

An ISD Course Design Checklist (An *Infoline* Job Aid)

Instructions

As an instructional designer, you must pay attention to many details. Once the initial design is written, it's important to have your design reviewed. Use this checklist to review the completeness and quality of your design. You can review your own design, but it is also good to have it checked by another instructional designer.

Read each statement on the checklist, and check as many boxes as you believe apply. For any item that you do not check, write in recommendations on the corresponding lines. Use a question mark to indicate any items that you lack the information to assess.

For more information, see *Infoline* No. 258905, "Course Design and Development." Purchase this issue as a downloadable PDF or order the print version [here](#).

During the design phase of ISD, a course director must pay attention to innumerable details. Once a design is written, the director needs to step back and assess the quality of the overall scheme. The director may also ask design and development team members (or, if no team was formed, people with relevant knowledge and skills) to assess design quality.

The checklist below is admittedly subjective. Everyone will not necessarily agree, for example, about what equals “adequate” resources. But whenever someone who reviews the checklist believes that a course lacks one of the desired characteristics, that person should be asked for suggestions to improve the course design. This request often brings useful advice. Responses also help the course director recognize when reviewers have an overly ambitious idea of what’s possible. In this case, the director may need to talk with reviewers to modify their expectations or to marshal their support for additional resources. Some public relations work may also be in order.

This checklist can be handed to a reviewer for use as a course design evaluation form, or the course designer can use it to evaluate his or her own design.

Instructions to reviewer:

Please review the attached design, then check as many of the descriptors below as you believe apply. For any descriptor that you do not check, please indicate in the space provided (use the back of the form, too, if necessary) what change(s) you recommend for improving the design. Or, use a question mark to indicate that you lack the information to assess the particular characteristic.

Please return this form in the enclosed envelope by _____.

Thank you.

Signature Block
(Course Director)

Course Title: _____

Course Objective(s): _____

The Design

- Describes training, education, and development capable of solving all or part of a performance problem. _____

- Is systematic; offers orderly plans. _____

- Is valid; is based on analyses of training population and job tasks, topics, and problems. _____

- Is efficient, uses least disruptive data collection methods and timing; uses appropriate technology for data collection and analyses, forms production, and so on. _____

- Considers training participants’ prior level of training. _____

- Respects resource constraints, but provides adequate resources for meeting the course objective(s). _____

- Appropriately involves training population representatives, their supervisors, and subject matter experts (SMEs). _____

(Job Aid continued on page 16)

Job Aid

- Is relevant and meaningful; focuses time on skills, knowledge, or attitudes that learners need on their jobs—and in which they need improvement. _____

- Is comprehensive; covers all essential tasks, topics, and problems. _____

- Emphasizes “need to know” tasks and topics; avoids extraneous information or activities. _____

- Emphasizes active learning, except when safety or deadline considerations dictate otherwise. _____

- Includes written performance objectives that state what a learner ultimately is expected to do, under what conditions, and to what standard(s). _____

- Logically sequences subordinate and final learning and performance objectives. _____

- Maintains (through trainer, facilitator, or learning materials) appropriate degree of control over process—to ensure efficient use of time, learner safety, and so on. _____

- Allows, to the extent possible, learners choices based on individual needs and control over their own rates of progress. _____

- Is internally consistent; matches test items to performance objectives. _____

- Is standardized; uses formats, forms, and data analysis categories in keeping with usual training and organizational requirements. _____

- Provides learners with adequate feedback on their progress. _____

- Offers learners adequate practice especially for difficult or important, but infrequently used, tasks. _____

- Includes job aids as necessary. _____

- Makes critical use of media, methods, and materials, avoids overly complex, expensive, or time-consuming strategies. _____

- Approximates or duplicates the context (physical surroundings, materials, tools, equipment, aids) in which learners must function after training. _____

- Clarifies roles and responsibilities of course developers, instructors, facilitators, and learners; incorporates plans to ensure accountability of achieving their responsibilities. _____

- Incorporates evaluation plans for individual learner’s progress and for the course itself. _____

- Incorporates plans for training documentation, noting any related level or organizational policy requirements. _____

- Appears reliable; pending pilot testing or implementation, seems reasonable to expect design to produce good results for its target audience. _____

