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Designing Online Courses

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Needs Assessment and Context Assignment

Introduction and Overall Context

The course that I will like to develop will be on Basic Computer Skills. The course will teach students how to use a number of applications and complete computer related tasks. This course could be used by a number of organizations but the focus will be on non-profit organizations such as community centers and public libraries. At the public library in my hometown there is computer courses offered that teach the basics, however, the most you will receive if you do not attend the class is basic tutorials. This will be an alternative to just going over training documents and actually provide an option to complete the course at your own pace online. This will be helpful who are unable to attend the classes due to scheduling conflicts.

I. What is the problem or gap?

The problem is that everyone who has an interest in taking basic computer classes offered by their community may not be able to attend the face to face course. The new opportunity here is to allow the computer course to be taken self-paced and completely online.

There is a population of adult learners who do not have basic computer skills which limits there employability.

II. How will this course (help) solve this problem?

This course will provide an opportunity for adult learners to practice and learn basic computer skills. The course will provide instruction in a number of ways that make the experience worthwhile. The course will not only focus on one task but multiple tasks. Sometimes I'm even surprised how something I consider so basic is really new and exciting to someone else. There is a lot to be learned and as people become more comfortable and confident using computers their self-esteem also improves. The skills gained from taking this course will provide the learners with the basic computer skills that are expected or required for most jobs.

IV. Who is the target audience?

The target audience is adult learners who lack basic computer skills and have been unable to obtain employment or would like to advance in or change their jobs.

III. What are the overall instructional goals?

- *Students will have knowledge of the World Wide Web and be able to navigate and search the web effectively*
- *Students will be able to use Email Applications to send emails, work with attachments, forward messages, create folders, set up away messages, recognize spam and other email related tasks*
- *Students will learn to create documents, save in different formats, making changes with the document, adding headers, footers and page numbers and a number of other task*
- *Students will learn to create basic spreadsheets and create formulas*
- *Students will learn how to navigate Windows operating system, find files, create folders, rename documents, etc.*

IV. What is the technology context?

The course will be developed in Moodle. Students will most likely be using the computer lab in the library when taking the course. The course will include videos, audio, and other forms of multimedia. Headsets may be necessary from time to time.

V. Future Data Collection

I would collect data on students who currently take the courses offered by the library, find out what skills they had at the beginning of the training, what skills they hope to acquire and what they have acquired up to that point. This information would be very valuable in terms of selecting course material that is relevant and useful. Assessments at the beginning and end of the course would also be helpful as a way of finding out what students learned and help with future course instruction.

Basic Computer Skills

Course Description

This is an introductory course to basic computer usage. This course will cover email, internet, word processing, operating system, and other basic computer skills. Upon completion students will be expected to demonstrate competence in basic computing.

Major Course Goals

1. Computer Skills:

Students should be able to navigate and explore operating system.

- a. Students will be able to create, rename, delete and organize files.
- b. Students will be able to move and copy files from one location to another.
- c. Student will learn the common extensions used to identify files.
- d. Students will be able to locate and find saved files.

2. Internet Skills:

Students should be able to successfully search and navigate the internet

- a. Students will learn to create folders to organize favorites.
- b. Students will learn to use advance search functions to better
- c. Familiar with search engines and browsers
- d. Students will learn to identify and evaluate search results

3. Email Skills:

Students will practice and learn email skills.

- a. Students will be able to send and receive email
- b. Students will be able to work with attachments
- c. Students will be able to create folders, rules and out of order messages
- d. Students will be able to identify and handle spam

4. Word Processing Skills:

Students will learn to use productivity software and an effective way.

- a. Students will learn to use Microsoft Word to create documents and perform different tasks.
 - i. Students will learn to use different formatting techniques
 - ii. Students will learn to add headers and footers to documents.
 - iii. Students will learn to add page numbers and create a table of contents

- iv. Students will learn to add images, graphics, charts and graphs, and hyperlinks to documents
- v. Students will be able to save documents in several different formats

Breakdown of Goals

	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Email	Students will learn to use Internet based email.	Students will be able to open, send, receive, forward and delete emails. Students will be able to create folders to organize emails. Students will be able to work with attachments.	Students will be confident in their abilities to work with different email clients and ability to easily transfer the knowledge to other clients.
Computer Skills - Operating Systems/Software	Students will familiarize themselves with the Windows OS.	Students will be able to navigate and explore the operating system with ease. Students will also be able to create files and folders and perform different operations on them.	Students will be confident in their ability to perform basic task within the OS.
Internet	Students will be familiar with the popular search engines and browsers. Students will be able to perform basic search functions. Students will learn to efficiently and effectively search the web.	Students will be able to perform basic and advance searches. Students will be able to organize favorites.	Students will feel comfortable and confident using the internet.
Productivity Software	Students will have knowledge of various productivity software and its capabilities.	Students will be able to perform basic tasks using Word and Excel and possibly other software.	Students will be confident in their abilities to do basic task using productivity software.

Prerequisites

Students at the least should be comfortable with the functions of a computer. Students should be comfortable with powering on the computer, shutting down and restarting. It is ideal that students be comfortable using the keyboard and mouse.

Learner's Analysis

Many of the students in the course will be adult learners wishing to obtain basic computer skills. Students will possibly have a slow start because of the content of the course being in an online format but with a little guidance I have no doubt in the learners' ability to grasp the information. Some students will do better with written documentation while others may need something more engaging. The overall attitude is likely to be positive.

Prior Knowledge of the Subject Matter

Students are not expected to have a vast amount of prior knowledge involving computers. At the least students should be comfortable with the most basic tasks which include starting the computer, restarting, shutting down, and browsing the internet. Although not required, students should have some keyboarding background, familiarity with the keys on the keyboard and their functions. Students should have some experience working in productivity software and be comfortable with the menus and basic functions.

Affective Elements

Most students will likely have a preference for hands on learning in a face to face so there may be a bit of a learner's curve here because the course will be online.

The learner's motivations will vary but many will be looking to acquiring computer skills to help gain employment. Others will be motivated by personal growth and development.

The cognitive styles may vary but most will require active experimentation and some type of concrete experience as well. Being able to hear and see what they're learning and then being able to actual perform the actions will be big for these learners.

Abilities and Aptitudes

Some students will be able to read a tutorial/description and easily be able to process the learning complete the task.

Some students will struggle with written directions and will do better with video tutorials, simulations and more personalized instruction.

Some students will be more open and ready to learn new skills while some may be intimidated by the technology and require more guidance

Attitudes

The general attitude of the learners will likely be positive.

The learner's will have a determination to acquire the knowledge and know how offered by the course

Additional Information that would be helpful

It would be helpful to have more information about the learner's prior knowledge and learning preferences. To obtain information about the prior knowledge I could use a survey or pre assessment. A pre assessment would be valuable because knowing what the students already know would help to better setup the course to be the most valuable to the learners. As we know when students are not challenge they tend to lose interests and therefore the course must present new information and skills and not offer just a review of what students already know. A survey would be a nice tool to use to find out what students expect from the course and what type of resources they would find helpful. Using surveys and assessments could essentially help to shape the course and more directly reach the learners.