Find the Gap:
Needs Assessment Essentials for Training Programs

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Who am I?

• **Adult technology Instruction** - Lead Technology Instructor, Elmhurst Public Library

• **Onboarding** - Assistant Head of Adult Services, Elmhurst Public Library

• **Staff Training** - Training Coordinator, Hennepin County Library
By the end of the session, you will be able to:

• Identify the value of conducting a needs assessment before designing a staff or public training.
• Find the underlying gaps in performance through in class exercises.
• Organize data into an “Impact to Effort Matrix” to prioritize solutions.
Out of Scope:

• In-Depth Instructional Design
• Evaluation
• Human Centered Design
How many times have you:

• Attended a training that’s content was only partially relevant to your work?
• Designed a training, but were unsure of whether it would land with an audience?
• Participated in a training that did not seem to change the work of a team?
What is a Needs Assessment?
Needs Assessment is a process we use to:

• Identify gaps between current results and desired ones.
• Place the gaps in results (needs) in priority order.
• Select the most important ones to be addressed.
During a Needs Assessment We:

- Gather Data
- Analyze Data
- Propose Solutions
We Have a (Hypothetical) Problem!

• We serve on the MLA Planning Committee.
• We have heard that some conference presenters don’t feel comfortable at the MLA annual conference. There are reports of presenters starting their presentations late, and a few survey responses that describe presenters as nervous during their presentations.
Where should we start?
Start with the “Optimal State”

• What is the best experience for your user?
• How do people act, feel, think, and say when they are having the optimal experience?
Optimal State

Sponsor

Trainer
Next determine the current state:

• What is the current state for your users?
• How do people act, feel, think, and say when they are having the experience currently provided?
Current State Items

1. We have heard that some conference presenters don’t feel comfortable at MLA.
2. There are reports of presenters starting their presentations late.
3. Survey responses describe some presenters as nervous during their presentations.
1. Presenters feel the venue is excellent.
2. Based on a survey, presenters say it’s easy to contact the planning committee for questions.
3. Presenters are excited to participate in the MLA community.
How do these two compare?

Optimal State | Current State
Gap Analysis

Current State  →  GAP  →  Desired State

Key steps to bridge gap

Action Plan
Optimal State

Sessions start on time

Presenters have confident presentation skills

Current State

Presentations are starting 5-10 min late

Presenters seem nervous
Optimal State

Sessions start on time

Presenters have confident presentation skills

Current State

Presentations are starting 5-10 min late

Presenters seem nervous

Why does this gap exist?
Gap Analysis

• What is the root cause of the gap?
• What barriers exist that prevent the change from happening?
Core
Core
MLA Presenters
Direct

Core

MLA Presenters
Indirect

Direct

Core

MLA Attendees

MLA Presenters

MLA Planners

MLA Staff

Venue
Indirect

Direct

Core

MLA Presenters

MLA Attendees

Presenters’ Families

People who view content online

Venue Staff

MLA Field

Library
Goals
Aspirations
Expectations
Perceptions and Misperceptions
Direct Experience

Sponsor

Trainer

MLA Presenters

Goals
Aspirations
Expectations
Perceptions and Misperceptions
Direct Experience
“Why are our MLA Presenters so lazy? They’re never on time! We need to train them on professionalism!”

“30 percent of attendees are came to my session 10 minutes late. I waited for the group to arrive.”
What if we ordered lunch like we determined training gaps?
What if we ordered lunch like we determined training gaps?
So treat your core stakeholders like experts!

*Ask them what they want for lunch, before you order!*
By interviewing our core stakeholders, our causes go from this:

Presenters are not sure where their room is located

To this:

• Presenters are not sure where their room is located
• Presenters didn’t know other people at the conference
• Issues with technology
• Not enough communication
• Unfamiliar with the area
• Difficulty using conference app
• Wondering whether people will show up to presentation or not
• Not sure if presentation matches other topics at the conference
• Nervous about public speaking
How can we gather data?
What data do we already collect?

• Attendance statistics
• Library checkouts
• Employee surveys
• Completion dates
• Door counts
Questionnaires

- Gather data from a greater amount of users more quickly
- Allows for anonymous feedback
- Loss of context
- Survey fatigue
Interviewing

- Great amount of context
- Ability to ask follow up questions
- Relatively easy to schedule, but somewhat time consuming
Focus Groups

- Great amount of context
- Ability to ask follow up questions
- Gather data more quickly
- Benefits of group data
Fly-on-the-Wall Observation

• Very little/no time commitment for user
• Shows actual use of space or service, not user’s perception of it
• May reflect biases of designer rather than lived experience
Graffiti Walls

- Asynchronous data gathering
- Low time commitment
- Lack of context
- Benefits of group data
Card Sorts

- Low time commitment
- Helps prioritize data quickly
- Fun alternative to other options
Other Data Gathering Options

• Exploratory Research
• Personas
• Usability Reports
• Role-playing
• Shadowing
• Secondary research
Dig Deeper!

Presenters have problems with their laptop ➔ Have the wrong connecting cable ➔ Their laptops do not have HDMI ports ➔ Their laptops are from 2005-2009
How do we prioritize?
What is does our Current (Hypothetical) State for MLA Presenters look like:

• Presenters are not sure where their room is located
• Presenters didn’t know other people at the conference
• Issues with technology
• Not enough communication
• Unfamiliar with the area
• Difficulty using conference app
• Wondering whether people will show up to presentation or not
• Nervous about public speaking
• Presenters not sure what they should wear
Impact to Effort Matrix

- Quick Wins!
- Major Projects
- Fill in Jobs
- Thankless Tasks
Training can create change in:

• Knowledge
• Skills
• Abilities
For More Information:

1. Universal Methods of Design
   - Bela Martin
   - Bruce Mau

2. Design for How People Learn
   - Julie D'Amico
   - Julie D. Dirksen

3. Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation
   - James D. and Wendy Kayser Kirkpatrick
For More Information:

How to Design and Deliver Training Programs
Discover how to design and deliver training programs help them quickly develop new skills.
1h 29m  Beginner  Views: 57,903  Oct 19, 2017

The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design

The Six Disciplines of Breakthrough Learning
How to Turn Training and Development into BUSINESS RESULTS
Questions? Get in Touch!

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Bibliography


Images From

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