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ETEC 650 – Fundamentals of Instructional Design

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Preparing a Syllabus (Course Outline)

PART 1 – ABOUT THE PROJECT

In order to familiarize new faculty and lecturers of LaFortune University, the Director of the Centre for Faculty Development wishes to devise a year-long orientation program to support non-tenure track. Online training lessons with a 30-minute duration time period prepare faculty members with the transition to university teaching. As a faculty development specialist, the instructional program developed provides guidance and direction to new faculty members and allows non-tenure in administering teaching practices.

DATA SOURCES

Third-party sources: When observing the different formats of course syllabi from one undergraduate professor, information disclosed regarding course description, methodology, assessments, grading and policies aid in viewing how lecturers create and structure content to be relayed.

Research: Consulting two Canadian university websites regarding information to be included on course outlines helped to identify main and supporting tasks in the report. Furthermore, research conducted demonstrated methods used to construct the outline while providing insight as to how imperative a syllabus is for a course.

Part 2 – BACKGROUND

This part of the needs assessment addresses restating the request in preparing training to support new faculty and lecturers with the transition to university teaching. Background information concerning the topic includes restating the request, stating the business need, recounting the desired and current performance gap while highlighting a list of tasks to follow through with developing a special year-long orientation program for LaFortune University. Lastly, describing scenarios, providing information on the learners and their environment, specific constraints affecting the project along with evaluation methods will be disclosed.

The Request:

In order to support non-tenure track faculty members, the Director of the Centre at LaFortune University has decided to develop a special year-long orientation program. A series of 30-minute online lessons allow faculty to acquaint themselves with procedures pertinent to successful university teaching. For faculty members who complete the program, a certificate of completion

will be rewarded. According to the Director of the Centre, this is considered as something desirable when evaluating performance. Requesting the program involves the instructional designer to specifically devise how to prepare a course syllabus. For the purpose of the project, the instructional designer is responsible for transmitting information relevant to student success while addressing how to abide by educational strategies put forth. Based on the information available, new faculty members may not be aware of the methodology the educational experience entails.

Business Need Underlying the Request:

The training will benefit the university in that full-time, non-tenure track faculty will be able to better prepare themselves for the teaching experience in a university setting. The business need of this project is to contain expenses in teaching new lecturers to work effectively and become comfortable with university teaching practices. Informing new faculty members with no previous experience in higher education teaching of the high turnover rate occurring at LaFortune University is also the objective. With a variety of training, teaching and research backgrounds, the Director of the Centre would like for new lecturers to be inclined to remain within the university.

Global Training Goal:

New lecturers and clinical professors will be able to use the skills acquired in this program to manage class structure effectively and increase productivity in an academic learning environment in order to ease the transition to university teaching thus reducing turnover.

Module Goal:

New faculty members will be able to provide a clear framework when creating a course syllabus regarding the expectations, objectives and overall curriculum of a course to ensure students meet the requirements to achieve academic success.

Gap Between Real and Ideal Performance

The Current Situation:

Charlotte is a permanent, new lecturer on the non-tenure track at LaFortune University. At the start of every semester, she spends countless hours perfecting the course syllabus that is to be distributed to students. Charlotte ponders as to whether she is being descriptive, fair and equipped with what she is disclosing along with specifying course materials that are stimulating. Despite planning and crafting an outline to the best of her ability each time, she believes she is not prepared when it comes to providing an enriching course description, enforcing proper academic integrity and is not well-informed of the university's standards and policies. She often constantly forgets to address evaluation methods fully which leaves students puzzled as to what

is expected of them. Additionally, feels pressured to design a syllabus that is too detailed and the design of the outline is disorganized.

The Ideal Situation:

Charlotte is a permanent, new lecturer who has successfully narrowed down the information to include in her course syllabus prior to the commencement of each new semester. She provides brief course descriptions, contact information along with classroom etiquette and rules she would like for students to follow. When contemplating required course materials, she decides to create a course pack with relevant readings and blank pages so students can take notes accordingly when completing class work or homework. Charlotte also ensures that assessments are interesting and includes pertinent assignment information with the grading weight for how each assessment contributes to students' final grade in the class. Moreover, as assignments are introduced in sufficient detail, she opts with providing additional description sheets for assessments that acknowledges due dates, objectives and steps to take in order to complete tasks. With this, students know the framework and purposes of course projects. Charlotte also now knows which documents and records to consult when including information on plagiarism, safe space classrooms, school resources and services for students to be aware of.

