

Components of Effective Online Learning - Debra Beach

Among the main aspects needed to achieve a successful ID for online learning communities are:

Technology

Access to technology, connectivity, and ability of user (learner) to navigate and use the intended tool are important factors (Palloff & Pratt, 1999). Overlooking data on the users (learners), whether they have current or specific technologies (e.g. computers, hardware and software), and their potential ability to connect to and utilize any instructional tool or content can result in inaccessibility and subsequent ineffectiveness of the intended learning treatment/s.

Ease of Use

Usability and findability are dependant upon the architecture and design of the tool and experience (Preece, 2000). Poorly designed interfaces and navigation contribute to the frustration of the user. Thoughtfully designed and tested environments provide users with less ambiguity and a sense of control.

Learning Framework

The investigation into and planning of the intended content, who the audience (users/learners) is, and what their expectations of the experience are is critical to a effective learning framework (Preece, 2000). The learning experience itself should contain clear objectives and guidelines to ensure learner success (Palloff & Pratt, 1999). These objectives and guidelines should be included and relate directly to the course content. Specifically stating the objectives for each week/unit and providing clear rubrics will do much to ensure that the learner/s understand what is required of them. Lastly, It is important to include and plan for the social aspect of learning online, which engages learners and promotes the development of a sense of community online (Preece, 2000).

References

Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (1999). Building learning communities in cyberspace: Effective strategies for the online classroom. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Preece, J. (2000). Online communities: Designing usability, supporting sociability. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons.