HU 4630 Online Learning and Training

(11-1230 T & Th. in WAHC 134 or CCLI)
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Texts, Notes, Definitions, & Expectations

Texts

Notes
- If you have any disabilities under the ADA, please let me know about them by the end of the first week of class.
- I may modify the syllabus and policy statement for this class in light of changing student needs and the changing circumstances of this class.

Course Definition & Expectations—HU 4630, Online Learning and Training, is a new course designed for several audiences: Technical Communication student, English Education majors, and other students interested in setting up and maintaining technology-rich learning environments. Technical communicators are often responsible for providing work-place education and professional development experiences (training) for employees. English Education teachers are, of course, responsible for providing students with literacy experiences of all sorts: reading, composing, listening, researching, . . . . Many other students from across the curriculum, as well as the HU majors mentioned above, understand that in today's educational, organizational, and corporate worlds, communication technologies are challenging the way we approach learning, teaching, instruction, training. This course is meant to provide an introduction to some of the many
technology-rich environments that can, but don't automatically improve the learning of students and professionals.

The course, Online Learning and Training, will concern itself with both face-to-face and online learning experiences. It is NOT just about entirely online courses. A better name for the course might be Technology-rich Learning and Training. The readings will vary from very practical classroom advice to theories of learning to critical approaches to communication technologies. The assignments will have you working in technological environments that you will experience originally as a student (in this class). But you will also have a chance to use them as a professional. Most of the digital systems you use in this class will be available for you to use once you graduate, leave for a coop, or go out into the schools to student teach. These systems include but are not limited to

- an assessment, online portfolio system (Learning Record Online, LRO: lro.cwrl.utexas.edu)
- asynchronous threaded discussion system (WebBoard, skipper.hu.mtu.edu/~rselje)
- CCLI web tools and web space (not currently available after graduation)
- email and email listserv software (majordomo.mtu.edu)
- "free" web space (Tripod, lycos.tripod.com)
- online class management tool (Nicenet's Internet Classroom Assistant: www.nicenet.org)
- synchronous discussion systems or chat system (Northwoods MOO, www.hu.mtu.edu:8000)

Finally, but probably most importantly, you will be able to construct materials that are of personal importance to you as a trainer/teacher. I will ask you to develop learning environments for audiences of particular interest to you. As you can probably tell, we will be following a process commonly known to technical communicators as user-centered design. That process will be modified in order to accommodate what Elliot Soloway called "learner-centered design" (1994).

COURSE PROCEDURES

(1) Attendance and Participation (5%)
This document will stand as your primary source of information about the assignments in this class. I will, however, elaborate on assignment procedures during class discussions. You are responsible for both. If you are going to miss class, I should know about it before the class meets, unless it's an emergency. The key here is communication! If you must miss a class, it is sometimes possible to work out alternative activities if you contact me before that absence. When you return, get the recorder's class notes or off the class web site, look them over and talk to one trusted class member about what happened that day. In addition, come by and get my version of what took place. If you miss more than two classes without excuses and make up activities, your grade to be lowered.
Participation means that if we have readings, that you complete them before class and participate in on-line and face-to-face (F2F) discussions. I want from you an honest attempt to engage or critique the material I provide in the class.

(2) Interim and Final Drafts of Projects (up to 5%)
INTERIM DRAFTS are your way of getting feedback from me and other students. We’ve all on tight schedules. You need to have those drafts ready. If you do not hand them in or hand them in late, it will hurt you in two ways: you won’t receive suggestions or comments for later drafts, and you’ll receive a low grade on the timely disposition of drafts. When you hand in your FINAL DRAFTS, include all interim or “comment” drafts! You will loose 1/3 of a grade for each day that the assignment is late. Weekends count as one day.

ASSIGNMENTS

Overview: Technology and Teaching (or Training) Autobiography (TTA)
There will be several sub-assignments that will be due periodically during the term. Those sub-assignments include:
• An autobiographical reflection on your past experiences with technology, teaching (or training), and teaching with technology.
• A report on the patterns you saw and the insights you came to as you read your classmates' TTAs.
• An interview report detailing the discussion you have with a trusted person (a mentor) who knows you well. The interview will center around the short autobiographical reflection mentioned above.
• A visual representation of your relationship to technology and teaching.
• A final reflection on how or if this course has changed your skill level with, approaches to, or attitudes toward technology and teaching.

The TTA Assignments serve several purposes.
• Because teaching or training with technologies requires an on-going effort that will not conclude with this class, one of the purposes of this assignment is to introduce you to colleagues who will continue to collaborate with you and support you in the months and years to come. The Technology and Teaching Autobiography will help class members and myself better understand your past experiences with technology and teaching, your expectations for the near future, and your strengths and weaknesses as a technology user and as a teacher.
• This will allow us to set up and maintain a class "expertise grid." The grid will allow people to know what you know well, what you know well enough to use, or what you don't know at all. We all need to be part of a support staff for the projects we take on in this class. Part of your grade in this class will be
based on a "service component." You can fulfill that service requirement by helping others in the class with the work they are doing.

- We will all learn a great deal about how people learn new technologies (life-long learning strategies).

**TTA Sub-assignment 1: An Autobiographical Reflection**

Due Friday noon eastern time of the first week of class.

