Design Considerations

Course Title “Service with a Smile; A Student Worker’s Guide to Customer Service

 Designing an online course may create some challenges and it is up to the designer to consider all of these challenges before launching an online course. These may be issues which will affect the learner or the non-learner (facilitator). Since I have never designed an online course, I plan to simplify the design of the course until I have a better understanding of what will actually work in the course. This will allow me the flexibility to add more difficult projects as the course develops structure and I sense the proficiency of the learners. Below you will find the design considerations for my course “Service with a Smile; A student worker’s guide to good customer service.”

**Non-Learner Issues**

Content changes are usually something most classes, whether offered online or traditionally, have trouble with maintaining. It would be up to the instructor to make sure the content of the class is up to date and there are no changes needed for the design before the class starts. I don’t anticipate having many content changes since customer service is a standard practice that has been around for years. To make sure I don’t have any changes I plan to review my course every year and make sure all content is up to date and all links are active.

The resources on the web are useful and can be beneficial to my course. This will allow me to use other resources besides the book that I have incorporated into the course. Before I begin teaching each semester I plan to review all the web links in the current course design to make sure they are still accessible to me and the students. This will eliminate confusion and the instructor having to scramble for alternate web resources to use in the course design.

Once my course has been developed for a while, I plan to add video content and power point presentations. Once I learn the course even better and the type of students enrolling in the course, I will try to incorporate social media, such as, Facebook and Twitter. My plan for incorporating this into my design is to first determine if the technologies are beneficial to the course for me to use. I will also be determining if the technologies I choose will cause confusion to the learner and if I can structure them into my design without any problems. This will not be determined until I have taught the class for at least two consecutive semesters.

Technologies such as power point and videos I am very comfortable with using. I am not as comfortable with using social media in the classroom because of privacy issues. I don’t have any prior experience with using social media in the classroom, except for the one class I participated in as a student. I plan to complete more research on using social media in the classroom before I decide if it is something I would consider incorporating into my course design.

Having funds for purchasing development tools and learning resources will be dependent upon the college or university where I plan to teach. I plan to make a proposal for the funds from the college or university with my design plan and the amount I would need to purchase development tools and learning resources. If I am not able to receive funding I will keep my design plan simple by incorporating an inexpensive book the learners will be required to purchase. I can also use free online websites which will offer important information in which the learner will be able to access easily and receive the information needed for the course.

Sometimes designers incorporate to much work for the student to complete during a semester. I will have 15 weeks to design and develop my course. This will be enough time for me to go through all of the lessons thoroughly and effectively. Each student will walk away from the course more knowledgeable about the requirements of the course than when they first enrolled.

 Developing a course is not an easy process because it requires a design plan that will be suitable for multiple learning styles. Since I have never designed an online course this will be a trial and error project for me. I may make some decision that won’t work for the design plan and that I may have to change later. My strategy will be to keep my design plan simple. I will focus mainly on the readings, discussion questions, and blog entries until I have an idea of how to incorporate more complicated projects into the design to fit multiple learning styles.

 Teaching is an important aspect of facilitating an online course. I have not taught previously and I have only facilitated an online course in the facilitation course of the Online Teaching Certificate. The strategies I will use to address this issue is to keep my design plan simple, I will log on to the course three times a day to check course messages and emails, and I will continue to learn and to look for teaching strategies that will help me to navigate and develop online courses.

 Having support in the design process is important for a new online course designer. I am fortunate to have the support of my instructor, my peers, and my coworkers. This gives me more confidence while developing my online course. I will continue to share my design ideas with my support team in order to develop an effective online course. This will allow me to be more confident in my design. I will be able to get multiple prospective on the course design. I will also be able to reflect on the suggestions given from my support and decide if the decisions are important or necessary for the design.

 When teaching at the college or university level you have colleagues that will sometime facilitate a course you are not able to facilitate during a semester. I don’t plan to have anyone else teach this course for at least a year. I would like to make sure the design does not need any changes before I hand it off to my colleagues. Once I am ready to have others teach the course I will meet with them to explain the course. I will provide all materials needed to successfully facilitate the course. I would also like to shadow the class so I will be able to provide the new instructor with ideas for a smoother course. Creating a teaching guide will also be something I will do in order to provide the instructor with the tools needed to facilitate the course.

**Learner Issues**

 Student proficiency in technology could be an issue in an online course. There are students who don’t have much experience in an online course and others who have an enormous amount of experience. I will need to learn my student’s proficiency and determine what works best for them. My strategy for addressing this issue is to require all students to complete the tutorial for the schools learning system. Second, I will encourage my students to ask question on the discussion board. This will allow me to answer the question for the entire class and it will also give students the opportunity to answer the question to help their fellow classmates. I may need to offer extra support to those students who are not computer savvy. If it begins to be a distraction for the entire class I will need to suggest that the student receives some tutoring help to successfully complete the course.

 Determining how experienced my students are with online learning will be important to the learner. This may range from students who have never taken an online class to students who have completed all of their class online. I will begin with an orientation of the course to get the students familiar with the course and the syllabus which will outline my expectations in the course, and also a learning agreement each student will need to sign in order to participate in the second week of classes. The students will also have an icebreaker and I am hoping this icebreaker will encourage them to engage with one another to finish the course.

 Depending on the university we may have students in class from across the nation or there may be students who are trying to understand customer service in the U.S. and want to join the course. I would not be able to stop students from enrolling in the course so I will make sure all of the students are familiar with netiquette and cultural differences. The icebreaker will help the students become familiar with each other and I will monitor the discussion board and students group projects to make sure netiquette is followed by every student.

 Summer courses are options for students who want to complete their degree quicker. Colleges usually offer summer courses in a shorter 11-week timeframe. Since my course design is 15 weeks long I will require a quicker pace for my summer courses. This may be difficult for some students to keep up with because the amount of work due will be doubled for some weeks. A strategy I will use to address this issues will be giving the students the course schedule in the syllabus. I will also give them the opportunity to start early on the weeks with the double assignments. Lastly, I will provide reminders via email and the course shell of upcoming assignments so student will be able to keep up with the course.