so hard, eh? For a start, there's much less text. And the key points are clearly shown in list form. If you really want more detail, there's a link to a separate, printable document. And the chart's been greatly simplified. After all, it's not what a chart says about you that counts - it's what it says.

Screen 3.2.2

Graphic/animation: Person surrounded by books and looking rather smug.

Narration or text:

Sometimes it can actually be a disadvantage to be a subject matter expert - what is sometimes called the 'curse of knowledge'. It's what leads you to believe that others have the same knowledge and interests as you, and are just as fascinated by all the theory and the detail.

Screen 3.2.3

Graphic/animation: Pic of Blaise Pascal to the left, with quote added in speech bubble.

Narration or text:

Way back in 1657, French mathematician Blaise Pascal explained how he "had made this letter longer, because I have not had the time to make it shorter."

Screen 3.2.4

Graphic/animation: Building on the above. A picture of Louise Brooks to the right, with quote added in speech bubble.

Narration or text:

And according to actress and writer Louise Brooks, "Writing is 1 percent inspiration, and 99 percent elimination." Unfortunately it does take longer to create content that is simple and concise, but it's definitely worth the effort.

Screen 3.2.5

Graphic/animation: Buzzword Generator Flash movie (I have this).

Narration or text:

It's so tempting to use all sorts of pompous-sounding buzzwords. Look how easy it is to create new ones of your own. Push the Generate button and see what the Buzzword Generator can come up with.

Screen 3.2.6

Graphic/animation: None

Narration or text:

When it comes to words it pays to keep it simple. That doesn't mean dumbing down or using an imprecise phrase when an accurate or more specific one is required; it just means choosing the

simple, everyday option wherever possible. Here are some examples. In each case, see if you can find a simpler alternative. Type it into the input box and select the OK button.

Activity: series of over-formal words and phrases; in each case the user types in their idea for a better alternative, clicks OK, gets some feedback and sees what we have to offer.

as a consequence of <because of>

discontinue <stop, end>

endeavor (verb) <Try, attempt>

facilitate <help>

remittance <payment>

residence <home>

with reference to <about, concerning>

purchase (verb) <buy>

whensoever <when, whenever>

remuneration <pay, salary, wages>

Screen 3.2.7

Graphic/animation: Pic of Chaucer. Speech bubble with the quote: "Speketh so pleyne at this time, I yow preye, that we may understonde what ye seye."

Narration or text:

Writing in plain English is not a new fangled idea - even Chaucer had the right idea, back in the fourteenth century.

3.3 Illuminate your material with imagery

Screen 3.3.1

Graphic/animation: Existing animation (WordWise 7-1).

Narration or text:

According to scientists, the most powerful influences on people's sensory input comes from visual sources. By adding a visual element to your e-learning materials, you will be making a more powerful and memorable statement, and that's certainly going to help you achieve your objectives.

Screen 3.3.2

Narration or text:

It's easier to see just how important pictures can be when you're forced to do without them. Take a look at the examples listed here and imagine how you'd go about communicating them in words alone. Then think how much easier it would be if you could use a photograph, a chart, a diagram or an illustration.

Text list:

The new office that we will all be moving to later this year.

Sales territories in the Indian sub-continent.

Welcome to our new head of HR.

The process to follow when troubleshooting a machine breakdown.

Our fall fashion collection.

The process of condensation.

The workings of the internal combustion engine.

Comparative sales figures over the past five years.

The cypress tree.

The structure of the Internet backbone.

Screen 3.3.3

Narration or text: It's important to recognize what type of visual to use and when. Take this example. Which type of visual, if any, would you employ in this situation?

Question stem: The founder of the company, Joanna Biggs.

Options and feedback:

None [That would be an opportunity missed. Pick another option.]

Illustration [An illustration would work, but there's a much simpler alternative. Have another go.]

Photo [Yes, a photo is an obvious option.] <Show the photo>

Chart [No, a chart is for numerical data. Pick another option.]

Diagram [No, a diagram is for clarifying structures or processes. Pick another option.]

Screen 3.3.4

Narration or text:

Here's a second example. Which type of visual, if any, would you employ in this situation?

Question stem: A proposed new departmental organization structure.

Options and feedback:

None [Well, you could display this information in ordinary prose, or better still as a table. However, you do have an opportunity here to use a visual that would make the point more powerfully. Pick another option.]

Illustration [Well, you may use an illustration to emphasize some aspect of the new organization, but not to present the structure itself. Pick another option.]

Photo [Well, you may use photographs to show some of the personalities involved, but not to present the structure itself. Pick another option.]

Chart [Well yes, in this case an organization chart, which is a special type of diagram.]

Diagram [That's right. Diagrams are ideal for clarifying structures or processes.] <Show the chart>

Screen 3.3.5

Narration or text: One more example. Which type of visual, if any, would you employ in this situation?

Question stem: A range of statistics, including current levels, highs and lows and percentage changes, for twenty of the world's largest stock markets.

Options and feedback:

None [That's right. The data here is too detailed to be presented using a chart and none of the other forms of visualization make any sense. However, presenting the data in ordinary prose would be far too hard on the reader. Our suggestion is a table.]

Illustration [Well, you may use an illustration to emphasize some interpretation of the data, but not to present the data itself. Pick another option.]

Photo [Well, you may use a photograph to add visual interest to the data, but not to present the data itself. Pick another option.]

Chart [A chart would be a possible option if the data was less detailed. As it is, a chart would hinder rather than help. Pick another option.]

Diagram [Diagrams are useful to clarify structures or processes, not to present numerical data. Pick another option.]

Screen 3.3.6

Narration or text:

What's a gratuitous graphic?

