Effective Lesson Elements

Preview

Introduction	We examine the answers to these questions now:
	• What is a lesson?
	• What must it include?
	• How does an effective lesson work as a process for managing change?

Process: managing an effective lesson	The instructor gradually empowers the learner during a complex change-management process. Earlier in this course of instruction we have explored the phases of that process, and tagged it, *Becoming Consciously Competent*.
	Managing an Effective Lesson is another process at the heart of becoming consciously competent: it is a process nested within the larger process. Both the instructor and the learner are responsible for its success.

Instructor's limited responsibility	The instructor is present to the learner during only the first three phases of the process of becoming consciously competent:
	• Orientation
	• Persuasion
	• Instruction, Guided Practice, and Closure.
	The instructor is not directly responsible for the last two stages:
	• Independent Practice
	• Evaluation.

Lesson's critical attributes	These five instructor actions are the critical attributes of a lesson:
	• Orientation,
	• Persuasion,
	• Instruction,
	• Guided practice, *and*
	• Closure.
	The table on the next page reinforces earlier information about these five critical attributes of a lesson.

More…

More… Preview

Process   This table displays the five phases of the process during which the learner becomes consciously competent. The basis for this table is the change of states that the instructor educes in the learner.

Phase	Learner State	Instructor Action	Result for Learner
1.	Unaware Unwilling Not competent	*Orientation*: Presents attractive alternatives to whatever learner knows	Is aware of other options, some more attractive than the present situation.
2.	Aware Unwilling Not competent	*Persuasion*: Promotes strong feelings of interest in one option as best	Is aware of several options, but strongly interested in pursuing one of them.
3.	Aware Willing Not competent	*Instruction*: Builds information fields for acting and knowing *Guided Practice*: Supports learner's efforts to rehearse new knowledge *Closure*: Asks learners to • label/tag what they learn, • explain it in their own words, • give examples of how they will use their new knowledge at their work sites, *and* • predict results when they transfer learning to work sites.	Grasps knowledge needed for doing a new task. Takes reasonable risks, and gains independence from guidance • Stores new knowledge with consistent labels, • Corrects any misinformation, *and* • Plans to apply new knowledge
4.	Aware Willing Competent	*Independent Practice*: Monitors learner's independent efforts to master working task on the job	Gains mastery of working task, feels empowered, *and* has confidence in competence.
5.	Unaware Willing Competent	*Evaluation*: Observes and surveys learner at least 90 days after instruction	Demonstrates effectiveness of learning, and does working task at expected level of competence.

More…

More… Preview

Lesson elements

This table displays —

- the sequence of elements every lesson must have to empower any learner with new procedural and declarative knowledge; *and*
- which elements are critical to –
  – achievement of lesson objectives, *and*
  – measuring lesson effectiveness.

Element	Critical to achievement of lesson objectives	Critical to evaluation of lesson effectiveness
Within course: Instructor is present to learners.		
1.	Orientation	
2.	Persuasion	
3.		Learning standards
4.		Pre-test
5.	Instruction	
6.	Guided practice	
7.	Closure	
8.		Post-test
Outside course: Instructor is not present to learners.		
9.	Independent practice	

What's next?

The following documents list the definition, purpose, and examples of each of these effective lesson elements.

Orientation

Definition	*Orientation* is an experiential activity during which the instructor presents attractive alternatives to the knowledge the learner already possesses.

Orientation has these critical attributes:

- participation by every learner, *and*
- real or simulated experience.

Purpose	Use orientation to —

- stimulate learners' participation.
- focus learners on what they will learn.
- compare it to what they already know.
- make learners aware of at least one option that is more attractive than what they already know.

Examples	This table lists activities and examples of orientation.

Activity	Example
Promote group interaction with an "ice breaker."	Sally introduces Sam.
Tell an interesting story.	Jan's first day as a teller at Bank of America.
Show a videotape segment.	Kevin operates his Sony fax-modem.
Listen to an audiotape clip.	Corrine interviews Hal about his accident.
Take part in a simulation.	Pam and Jerry shut down a nuclear reactor.
Demonstrate a new task.	Tom shows Eric how to dust for fingerprints.
Recall a familiar event.	Gigi reviews last week's team meeting.

