Lecture 6
Planning the Instructional Site

Objective

• Set up an effective instructional environment.
• List the advantages of an ideal instructional environment.
• Explain adjustments you can make in the layout of an ideal instructional environment.

Why learn this?

• A well arranged and well equipped instructional room will enhance the instructional presentation.
  – Learners will be able to see.
  – Learners will be able to perform skills.
  – Learners will be able to hear.
  – Learners will be more engaged.
Evaluating the Logistical Arrangements

• You must visit before the first learner arrives.
• Look at:
  – Presentation scheduled times
  – Food
  – Transportation/parking
  – Support
  – Communications

Logistical Questions

• Reserved the room for the proper time(s)?
• Ordered refreshments?
• When and where will the refreshments arrive?
• Easiest directions to the training site?
• Parking available, and what is the cost?
• Signs to direct students to the proper room?
• Type of support available in case of any emergencies?
• Where are the rest rooms?
• Phones available for students to use?
• Smoking area?
• Communicated info to the students before the class?

Evaluating the Physical Environment  Room Evaluation Questions

• How is the furniture arranged?
• Can the furniture be moved?
• What are the lines of sight?
• How are the acoustics?
• Is there wheelchair access?
• Can the lighting be controlled?
• Where are the light switches?
• Where are the controls for any computer or audio-visual (AV) equipment?
Room Evaluation Questions (Cont.)

• Where are the printers?
• Where are the supplies for the printers, overhead projector, and so on?
• Are there telephones?
• Where are the breaks/lounges/rest rooms in relation to the training room?
• Can the heating and air conditioning be controlled?
• Are there any unsafe conditions that need to be addressed?

A “Ideal” Room Layout

Advantages of the “Ideal” Layout:

• Uses the full visual area of the front wall.
• The overhead projector can be used at the same time as the chalk/white board.
• Charts can be used either to supplement the overhead projector and the board or to keep a dominant message in front of the trainees.
• The U-shaped layout of desks avoids the suggestion of a regimented schoolroom atmosphere.
• You can easily supervise the work of the trainees.
More Advantages of the “Ideal” Layout:

• You can easily get to the overhead projector.
• You can set up and focus the movie projector for immediate use.
• The door at the back of the room reduces the disturbance created by people entering and exiting.
• You can easily read the clock at the back of the room (where it is not a distraction to the trainees).

Factors That Can Affect the Layout

• Availability of physical resources:
  – the shape of the room
  – the location of electrical outlets
  – windows, doors; the likelihood of outside distractions, such as noise.
• The instructional technique: you may need different layouts for group work or for individualized learning.
• The learners: the number and preferences of the learners.

What can you do about the shape of the room?

• Perhaps the worst is a long, narrow room.
• The only real solution in this case is to use one of the narrow sides as the visual area.
• But the side may be too narrow for a board and an overhead projector at the same time.
  – In this situation, you can opt for the overhead projector and a chart stand with several blank pieces of paper. This paper can then be used instead of a board.
What can you do about the location of electrical outlets?

• Overcome the problem of unsuitably located outlets by using extension cords.
  – Be sure to observe safety practices, for example, tape cords to walls or the floor, or cover them with a mat; and do not overload electrical circuits.
• Always have several extension cords and adaptors handy.

What can you do about the location of doors?

• There is not much that you can do about doors.
• If you have two doors to the room, lock the one that could prove the most bothersome (or barricade it both outside and inside).
• On the outside -- use several chairs or plants and put up a sign indicating the alternative entrance.
• On the inside -- put the charts or even the projector screen in front of the door.

What can you do about the instructional technique?

• Each instructional technique may require its own room layout.
• The ideal layout is most suitable for the lecture session and for some skill sessions.
• In skill sessions, the type of equipment needed in the task often dictates the layout.
What can you do about the learner preferences?

- Based on your knowledge of the learners, arrange the room to suit their preferences
  - Unless, this arrangement interferes with effective learning.
- There is not much you can do if you have too many learners assigned to the class. Numbers often dictate a specific arrangement.

