

# LEARNING SUPPORT THROUGH LEARNING GUIDE DESIGN

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## Abstract

*Outcomes-based education and training calls for a different approach to learning support. One of the challenges in Distance Learning is guiding learners towards lifelong learning with the aid of specific learning interventions built into the learning guide. This learning guide, the primary medium of communication in Distance learning, must meet the requirements of outcomes-based education and training. Our learners need a learning guide that is designed to:*

- *direct them through a series of appropriate learning activities, and*
- *direct them to a range of resources,*

*thereby providing the support they need to achieve the outcomes set for a particular programme and/or qualification.*

*This paper focuses on the design of learning support in the learning guide, specifically instructional design and layout design, which will ensure facilitation of learning. The Centre for Courseware Design and Development (CCDD), Technikon SA, acknowledges the fact that industry has real requirements that must be met. In order to guide learners towards achieving outcomes set to satisfy specific industry requirements, the CCDD has adopted a co-operative approach in the design of learning guides.*

*During the design phase (of the design and development cycle) a team of stakeholders puts together the instructional strategy (design/plan) for the programme/instructional offering as well as specific measures that would ensure implementation of the design by the author of the guide. Implementation of the strategy ensures that the learning support will feature in the learning guide as planned by the design team.*

*In this presentation my colleague, Babs Greven, Electronic Originator at the CCDD, and I will illustrate with practical examples, what exactly happens in the design of the learning guide and how this approach breaks down barriers to access and success.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Centre for Courseware Design and Development (CCDD), Technikon SA, started to explore and refine their model for courseware design and development about eight years ago. When the SAQA Act came into play, the CCDD realised that the design of the learning guide flows directly from the design of the qualification. Most of you are familiar with the fact that all formal qualifications must be registered with SAQA, meeting very specific requirements

(Purpose statement, Exit level outcomes, Specific outcomes, Assessment criteria, and so on.)  
Flowing from this process is the design of a learning guide for each offering/module.  
Although the importance of qualification/programme design cannot be over stressed, this paper focuses mainly on the design of the learning guide.

Many questions had to be addressed before we, at the CCDD could get to the stage of referring to our learning guides as meeting OBET requirements. These questions are among others:

- Do technikons provide career-oriented education?
- What does OBET imply within the context of distance learning?
- Do our learners know how to learn?
- Where does content/theory fit in if critical and specific outcomes are so important?
- How do we integrate specific and critical outcomes?
- How do we integrate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes?
- What is the technikon's responsibility?

It has become clear over the last few years that very few learners know how to learn. We so proudly refer to Technikon teaching as being career-oriented: With distance learning we bring learning to the learner! Except, nobody has taught us how to learn. We have regular (once/twice a year) contact classes, resource centres, tutors spread over the country, online delivery, etc. Except, nobody has taught us to learn. Whether we want to believe it or not, us academics still expect our learners to memorise information from textbooks and so-called study guides and repeat to us that information for assessment purposes.

## 2. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Within the context of OBET, the instructional designer takes the client through a systematic and reflective process of translating principles of learning and instruction, into a detailed plan (instructional strategy) for learning materials, activities, information resources and evaluation (adapted from Smith, P.L. & Ragan, T.J. 1999. Instructional Design).

This design process includes activities around the following:

- **Analysis and design (slides)**
  - Qualification registration information (at SAQA)
  - OBET learning guide: the definition
  - Industry requirements (also existing gaps in industry)
  - Level descriptors
  - Learner profile (to determine learner needs and implications for learning guide design)
  - Unit standards
  - Goal and task analysis
  - Formulation of outcomes and objectives
  - Assessment criteria
  - Design of assessment activities
  - Identification of content (that will best enable the learner to perform the activities and therefore eventually achieve the set outcomes)
  - Learning strategies
  - A variety of (re)sources
  - Layout design specifications

- **Development (slides)**
  - Implementation of the strategy by a team of role-players:
    - Author
    - Moderator
    - Instructional designer
    - Editor
    - Graphic designer
    - Electronic originator
    - Quality assurance practitioner
    - Project Manager
- **Evaluation**
  - Implementation of the evaluation strategy: formative and summative evaluation of the design and development process and the effectiveness of the materials

### 3. EXAMPLE: LAW OF PROCEDURE I

I would like to illustrate to you what the design team for Law of Procedure did by

- Showing you the instructional strategy for one chapter in the learning guide, and
- Taking you briefly through the process we followed to compile this strategy.

The design team in this case consisted of:

- Representatives from the Programme Group: Law, our client (academics)
- The author and lecturer of Law of Procedure (academic)
- The moderator (from industry)
- The instructional designer, who facilitated the design workshop
- Representatives from the sheriff's profession

#### 3.1 Instructional strategy (slides)

Annexure A shows the instructional strategy for Chapter 2 of Law of Procedure I. The first column simply conveys the chapter theme/ heading. Note that the process is facilitated in the same order as reflected by the strategy document, in other words, starting with the outcomes. These outcomes are formulated based on the aspects referred to section 2 of this document, under analysis and design. The chapter outcomes are then broken down into manageable chunks by the design team and subsequently referred to as learning objectives. Design and formulation of appropriate assessment activities follow, after which the team start identifying the content that will best enable the learner to perform those assessment activities and in doing so, achieve the learning objectives. Once all the learning objectives had been achieved, the learner will find that he/she had automatically achieved the chapter outcomes. Easier said than done.