Persuasion

Definition	*Persuasion* is an activity in which the instructor promotes the benefits of the lesson. Critical attributes of persuasion include —
	
	• linking learners' personal goals to their choice to learn.
	
	• evoking a strong feeling of interest in choosing one option as –
	  – best of several, *or*
	  – better than the present situation.
	
	• describing the accountability which participants have for learning during this course.

Purpose	Use persuasion to —
	• gain the learners' commitment to course objectives.
	• stress the importance of –
	  – learning this skill or knowledge.
	  – transferring knowledge/skills to the work place.

Examples	Examples of persuasion include — • sharing achievement stories by course graduates. • asking learners what their expectations are for this course, then comparing them with the course objectives. • displaying the course objectives and relating them to the learners' goals back at the work site.

Back to Table of Effective Lesson Elements

Learning Standards

Definition   *Learning standards* are the set of adult learning behaviors by which participants govern themselves during each learning session.

Source   Learning standards result from a climate-setting process, involving both the instructor and the learners:

- The instructor –
  - asks learners to list their own self-governing rules.
  - posts list of learning standards to remind learners of their commitment.

- The learners agree with the instructor as to which learning standards are acceptable for all.

Examples   Here are examples of standards for adult learning sessions.

- Come to class on time.
- Bring class materials (guide, note pad, pen, videotape).
- Listen attentively while another person is talking.
- Tolerate viewpoints different from your own.
- Take breaks whenever you need them.
- Smoke only in designated areas.
- Let the instructor know in advance, if you expect to be –
  - coming late.
  - leaving early.
  - missing a significant part of the course.

Pre-test

Definition   A *pre-test* is a set of items or questions that measure the level
of competence that participants already have on the working tasks
that a course is expected to teach.

Purpose   Use the pre-test to —

- determine parts of the course participants may omit, if any.

- gather baseline information about participants' levels of knowledge, skills,
  attitudes, beliefs, values.

- compare results with –
  – other trainees' performance.
  – post-test results of their performance after training.

Example   Learners in this course respond to the pre-test
before or during the first session.

A copy of the pre-test for this course accompanies this Learner Guide.
It is too long to insert here, without overpowering the organization
of this document.

See: Welcome to our Course, Before-Course Questions.

Instruction

Definition   *Instruction* is an interactive process during which the instructor facilitates specific learning for a learner by "building in" knowledge.

Two functions of knowledge   This table tags and lists the acting and knowing fields which result from instruction.

Information Field	Information Display
Acting	• Action • Situation
Knowing	• Fact • Construct • Process • Principle • Concept • Metaconcept

Purpose   Use instruction to —

- cause learners to think consistently about the orientation experience.
- empower learners to become consciously competent to do working tasks.

More…

More… Instruction

Examples   This table lists roles and examples of instructional processes.

Instructor…	Learner…	Example
Tells	Listens	Interns hear researcher interpret how new measles vaccine works.
Displays text, graphics, video	Reads, views	Mechanics explore fuel injection process on screens of new diagnostic software application.
Models a task	Observes, imitates	Tim watches and helps Tom set up a schedule for interviewing SME's.
Interacts	Discusses, questions	Sue probes for hidden causes of team members' lack of motivation.
Simulates	Takes part	Buyers scan trend results for cutting discounts on new computer chips.

Phases of a working task   This table summarizes the three phases of a working task.

Phase	Instructor Action
Input	Describes what learner needs to know.
Performance	Shows how to do the task(s).
Output	Checks for learner's ability to discriminate • acceptable performance or product. • critical attributes missing from a defective performance or product.

Rule   Each lesson must focus on all three phases of one working task.

Guided Practice

Definition

Guided practice is a learning process during which the instructor empowers learners to demonstrate that they can do a specific task.
The instructor is available to support the learners, if needed.