Question stem: What's a gratuitous graphic?

Options:

A rather saucy image

A graphic that's provided free of charge

A picture drawn on a napkin and left as a tip

Feedback (all options): No, this is a gratuitous image ... <image appears> Images that are there simply to decorate the page or to fill an empty space are just noise as far as your audience is concerned. It's OK not to have images on every screen.

Screen 3.3.7

Graphic/animation: Person sitting watching the TV.

Narration or text:

Before you head off home and slump down in front of the TV, ask yourself, what is it that video provides, that other media cannot?

Question stem: What is it that video provides, that other media cannot?

Options and feedback:

Cheap entertainment [Well other media can do that, you know.]

Movement [No, you can get movement from simple animation.]

A likeness of real people and things [Ever heard of a photograph?]

The combination of sound and pictures [Not quite. There are lots of ways of combining computer graphics with sound as in computer games or materials like these.

Recordings of real events [That's right, this is the province of video or, if you can do without pictures, audio.]

Screen 3.3.8

Graphic/animation: Weighing up the choices.

Narration or text:

As the most bandwidth-hungry medium, video should never be used just for the sake of it. But there are situations in which video is the only practical way of achieving a communication goal. Take these examples. In which of these cases would the use of video be justified?

Question stem: In which of these cases would the use of video be justified?

Options and feedback:

To show a movie clip [Yes, this is a sensible use of video, assuming it's relevant to the topic.]

To demonstrate a tennis stroke [Yes, there's no easy way of accomplishing this in words or still pictures.]

To show you how an engine works [Possibly, although an animation may be clearer.]

To welcome you to the course [Well, if all you are seeing is a head and shoulders shot of the presenter, then no. You'd be better off with text.]

To demo software [Yes, this can work quite well. There are many screen capture tools on the market that make it easy to create videos of software operations.]

To present a lecture [Well, there is not always a great deal of visual interest in a lecture. You may be better to run the lecture as audio, perhaps supplemented by slides.]

To playback an interview [Yes, this could work well, although much of the benefit could be achieved using audio.]

Screen 3.3.9

Graphic/animation: Montage of sources, ideally synchronised.

Narration or text:

These days you don't have to be an artist or a video director to create great looking visuals for your e-learning materials. Use a digital camera or camcorder to take your own photographs and movies. Or see what's available elsewhere on sites such as Google Images, Flickr and YouTube. Products like Excel are great for generating charts and there are plenty of tools to help you demonstrate software.

Do make use of all these new resources out there, but be careful to obtain the owner's permission before using copyrighted material.

3.4 Use audio where appropriate

Screen 3.4.1

Graphic/animation: Person listening to music using a personal stereo.

Narration or text:

The next time you sit down to enjoy a discussion on the radio or listen to your favorite Black Sabbath album, take a moment to think about what it is that audio provides that other media cannot?

Question stem: What is it that audio can achieve that other media cannot?

Options and feedback:

It attracts attention [It does do, but it's not unique in that respect. You can also grab attention with movement.] It conveys mood and atmosphere [This may not be a unique quality of sound, but it does do this very effectively.] It communicates words [Obviously this is not a unique property, as text also communicates words.] It conveys tone of voice [Yes, that's something that text cannot

achieve.] It allows us to listen to music [Yes, you need sound to communicate music (unless you're a musical genius and can hear the music just by reading the score).]

Screen 3.4.2

Graphic/animation: Weighing up the options (as before).

Narration or text:

As with video, while bandwidth is still limited it's important not to use audio for the sake of it. Limit your use of sound to those situations where it provides real added value. In which of these cases would you consider using audio as part of your e-learning materials?

Question stem: In which of these cases would you use audio as part of your e-learning materials?

Options and feedback:

To provide background music [Perhaps. Music certainly does influence mood, but some learners may find it an annoying distraction. Make sure they can turn it off.]

To ask a question or provide feedback [Be careful here. Learners like to reflect on a question before they answer it, so both the stem of the question and the options should be available in text. The same goes for the feedback.]

To provide information that will be used for reference [Audio is not an ideal medium here, because it's relatively slow to access. Learners will find it a lot easier to scan through text for what they want.]

To deliver a commentary accompanying a still image or animation [Yes, this makes a lot of sense. Providing audio alongside imagery is efficient because it uses both the learner's auditory and visual channels. It also frees up screen space, so you can make the images as large as possible.]

To replicate text on the screen [No, please don't do this, as it actually hinders the learner!]

Screen 3.4.3

Graphic/animation: Images appearing in synch with narration: (1) mic on table stand, PC alongside; (2) two PCs with network zig-zag connection between; (3) PC with speakers and headphones connected.

Narration or text: If audio is going to work for you as an option, you have to be able to tick a number of boxes ...

First of all, you need the facility to record audio. Now this isn't as difficult as it sounds, because a mic connected to your computer is all you require. Having said that, quality is important, and you may find you can get better results using a sound studio and even a professional voiceover artist - like me!

Then, the software that you're using to create your e-learning materials and your organization's network both need to support audio. That might mean you checking with IT.

Lastly, your learners need audio playback facilities on their computers, through speakers or headphones.

Screen 3.4.4

Graphic/animation: Homework.

Narration or text:

That's it for this module. You can move straight on to module 3, but like before, you might be better off letting some of this material sink in first.

Before we meet again, take some time to think ahead to a project you have coming up, considering the questions listed here.

Text:

Consider these questions in the context of an upcoming project:

- What can I do to hook my learners in emotionally?
- How can I avoid presenting my learners with too much information or information that is too complex?
- What imagery can I use to enhance my material?
- How will I source the imagery that I need?
- Will audio add value to my materials?
- How should I go about producing this audio?