General Tips

- If you plan to use the overhead projector extensively, concentrate first on the placement of the projector. Set it up so that it throws a full, well-focused picture. Then set up your desk to facilitate the use of the overhead projector. You can arrange the learners' desks.
- Create a space of about 10 feet (3 meters) between the board and the front of your desk.
- When you have set up the room, sit in every learner's seat to ensure that all visual aids are visible.
- Check to ensure that all electrically powered aids are operational.

Other Room Arrangement Options
U-Shape Setup

- Use for:
  - lectures
  - large group discussion
- Students can easily see those across and at a diagonal but in large seatings, not along their side of the U
- Instructor must travel a long way if he/she helps students on outside of U
Row Setup

- Use when:
  - Instructor presents material to students
  - Students are working independently
- Make sure there is room for students to enter and leave with ease -- do not disturb others
- Make sure power and other cords are not easily unplugged
- Make sure instructor and visuals can be seen

Circle

Circle Setup

- Best for discussions
- Can be used for lecture, but
  - Visuals may be hard to see by everyone.
  - Instructor will not easily seen by everyone.
- Works well when there are a small number of listeners
- When using computers, it might limit visibility but it protects for mishaps from cables and power cords.
Cluster Setup

- Most useful for small-group interactions or individual lab work
- Instructor can easily move about to assist
- Students can work on individual projects with little distraction
- Room size and dimensions are factors in setting up this arrangement
- Need to make sure students can easily see and hear.

Technology Lab

- Arrangement depends:
  - Curriculum requirements
  - Need room to work on projects.
  - Access to tools and devices
  - Need to be able to see and hear demos
  - Be able to monitor students as they work.

Cluster Layout
Classroom Equipment
Determine how to use each item

- Chalkboards
- White boards
- Easels
- Overhead projectors
- Computers
- LCD projectors
- Flip Charts

We talked about these in Lecture 4.

Computer Evaluation Questions (Cont.)

- Are the computers networked?
- Is there a way to share files between the computers?
- Is a password required?
- At what resolution is the default?
- Can the display on one computer be shared with others?
- Is there Internet access?
- Is there anything specific to the program(s) that you will be using that is not covered in these previous questions?

Furniture Evaluation Questions

- Can the furniture be rearranged?
- Is it ergonomically correct?
- Is it comfortable?
- Can the students see over the equipment?
- Will it accommodate those who have special needs?
- Must the instructors be sitting or standing to use the instructor station?
- Would you be comfortable sitting in this seat all day?
Controlling the Physical Environment

- Determine the appropriate contacts for the following areas:
  - Reservations
  - Access to facilities
  - Technical support
  - Delivery of materials
  - Food preparation and delivery

Physical Environment (Cont.)

- Decide on the optimum room layout based on the instructional methods to be employed; rearrange the room accordingly.
- Order any necessary equipment.
- Ship instructional materials (if necessary).
- Send information to students including times, directions, parking, and other pertinent information.
- Bringing extras (handouts, disks, and so on)

Evaluation

- Setting the Stage
  - Classroom policies (food, drink, e-mail, etc.)
  - Rest rooms and water fountains
  - Message boards
  - Telephones/cellular phone usage
  - Break room
  - Smoking regulations
  - Fire exits
  - Snacks
  - Meals
  - Contents of student material
  - Outline of the course
Evaluation

• During the Course or Presentation
  – Continue to assess verbal and non-verbal reactions'
  – Check their body language and catch their “eyeballs”
  – Take breaks as you need to
    • Early is better than “squeezing” that extra 15 minutes out

• Final Evaluation
  – Student evaluation of the course
  – Physical environment
  – Scheduling and logistics
  – Physical layout
  – Equipment
  – Food
  – And instructor’s reaction to classroom issues

What should we have learned?

• We need to assess the instructional site for schedule, food, support.
• We need to assess the physical environment for room layout, lighting, equipment, furniture
• We need to optimize the learning environment and minimize the distractions
Next week -- Exam

- It will be a short answer essay exam.
- You will have a four-hour window to complete the one-hour open-book, open-note exam.
  - I will email it to you and post it on the web site for the four hours.
  - We will not have class, so you can take it at home.
- You will email your answers back to me within the 4-hour window of time.
- I’ve posted a study sheet for you on the course web site.

Let’s go home!