Tasks in Current Performance:

- Devotes large amounts of time to structuring a course syllabus
- Identifies course methodology and description in detail
- Uses jargon and unnecessary specifics when describing course content
- Omits learning objectives and outcomes
- Contemplates course materials and readings that are required
- Unaware of university policies, procedures and services pertinent to student success
- Indicates non-explicit information regarding evaluation methods
- Chooses simple headings and formats for organizational and aesthetic purposes of the course outline

Tasks in Ideal Performance:

End Result:

New lecturers will be prepared to develop a course outline that includes all components and key information to help students understand course requirements, objectives, and assessment tasks prior to the first day of a class session.

Main & Supporting Tasks:

- ❖ Label general information about the course
 - State instructor and teaching assistant contact information
 - Disclose preferred method of communication(s)
 - List full name(s)
 - List e-mail address(es)
 - List phone number(s)

- List office hours
 - List office location
 - State pertinent professional and institutional information
 - List title of the instructor
 - List title teaching assistant
 - List faculty
 - List department
 - List university
- Describe the course
 - Identify the course information
 - State the course title
 - State the course time
 - State the course day(s)
 - State the course location
 - State room location
 - State the course term
 - Explain what the course entails
 - State course content
 - Identify course topics
 - State course goals
 - Describe who the course is for
- Explain the purpose of the course
 - Provide a course overview
 - Define goals and skillsets pertinent to successfully completing the course
 - State what type of access is needed to participate in class activities outside of designated class time
 - State classroom expectations, rules and conduct
 - Identify learning objectives
- ❖ Describe components of the course
 - Devise a course calendar
 - Design a weekly class schedule
 - Identify week
 - Identify date
 - Identify lecture topics
 - Identify readings to be completed
 - Identify deadlines
 - Identify statutory holidays
 - Identify what date the semester begins and ends
 - Distinguish important dates
 - List drop deadlines
 - List withdrawal dates
 - List dates for activities
 - Indicate oral presentation dates
 - Indicate guest speaker class sessions

- Indicate dates for make-up classes
- Explain course materials
 - Choose texts and required readings
 - Explain where to locate and retrieve hard copy texts
 - State if written matter will be provided or viewed electronically
 - Choose resources to consult
 - List any course website or portal used for the class
 - Identify online library course reserves for students
 - State supplies or tools needed
 - List laboratory instruments
 - List material for art activities
- Describe assessment tasks
 - Describe content of assignments
 - Indicate assessment type
 - Indicate length
 - Indicate due date
 - Indicate value/weight
 - Indicate a brief overview
 - Indicate assignment submission method
 - Describe type of course assignments
 - State course research paper(s)
 - State course projects
 - State course exams
 - State course oral presentation(s)
 - Define grading scheme
 - List grade letter range
 - List numerical grade range
 - List grade point
- ❖ Define classroom philosophy and learning environment
 - State attendance policy
 - Explain responsibility of the student to attend all sessions
 - Discuss punctuality
 - Discuss break times
 - Discuss importance of taking notes for material presented
 - Organize a positive learning environment
 - Define ethical behavior for students
 - Explain how to respect differences of opinions
 - Explain the proper way to share ideas
 - Explain the proper use of cellular and electronic devices
 - State that devices should be placed on silent mode
 - State laptops' intended use for course purposes
 - Describe department's policies and standards
 - Explain process of final approval for grades appearing on transcripts
 - Indicate grade submission to department chair

