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Reflection on Online Course Creation

In this reflection, we will examine the background of our training problem, our justification of course elements based on the training problem and needs assessment, and our design process including each team member's contributions. We will also discuss the challenges we faced and overcame during course creation. We will end with some of the lessons we learned.

Summary of Training Problem

Upword Resume is a custom resume-writing company focused on delivering resumes that show an applicant's unique value and brand, not just past work experience. Upword typically hires six to eight new writers each year and uses a training program that has been in place for several years. The needs assessment determined it is outdated, disorganized, lengthy, and difficult to navigate. Therefore, we are creating a Quick Start Onboarding course to help new writers rapidly and efficiently learn company best practices and procedures so that they can begin taking paid client projects quickly.

Due to the remote nature of Upword Resume, training must take place individually and remotely via a Learning Management System (LMS) that allows learners to complete the training at their own pace and from any location. Each learner will be assigned a mentor, one of Upword Resume's experienced resume writers, to collaborate with remotely.

The course can be found here: Quick Start Onboarding.

Justification of Course Elements

The following is an explanation of each course element based on the training problem and the needs assessment performed prior to the instructional design process.

Goals and Objectives

The instructional goal is, "New writers (the learners) will be able to write resumes for clients following Upword Resume best practices." In keeping with that goal, the instructional objectives are:

1. Understand the unique benefits Upword Resume offers clients.
2. Demonstrate how to track a client project on monday.com.
3. Prepare appropriate questions to ask a client during the consultation call to uncover a client's personal brand.
4. Name the five main sections of a resume and describe what is contained in each.

These goals and objectives are in line with Upword Resume's expectations of new writers before they begin working with clients.

Organization

The scope and sequence of the Quick Start Onboarding course is outlined in Table 1 below. The Quick Start Onboarding course contains four lesson modules plus an introduction and conclusion. The first three modules consist of video lessons (five total), short (2-5 question) comprehension quizzes, and two hands-on formative assessment activities. The final module includes a hands-on summative assessment incorporating content from all of the modules. The lessons and assessments are designed to ensure each goal and objective is met.

Table 1.
Scope and Sequence of Upword Resume Quick Start Onboarding Course

Module	Objectives	Lessons	Assessments
What We're Selling (20 minutes)	• Understand the unique benefits Upword Resume offers clients. • Demonstrate how to track a client project on Monday.com.	• Who Are We: The philosophy behind what Upword offers clients • How to Track a Client Using Monday.com	• Comprehension Quiz
Connecting with a Client (100 minutes)	• Prepare appropriate questions to ask a client during the consultation call to uncover a client's personal brand.	• Prepping for a Client Call: Asking the right questions • The Targeted Resume: Uncovering a client's personal brand and two magic questions	• Comprehension Quiz • Hands-on Activity 1: Evaluating a client call
Resume Walk-through (105 minutes)	• Name the 5 main sections of a resume and describe what is contained in each.	• Anatomy of a Killer Resume	• Comprehension Quiz • Hands-on Activity 2: Writing a client resume
Resume Completion (60 minutes)	• Write resumes for clients following Upword Resume best practices.	• Work with your mentor to complete your resume final draft	• Hands-on Activity 3: Resume final draft

Learning Environment

The course is primarily programmed instruction and is housed in the AdaptiveU LMS, allowing learners to complete the training individually, at their own pace, on their own devices, and from any location. The hands-on assessments require the help of an assigned mentor (an experienced Upword Resume writer). These assessments also take place remotely, with the learner and mentor scheduling time to complete the activities.

The total time required for the training program is estimated to be five hours. The approximate times for each learning activity are included in Table 1 above. Learners begin the training immediately after they are hired, and are expected to complete the training within one to two weeks.

Learning Activities

This course includes three types of learning activities: video lessons, quizzes, and hands-on activities. The primary learning activity for the training program is five video lessons, each covering a specific topic and learning objective. The videos feature voice-over audio, so the learner hears the instructor speak while viewing a presentation. For accessibility, the videos include transcripts and have closed captioning available.

There are three comprehension quizzes. The quizzes consist of 2-5 objective test items (true/false and multiple-choice) and provide immediate feedback to the learner.

Additionally, there are three hands-on learning activities. The first activity involves listening to a pre-recorded call with a previous client, after which the learner answers a set of assessment questions (objective and constructed response). The learner then meets with the mentor to discuss the call and assessment.

In the second activity, the learner creates a resume draft using the information from the previous activity, the client's original resume, and a new resume template for a new resume. The learner receives feedback from their mentor. The final activity is a summative assessment. The learner writes a second draft of the client resume based on the mentor's feedback.

Evaluation

This section will describe evaluation of the learner as well as evaluation of the instructional design. Learner evaluation is formative, measured throughout the training program. Success is determined by the learner achieving the four learning objectives as well as the goal of the instructional design. Each module has a brief assessment quiz. These quizzes also serve as instructional activities, reinforcing the content delivered in each video. The quizzes range from 2-5 questions each and consist of objective test items, such as true/false and

multiple-choice items. The questions are designed to assess the knowledge and skills identified in the learning objectives. The quizzes are included in the AdaptiveU platform. Our intention is to give immediate feedback so the learner can see the correct answers to each quiz question, but the LMS has limited functionality (further discussed in the Challenges section).