Note

The instructor gradually withdraws support until the learners are totally independent while doing the task.

Purpose

Use guided practice to empower learners to become independently competent to do a specific task.

Process

This table lists descriptions of the four phases of guided practice.

Phase	Description
1	Learner — • demonstrates learning as instructor monitors task. • acts alone or interacts in a small group.
2	Instructor observes, coaches, and encourages risk-taking.
3	Instructor gives positive, prompt feedback on task results.
4	Learner applies feedback and improves task results.

Examples

Instructors guide the practice of learners in these ways:

• Present new situations to which learners must transfer knowledge.

• Observe learners as they teach knowledge to others.

• Question learners to validate their level of mastery of new knowledge.

Closure

Definition	*Closure* is the final element of a lesson in which the instructor gives learners various opportunities to restate the instruction. Closure is the flip side of the lesson's orientation.

Purpose	Use closure to reinforce transfer of learning in four different ways.

Closure sequence	This table shows you the closure sequence of questions, with examples to ask random learners.

Description	Example
1. Name or tag what they have learned.	• What is something you learned about in this lesson? • What tag do we give this information?
2. Explain what they have learned in their own words.	• What does this information mean? • How do you perform this task?
3. Give examples of how they will use the learning at work.	• How will you use this information at work? • How will this action help you at work?
4. Predict what will happen with fellow workers when they apply the learning.	What do you predict will happen to *you* and to your *co-workers* when you start using what you have learned in this lesson?

Tips	Here are tips for effective practice of closure. • Schedule your lesson activities backwards from lesson end to lesson beginning to allow about 10 minutes for closure. • Resist the temptation to omit these closure questions, "because we're running out of time!"

Post-test

Definition	A *post-test* is a set of performance items or questions that determine whether a course participant has learned to master the working tasks. The post-test format is an alternate set of items that meet the same objectives as the items in the pre-test.

Purpose	Use the post-test to —
	• determine which objectives of the course a participant has mastered.
	• gather information on participant performance, using an alternate form of items in the pre-test.
	• compare results with –
	   – performances of other participants, *and*
	   – their own performance before training.

Example	A copy of the post-test for this course does not accompany this Learner Guide. You will receive it during the last session. *Note*: To see it in advance of your completion of this course would prejudice the results of the post-test for you and other participants.

Tip	For now, review the pre-test, and imagine how you could meet the course objectives by responding to similar questions and performance items. *See:* Welcome to our Course, Before-Course Questions.

Independent Practice

Definition   *Independent practice* is the instructor's prescription for learners to practice a task or its parts —

- outside the classroom or learning center.
- without immediate support of a facilitator or instructor.
- with responsibility for reporting results to an instructor.

Purpose   Use independent practice to —

- build learners' confidence in their new knowledge.
- empower learners to work competently on their own.
- monitor learners' efforts to master a working task without your direct assistance.

Examples   Instructors assign learners tasks such as these as independent practice:

- Videotape yourself doing this new task for 10 minutes.
  Do every step in the action as you learned it.
  Return tape to me by next Tuesday, so I can view your results and evaluate your progress toward competence.

- Write two new computer programs, using the actions we have learned today. Run them, print the results, and show them to me before the lab session ends.

- Rewrite any correspondence you receive in the next week according to the principles of structured writing. Use your job aid.
  Send me a copy of –
  – original correspondence.
  – your version of it.
  – your comments about how easy or difficult it was to rewrite.

More…

More… Independent Practice

Guidelines   If you apply these guidelines about independent practice, then
you will better empower your learners:

- Prescribe practice sessions or practice items that require learners to use new declarative knowledge or procedural knowledge.

- Describe to learners exactly what you'll be expecting to observe –

  – about their practice session so you can evaluate it.

  – as behaviors which a supervisor can observe and evaluate.

- Give feedback to learners as soon as possible after the independent practice session, in a form that allows timely application.

Back to Table of Effective Lesson Elements