- Propose the submission of oral and written proficiencies
 - Explain the right to English and French language use for assignments
- Indicate under what circumstances a student may potentially fail
 - Describe expectations in respect to assigned due dates
 - Indicate assignments are due at midnight
 - Indicate late assignments will receive grade deductions of X% per day late
 - Explain procedures for personal circumstances that may arise
 - Indicate the requirement of appropriate documentation (i.e. physician note)
 - Indicate to notify instructor of any issues beyond control
- ❖ Demonstrate academic integrity
 - Define plagiarism
 - Indicate the academic code of conduct strictly prohibits plagiarism
 - Explain the offense and repercussions if students were to plagiarize
 - Explain that plagiarized material is information not cited from an original source
 - Explain that plagiarized material refers to images, oral presentations, reports, etc.
 - Explain the American Psychological Association (APA) writing format
 - Indicate academic documents abide by the APA citation style
 - Explain where to access APA style guides for citing and referencing material
 - Identify services to meet student needs
 - Invite students to inquire about concerns
 - Demonstrate being readily available for any questions
 - Recognize special needs related to learning
 - Explain various services available within the university
 - List counselling services
 - List services for students with disabilities
 - List services for international students
 - List health services
 - List academic advising within the faculty
 - List financial aid services

Learners

General Demographics

Primary learners are new non-tenure track lecturers and clinical professors at LaFortune University. All faculty members possess different skillsets, educational backgrounds and professional experience to bring forth in the transition to university teaching.

Data:

- Age: 30-55 years old
- Educational level: Postgraduate doctoral degree (PhD)

- Employment type: Non-tenure track appointment
- Employment duration: Limited term, contract
- Employment position: Assistant professor, adjunct professor
- Some new faculty members have background in teaching in continuing education
- Some new faculty members have background in corporate training settings
- Close to no new faculty members have previous experience teaching in higher education settings

Three Learners in Depth:

Low maintenance learner: John has been a qualified instructor in the continuing education sector for ten years. He seems to enjoy being immersed in an environment that covers a large range of areas and disciplines and caters to individuals who are looking to further their professional careers. He is experienced in delivering instruction and administering educational practices conducive to learning and has been employed at Vanier College all throughout his professional career. Recently, he had accepted an employment offer he simply could not refuse due to higher salary and better working conditions at LaFortune University. John is extremely efficient and adept in creating stimulating course lessons and monitoring student progress. He is skilled in preparing students for the topics and concepts in his classes and ensures that all is laid out appropriately at the start of each semester. However, John is particularly new to teaching in a university setting and while he feels comfortable in preparing and planning learning activities, he would like to familiarize himself with university standards and maintain proper academic integrity.

Average learner: Anastasia is a young female who has been working in a corporate training setting for two years. She enjoys her work and is responsible in relaying new material and knowledge to employees in the workplace. As a trainer, she makes sure that she is broadening her own skills by staying well-informed on new advancements in the industry as well as being readily available to answer any inquiries from individuals. Since she is always looking for new ways to cultivate her expertise, she has decided to move on to a new business venture. An employment opportunity at LaFortune University to be on the non-tenure track faculty list has interested her. While she has previous experience crafting lessons and delivering instruction to individuals, being immersed in an environment with young students is unfamiliar to her. She is inexperienced in educational practices and has never been in a classroom setting teaching young students. Anastasia is confident that her prior experience in corporate teaching will be an asset to teaching but she is fearful that students may not like her and that she will not be able to establish rules and structure course content successfully.

High maintenance learner: Jacob is a highly motivated and skilled individual who tends to grasp new things and break down difficult concepts easily. He has obtained his doctoral (PhD) degree from McGill University last summer and has been hired as a limited term, non-tenure track professor for the new year preceding his graduation in the Department of

Education at LaFortune University. He has always felt comfortable in attending conferences and panels and ranked as a top student in the Educational Studies program at McGill. After graduation, he wished to be a professor at the undergraduate level delivering instruction in a way that cultivates and enriches the student learning process. Since he is no longer a student in a formal school setting conducting research and composing papers, he is used to working with material that is challenging. With this new post, he is worrying how he will relay teaching practices and information to students where it is simple and clear. He is also unaware of explicit policies and procedures that LaFortune University enforces and is entirely new to university teaching. He does not know how to structure a course, work collaboratively with students who are younger than him and is very nervous to start lecturing. With no previous experience in teaching, Jacob is becoming frustrated and anxious when compiling course information and narrowing topics for his class. He cannot seem to design a course plan to transmit to students.