There is also a summative assessment activity, which is the final activity in the Quick Start Onboarding course. This activity, which is to write a second draft of the client's resume, requires application of the knowledge learned in the video lessons, quizzes, and other hands-on activities.

The instructional design evaluation is summative. The course ends with a survey to evaluate how learners react to the course. The survey asks the learner to rank statements on a five-point Likert scale. Then the learner is asked what suggestions they have for improving the course. As more learners complete the course, ongoing evaluation and iteration will occur.

Design Process

We began the design process by meeting as a team to choose a design project. We chose Kathryn's project because of the availability of existing content that could be recreated in our short timeline. The other ID plans involved content that would have been difficult to present on AdaptiveU.

We established a communication and project management plan. We decided to use Teams to schedule progress meetings, share files, and collaborate on documents, and we created a production calendar with deadlines that were developed by working backward from the project due date. We maintained frequent communication regarding our progress and offered each other solutions to difficulties we each faced.

We also established roles and responsibilities for each team member, listed in the table below.

Table 2.
Roles and responsibilities for each team member.

Kathryn: • Subject Matter Expert (SME) • Media Specialist: Audit existing training videos for content and revise and record updated videos • Brand identity • Main writer for the Reflection	**Lis:** • Project Manager • Communications Manager • Developer/LMS Specialist • Content for course (structure/organization)
Michelle: • User Experience/Accessibility Designer • Information Technology • Content for course (quizzes and activities)	**Shared Roles:** • Contribute ideas for Reflection • Learning Designer/Content Writer • Editor/Tester

Kathryn served as the SME since she works for the company. She went through the existing training program and pulled critical content for our online course based on the needs assessment. She created new slide decks and recorded five new instructional videos.

Michelle created quizzes for each module based on content in the slide decks. She also ensured our course content is accessible. To do this, she downloaded each video from Loom or SharePoint. She then generated a transcript from SharePoint and downloaded the VTT transcript file to upload to YouTube. She ensured the videos were unlisted—the contents of the videos are sensitive—and then posted the unlisted videos. The generated captions and transcript were about 95% correct, so she edited minor errors and fixed the timing.

Lis developed the course in AdaptiveU by adjusting the course outline to fit the LMS, creating non-lesson content including the course introduction and conclusion, module introduction and objectives, and summaries for each lesson. She then added the instructional content created by Kathryn and Michelle and incorporated the Upword Resume brand identity by using their logos, images, and colors where possible.

Challenges Faced During Course Creation

The most obvious challenge we faced was our short timeline. We chose to use existing training content, re-creating portions of slide decks used for the original training videos and updating them with the company's logo, colors, and typefaces. We re-recorded videos featuring the new slide decks.

Another challenge we faced is the limited functionality of the free version of the AdaptiveU LMS. The text formatting options are limited to bold/italic/underline, link, bulleted listed, and numbered list. There are no size or color options to change heading sizes or incorporate branding colors. Tables cannot be created, so we inserted our course layout table as an image. Images cannot be re-sized, so we had to adjust the large squiggle logo in Illustrator before inserting it. We thought we could insert the Loom videos into AdaptiveU, but they had to be converted to YouTube videos in order to present correctly.

Additionally, assessment tools in AdaptiveU are considerably basic. The system allows for multiple choice, true/false, and short- and long-answer questions, but we could not incorporate a true Likert scale into our course evaluation. Multiple-choice questions are limited to only four possible answers. And there is nowhere to upload an assignment submission, so we had to find another way to show submission.

During the testing phase, we learned that AdaptiveU doesn't allow for feedback on assessments. We assumed the learner would receive immediate feedback, since the platform requires the designer to indicate correct answers. But neither the learner nor the administrator receives feedback on the quiz responses. Nor does the admin receive the responses to the hands-on activities or the course evaluation. In the report section of AdaptiveU, the admin can only view the learner's progress toward completion.

During testing, we also learned that the course is accessible on mobile devices and tablets as well as desktops with the same limited functionality, but the previous/next navigation does not work.

Lessons Learned from the Course Design Process

The obstacles discussed above caused us to make slight changes in our plan but didn't hinder our progress. We learned to alter our design plan based on timing issues and LMS capabilities. We also learned the importance of an LMS with good functionality.

More importantly, we learned to work backwards. We started with our overall goal, then established objectives. We determined how to evaluate whether objectives are met, and then designed instruction to lead to successful assessments. We also learned the importance of outlining a course before building it. As we worked, we discovered we needed to move things around multiple times before the layout was finalized. But we always used the course outline for reference.

We learned the importance of meeting as a team to determine roles and responsibilities, having a detailed calendar of deadlines, and communicating frequently. We were fortunate in that all of us were motivated to meet our deadlines and produce quality work. We all respected each other's time and efforts and kept our communications positive. We learned that it is actually possible to create an online course in ten days.

Finally, we learned that SMEs are invaluable. Without a SME, we wouldn't have the appropriate content, which really is the meat of the instruction. Without this content, there would be no assessments and no accomplishing of objectives. We as designers are not experts in every subject, so we need a SME to provide accurate and appropriate content.

Conclusion

In this reflection, we reflected on the background of our training problem and our justification for course elements based on the training problem and needs assessment. We described our design process, some of the challenges we faced during course creation, and how we overcame them. We learned many lessons during the design process and feel better prepared to complete additional projects as instructional designers.