Clarion Review

Business & Economics

Project Management and Skills for Instructional Designers: A Practical Guide

Dorcas M. T. Cox
iUniverse
Unknown $18.95 (240pp)
978-1-4401-9363-7
★★★★☆
(Jan 20, 2010)

The ability to select appropriate training tools and gauge their effectiveness for improving the bottom line without squandering valuable time and resources is vital for training directors. This book provides guidance for instruction designers who develop, manage, and implement large end-user training projects.

Author Dorcas M. T. Cox is the CEO of Project Management Solutions, a training and consulting company. She has more than fourteen years of experience in human resources management in the government and private industries.

The author uses the storytelling method and a pleasant conversational writing style to maintain reader interest, which is key for effective user training materials. Each of the book's chapters first provides an "action" list of key concepts and terms the reader should understand upon completion of that chapter.

A brief introduction summarizes the two-discipline Four Step Combo method used in the book (based on the Instructional-Systems Development (ISD/ADDIE) model). Chapters one and two introduce a simulated problem and explain how to perform a training needs assessment. Chapter three details obtaining project approval and assembly of work components. Chapter four highlights how to establish project learning objectives and content. Chapter five introduces the project plan document for the scope of the work, project sequence, cost projection, risk management, human resource management, and quantitative and qualitative analysis. Chapter six stresses excellence in oral and written communication for effective trainee materials and facilitator guides. The final chapters focus on quality control and closing.

The book design emulates the step-by-step process it conveys with good examples that

are easy to relate to. Of particular note are the three extra instructional design projects at the end, which trainees can work on later for practice. Each covers a distinctly different business, such as mail-order, a carryout restaurant, and a large international corporation.

The book has a few editing issues, such as inconsistencies in the use of passive verses active voice and the unnecessary repetition of information. On occasion too many unnecessary words are used to express ideas (i.e., the key concepts lists at the beginning of each chapter). After all, the intent of instructional design is to communicate in a simple concise manner. Additionally, some table headings are inconsistent, and there are minor typesetting issues with layout and spacing of the forms.

Overall, this is a good manual with detailed instructional design methods and processes, and good documentation forms that will be helpful to those new to instructional design and training development.

Angela Black