Characteristics of the Learning Environment:

The Director of the Centre at LaFortune University has requested that the training program be conducted with 30-minute online sessions. With many faculty members having access to personal electronic devices, online training classes can be accessed from outside the university. There are also several laboratories in the school equipped with monitors and computers which faculty can connect to in order to view sessions. The sponsor requests that learning is done asynchronously and having access to media devices is crucial in order to acquire a certificate of completion.

Constraints on the Project:

- Some learners have prior experience with teaching
- Some learners possess different levels of educational attainment
- The sponsor requests the program to be a year-long orientation
- There are many topics to be covered in the training program
- Short 30-minute duration of each session
- The sponsor has not indicated any method of organization
- Cost and expenses needed to fund the training
- High turnover rate for non-tenure track faculty
- Some faculty may not have existing licenses or certification to contribute to CEU's

Software Constraints:

- Mac OS X operating systems and platforms
- Windows XP operating systems and platforms
- Microsoft Office applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.)
- Internet access and connection to web browsers (Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari, etc.)

PART 3 – REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROJECT

Business Need:

Decreasing the high turnover rate at LaFortune University by containing expenses and facilitating new lecturers' transition to university teaching with the training program.

Performance Need:

Implementing a training program to help with developing and structuring a course outline will allow for new lecturers to plan learning objectives, outcomes and course curriculum for a given course.

Learning Need:

Non-tenure track faculty will develop a deeper understanding of university teaching practices when making improvements to assessment plans, course overview, and learning objectives in a course syllabus.

Preference Need:

New faculty members can determine how to present their course outline when selecting relevant information to include according to the training and development process.

Main Objectives

1) Reaction Objective:

Present new lecturers with information pertinent to:

- Recognizing trainer's ability to incorporate adequate description of syllabus structure and course components
- Catering to the learning needs of university students
- Enhancing teaching skills focusing on strategies to create a course plan
- Recognizing the purpose of a course outline for student success

2) Learning Objective:

Upon completion of the program, new lecturers will be able to:

- Devise learning objectives within a higher education context
- Read grading ranges and criteria imperative to student success
- Arrange an organized format of a course outline (headings, tables, charts, etc.)
- Analyze course material to create course assessments

3) Application Objective:

When creating a course outline, new lecturers will be able to:

- Outline student rights according the university's academic code
- Prepare assessments to cater to students' overall learning process
- Develop favorable learning outcomes in the classroom
- Change the way they draft a course outline design and layout

4) Impact Objectives:

Enable new lecturers to grasp the development initiative in applying what they have learned by:

- Elaborating on pedagogical information and objectives to enable students to function efficiently within the classroom
- Improving overall plan for a course to increase student engagement
- Evaluating teaching methods conducive to student learning

Evaluation**Level 1: Sample Satisfaction Survey – Kirkpatrick Level 1**

(Adapted from Carliner, 2003)

Assessing reactions and analyzing responses from learners with a questionnaire to view the effectiveness of the training and individual skill assessment.

(1 – lowest score: not at all/low 5 – highest score: a lot/strong)

To what extent did the trainer incorporate an adequate description of crafting each component of a course outline?

1 2 3 4 5

How important is a clear, organized course plan in catering to the needs of the university students' academic success?

1 2 3 4 5

Using a number, rate the likelihood of applying skills taught to structuring a course outline?

1 2 3 4 5

Using a number, rate your expertise in executing a course outline prior to the program?

1 2 3 4 5

Rate the effectiveness and performance of this particular online training program.

1 2 3 4 5

How likely would you be to recommend this training program to a new lecturer or faculty member?

1 2 3 4 5

How well did the content of the training program expand your knowledge and improve your aptitude level?

1 2 3 4 5

Level 2: Sample Criterion-Referenced Assessment

Learners will be assessed on whether or not they meet the learning objectives. For the purpose of this evaluation, learners (new faculty members) of the program will be asked to answer questions regarding performance and readiness to learn with a quiz.

Learning objective #1: Devise learning objectives within a higher education context

Question #1

How do you create measurable learning objectives?

- a. Describe to students what they will be able to do after the semester is over
- b. Describe to students the action or skill to be achieved relevant to the overall course
- c. Describe what students will be able to do by the end of each assessment task
- d. Describe objectives using two or more action verbs

Answer: B. Writing objectives that are specific to an intended outcome, behavior or ability.

