82 Selecting learning methods

David Simmonds

Purpose

A checklist to help you consider the situation of your learners and any constraints there may be on resources.

When to use

Refer to the checklist every time you are involved in planning and designing a learning event for yourself or for someone else. This tool will help you to decide on the most appropriate course of action.

How to use

Selecting the most appropriate learning method is a very difficult process. Go through this checklist slowly and systematically each time you are involved in the design and delivery of a learning event. If you can, discuss these questions and your answers with another manager or trainer. Better still, make sure that the learner is involved in the process as well. By using this checklist objectively, your own design and delivery abilities will improve.

Selecting learning methods

Learning event: _____

Learner(s): _____

Learning objective: _____

Range	Number
Size of the group of learners	☐
Completion deadline for the learning (in weeks)	☐
Learning development time (in days)	☐

Indicate your answer with a tick in the appropriate column, where 1 is low and 4 is high.

How important is it for the learning to	1	2	3	4
• incur the lowest direct cost?				
• incur the lowest indirect cost?				
• be completed as quickly as possible?				
• achieve the best possible results?				

How much do the learners	1	2	3	4
• vary in their existing knowledge, skills and attitudes?				
• vary in their ability to achieve the required competence?				
• vary in the amount of learning required?				
• prefer to learn individually?				
• prefer to learn in a group?				

101 Questionnaires, Checklists and Proformas © Fenman Limited

Selecting learning methods

How much more effective will the learning be if	1	2	3	4
• the learners are away from the workplace?				
• learners can interact with others?				
• the learning is separated into short units?				
• there are opportunities for demonstration and practice?				
• the learners can set their own pace?				
• the learners can review and repeat any part of the learning?				
• the learning is delivered consistently each time?				
• the learners can question a subject-matter expert?				
• communication is immediate, spontaneous, or responsive?				

How well can the learning gain be measured by	1	2	3	4
• computer testing?				
• written exercises, tests, or exams?				
• observation, using checklists?				

How much will the learning be affected by using	1	2	3	4
• written text-based materials, including handouts and books?				
• voices, sounds, conversations, music and discussions?				
• non-verbal communication, including body language?				
• graphics, photos, icons, graphs, and charts?				
• actual equipment, forms, or objects used in the job?				
• moving images, including animation and video?				

Selecting learning methods

... continued

How much will learners need practice in the use of	1	2	3	4

- voice recording/playback?

- video recording/playback?

- computer simulations?

- equipment and materials?

How available are sufficient and competent	1	2	3	4

- learning designers?

- learning materials developers?

- coaches, presenters, mentors, or facilitators?

- technicians?

How available are sufficient and suitable	1	2	3	4

- rooms, or work spaces?

- networked computers?

- computers with access to the Internet?

- camcorders?

- cassette recorders, or 'telephone' simulators?

- flipcharts, overhead projectors, whiteboards?

- conference vision facilities?

- workbooks and other written materials?

Selecting learning methods

... continued

How difficult is it to get all the learners	1	2	3	4
• to be comfortable together as a group?				
• gathered in the same place?				
• released at the same time?				
• to see and hear adequately?				
• released for two hours?				
• released for four hours?				
• released for a whole day?				
• released for two days?				
• released for longer?				
• released for short, but regular, periods?				