Throughout the process the design team is reminded of some crucial aspects that can be seen as success factors in the design of the product (slides):

- requirements of outcomes-based education and training,
- industry requirements/gaps as expressed earlier on in the design workshop,
- learner needs (distance learning, adult learners, inexperienced learners,),
- the integrated learning process,
- critical outcomes and lifelong learning,
- integration of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes,
- the learning guide definition

The author can now start writing the manuscript, since the instructional strategy provides all the detail one would normally need to plan your writing. The instructional designer further

provides a one-on-one academic support to ensure that the instructional strategy is implemented as intended by the design team. Other booklets are also put to the author's disposal to assist in the writing process, such as:

- ❑ Guidelines to writing outcomes-based learning materials
- ❑ Authors' Assistance
- ❑ Reference Techniques
- ❑ Guide to biased-free writing

### **3.2 Layout design**

In the mean time the client/author and other interested stakeholders also get the opportunity to consult with the graphic designer and/or electronic originator on the team to discuss layout specifications in line with specific learner needs. The layout design is put together with the express view to facilitate learning. Aspects that are considered are among others (slides):

- ❑ page layout (page size, etc.)
- ❑ margin width
- ❑ fonts and font size
- ❑ white space
- ❑ appropriate icons
- ❑ leading
- ❑ position of diagrams
- ❑ features other than icons drawing the learners attention to important aspects
- ❑ print specifications

Upon finishing the first chapter/unit (referred to as the prototype) the author submits to the CCDD, where it goes through the development process. Care is taken by each team member to work in line with all design specifications. This is the opportunity to make amendments until all stakeholders are satisfied that effective learning support had been provided within the learning guide. The development team develops the rest of the manuscript according to specifications from the prototype.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Our challenge remains to find innovative ways of approaching learning support. Effective learning depends on what goes into the design of the learning programme. We can start referring to effective learning once our learners can confidently demonstrate their competence not only in that particular field of expertise, but also in life in general.

The Centre for Courseware Design and Development, Technikon SA, is committed to the process of empowering our learners, while at the same time providing our clients with the necessary tools to provide the learning support our learners need.

(Slide)

## REFERENCES

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Lockwood, F. 1989. The Design and Production of Self-instructional Materials. London: Kogan Page.

Olivier, C. 1999. Let's Educate, Train and Learn Outcomes-based. Pretoria: Benedic.

SAQA. 1999. Guidelines for the Assessment of NQF Registered Unit Standards and Qualifications. Pretoria: SAQA.

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### NOTE:

**Attached: Annexure A**

## LAW OF PROCEDURE I

The qualifying learner will demonstrate the competence to serve, with courtesy, documents to notify the recipient of the process of litigation in terms of

- the Constitution, and
- legal principles

in accordance with the sheriff's Code of Conduct

CHAPTER	CHAPTER OUTCOME	LEARNING OBJECTIVES (Ass Cr)	ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES	CONTENT	pp
2 Civil law	Differentiate between civil and criminal law to perform your duties as a sheriff effectively	<b>Distinguish</b> between criminal and civil law	Base a set of questions (2-3) on scenario: differences between civil and criminal law.	<p><b>INTRODUCTION</b></p> <p>Scenario/case study(1) to put the process (in court) into context, covering criminal and civil elements: CAR ACCIDENT. ART: Show accident details</p> <p><b>1 CIVIL LAW VS CRIMINAL LAW</b></p> <p><b>Learning strategy: Diagram</b></p> <pre> graph TD     A[Civil law Enforcement] --- B[Sheriff]     C[Criminal law Enforcement] --- D[Police] </pre> <p>(Link with sections 1.1 and 1.2)</p> <p><b>1.1 Civil Law Enforcement</b></p> <p><b>1.2 Criminal Law Enforcement</b></p> <p>Feedback to activity will serve as summary</p>	
		<b>Identify</b> the different civil courts and their jurisdiction to comply with the rules of court in the performance of your duties	<p>List the different courts in your area of residence. What procedure did you follow to find the above information?</p> <p>Attend a civil and/or criminal court case hearing. Based on your experience, indicate at least x number of differences between civil and criminal courts.</p> <p>Activity: jurisdiction More specific one</p>	<p><b>2 HIERARCHY OF COURTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intro par.: link with previous section (different forums)</li> <li>- <i>L.strategy: diagram (source: Legal Practice p 109)</i></li> <li>- Hierarchy of courts + documents (link/refer – Ch 4 (Documents))</li> </ul> <p><b>FEEDBACK:</b> give all differences</p> <p><b>3 JURISDICTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Definition</li> <li>- Refer learners to diagram in 2.</li> <li>- Demarcation</li> <li>- Legislation for different courts</li> <li>- Refer to Chapter 1 (jurisdiction of the sheriff)</li> </ul>	

		<p><b>Define</b> your role as sheriff within a team of role-players in the civil justice system.</p>	<p>Refer learners to scenario 1 + ask the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Determine the role of the sheriff and identify other role-players who impact on the sheriff's duties.</li> </ul> <p>Quiz or crossword puzzle: determine prior knowledge – base on accident scenario.</p>	<p><b>4 THE ROLE OF THE SHERIFF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Activity</li> <li>– Define role (refer to Ch 1)</li> </ul> <p><b>4.1 Teamwork</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Example (teamwork in civil justice system)</li> <li>– Diagram (link with scenario 1), illustrated with graphics.</li> <li>– Source: Marlette: library</li> </ul>	
		<p><b>Explain</b> the purpose of service and execution in enforcing civil court decisions</p>	<p>Upon looking at what you have done so far in this chapter, what purpose can you see emerging from enforcing civil procedure? Justify your answer.</p>	<p><b>5 ENFORCEMENT OF CIVIL COURT DECISIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– For reflection: humorous - take scenario 1 back in history (Roman times), show difference between then and now.</li> <li>– Purpose of enforcement has stayed the same throughout the ages</li> </ul> <p>(Also refer to Ch 1)</p>	20