Question #2:

Which of the following is an appropriate measurable verb to use when writing learning objectives?

- a. Show
- b. Understand
- c. Demonstrate
- d. Think

Answer: C. The new lecturer is illustrating that the student will use or apply the information from the course.

Learning objective #2: Read grading ranges and criteria imperative to student success

Question #1:

Which of the following is the correct way to best describe the grading systems for course tasks?

- a. Numerical percentage
- b. Grade point average (GPA)
- c. Letter grade
- d. Grading scale

Answer: A. Numerical grades are often converted to final letter grades and depict an accurate scoring.

Learning objective #3: Arrange an organized format of a course outline (headings, tables, charts, etc.)

Question #1:

What is typically presented on a course outline?

- a. General contact and location information, course description, course objectives, course format, assessment descriptions, grading scheme, policies and procedures, academic integrity
- b. General contact information, class times and location, course description, course objectives, course format, assessment descriptions, grading scheme, policies and procedures, academic integrity
- c. General contact information, class times and location, course description, course objectives, course format, assessment descriptions, course schedule, grading scheme, policies and procedures, academic integrity
- d. General contact information, class times and location, course description, course objectives, course format, course schedule grading scheme, policies and procedures, academic integrity

Answer: C. A course outline must highlight and detail all course specifics along with university protocols.

Question #2:

Which of the following is the best way to label and categorize assignments, projects and tests?

- a. Insert table with headings and descriptions
- b. Present a numbered sequenced of steps to follow
- c. Images and shapes
- d. Charts

Answer: A. The most useful way to organize course task information is with the use of a table characterizing assessment type, weight, submission deadlines in brief detail.

Learning Objective #4: Analyze course material to create course assessments

Question #1:

What is the best way to prepare oneself before crafting and executing a course outline?

- a. Consult with fellow colleagues who have taught the same course
- b. Attend faculty meetings to discuss general program goals, teaching approaches, and common assessment tasks to assign
- c. Analyze appropriate course-related texts and readings that closely relate to the course title to deepen understanding of material to relay
- d. Discuss with students preferred course work and how they would like to be evaluated

Answer: C. It is essential to retrieve resources that are relevant to course content in order to weave together existing knowledge with current ideas.

Application Objectives

Objective #1: Outline student rights according the university's academic code

Scenario: You have recently discovered a student has plagiarized a section of a research paper. Without knowing if this was intentionally done, you have decided to confront the student and address the issue. Indicate below how the course outline will serve a purpose in approaching the situation.

Program Objectives	Measures	Data Collection Method	Data Sources	Timing
<u>Level 1: Reaction</u> Present new lecturers with information pertinent to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognizing trainer's ability to incorporate adequate description of syllabus structure and course components - Catering to the learning needs of university students - Enhancing teaching skills focusing on strategies to create a course plan - Recognizing the purpose of a course outline for student success 	4 out of 5 on a 1 to 5 rating scale for <i>each</i> question Certificate of completion	Sample satisfaction survey	New lecturers (learners)	Immediately following the training session
<u>Level 2: Learning</u> Upon completion of the program, new lecturers will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Devise learning objectives within a higher education context - Read grading ranges and criteria imperative to student success - Arrange an organized format of a course outline (headings, tables, charts, etc.) - Analyze course material to create course assessments 	Must score <i>correct</i> on all multiple-choice questions	Questionnaire	New lecturers (learners)	3 months after the training session (coincide with end of a term)
<u>Level 3: Application</u> When creating a course outline, new lecturers will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outline student rights according to the university's academic code - Prepare assessments to cater to students' overall learning process - Develop favorable learning outcomes in the classroom - Change the way they draft a course outline design and layout 	Full 100% completion of objectives	Post-training teacher self-assessment Post-semester student evaluation form	New lecturers (learners) Students who have taken the course	6 months after the training session (2 nd semester following the training)
<u>Level 4: Impact</u> Enable new lecturers to grasp the development initiative in applying what they have learned by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaborating on pedagogical information and objectives to enable students to function efficiently within the classroom - Improving overall plan for a course to increase student engagement - Evaluating teaching methods conducive to student learning 	Full 100% performance of objectives	Interview with the sponsor	Sponsor	12 months after the training session

References

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