These two pieces of writing are meant to be fun and interesting for you to write and fun for the rest of us to read.

What to do?

In the next couple of days, please write a technological autobiography and a teaching (or training) autobiography (TTA) and then post them to our class email list by Friday noon of the first week of class (4630-l@mtu.edu). You classmates and I will then have several days to read autobiographies before meeting in person for our first technology workshop. It’s a lot of reading, but this will help us all know a little about each other as teachers and a little about our collective technology, teaching, and training experiences/ambitions. These TTAs will NOT be graded (other than to note that you handed them in) at this time. You will have time later to revised and add to them.

I suggest you write your TTA in MS Word. Save this somewhere on your local machine in a directory or folder set aside for files from this class. While the Word document is still open, open your email program as well. In the Word document, Select All by going to the Edit menu and selecting that option. Now copy your text by choosing Copy under the Edit menu.<p>

In your email package, open a new message and address it to 4630-l@mtu.edu. In the Subject line, please use this naming convention: (First_name Last_name’s TTA1). Mine would read "Dickie Selle’s TTA1."

To complete the assignment, respond to a selection of the following prompts. Reply to all the comments and questions marked with **. The others are optional.

**Technology Autobiography Questions and Comments**

- ** Write an autobiographical reflection in which you recall your earliest experiences with technological devices or artifacts.
  What were those early devices?
  What do you remember about using them?
  What were the popular gadgets in your house while growing up?
- ** Who do you identify as being a technologically "literate" person in your current or past life?
- ** Were there other people who influenced your attitudes toward technology (positively, negatively)?
- ** How do you learn new technologies?
- ** How do you expect to keep up with new technologies in the future? Do you have a plan?
** What technologies (relevant to this class) do you know very well? well enough to use? not well at all?

** What technologies do you need to learn in the near future?

Teaching & Training Autobiography Questions and Comments

** What experiences in your past have gotten you excited about teaching or training? Why were you excited?

** What content area would, do you like to teach (or train)?

** What specific teaching or training expertise do you bring into this class: administrative, curriculum design, an understanding of student learning, technology and teaching . . . )?

What sort of classes or training experiences do you hope to have in the future? In other words, imagine yourself working for a K-12 or college-level institution or an organization that requires systematic instruction of some sort. (Are there any that don’t? ;-) Describe the ideal educational system in which you’d like to be involved or the kind of system you’d like to set up.

Write the TTA with your classmates' interests in mind. What kind of examples would be most interesting to these folks? How much time do they have to read? What do they need to know about me and my abilities? In the next assignment, read your classmates’ TTAs for insight into their interests, attitudes, and abilities.

** TTA Sub-assignment 2: Learning about you classmates

Now that you’ve written your own TTA, read the TTAs of others in the class. Don’t read them passively though. Take notes online (in an MS Word document, for instance) on the patterns you saw as people answered the main questions. What insights did you come up with as you read? What did you learn about their attitudes or approaches to technology? What did you learn about teaching or training? We will discuss these patterns, insights and other observations when we meet in class (using an electronic system of course). Be kind and supportive when we do.

** TTA Sub-assignment 3: An interview report.

The week following our face-to-face workshop, I’d like you to interview a trusted person (a mentor) who knows you well. Center the interview around your own TTA and the patterns, insights and observations you made when you read other peoples’ TTAs. What does your friend/mentor think about the main questions? Would they add or modify anything in the TTA you wrote?

Write up a report of your interview/conversation. Submit it under the Document section of the ICA. Click on Add Document. Make sure you use this naming convention under Document Title:
My Document Title would be "SelfeTTA3".

If your last name is long, use the first "unique" (to the class) letters of your last name. For instance, someone named Fitzgerald might use FitzTTA3. Make sense?

TTA Sub-assignment 4: A Visual Representation

Start collecting images of that represent your enthusiasms, frustrations, and concerns about teaching with technology. What is your relationship to technology? How might you represent it visually?

Collect images for this assignment by either:
- copying them off the WWW after doing web searches for key terms and concepts (with appropriate citation information of course :-).
- taking digital images (with a digital camera or your own or checked out from the CCLI). Be imaginative and collect representations of your relationship to teaching or training with technology,
- taking images (with a regular camera) of appropriate representations of your relationship to teaching with technology. Get them developed and scan them using a flatbed scanner in the CCLI or
- create a collage out of magazine images and scan that in using the scanner in the CCLI.

Collect these images and create a simple web page (or pages) using these images. Add some textual explanation of what they represent: a description of how they represent your enthusiasms, frustrations, and concerns about teaching or training with technology.

(Optional) If you have the expertise, use a photomanipulation program like Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Elements to make a collage. Save this one image for the web, put it on a web page with an explanation, and let us know where to look to see it (Give us the URL.)

TTA Sub-assignment 5: A Final Reflection

Now combine all your TTA materials into a single a web site that includes:

1. your original teaching and technological autobiography, edited and cleaned up,
2. the most important patterns, insights, or observations you came to as you read your classmates' TTAs and as you interviewed your trusted mentor,
3. your visual representation of your relationship to technology and teaching. and
4. a final reflection on how or if this course has changed your approaches to or attitudes toward technology and teaching.

Technology-rich Instructional Plan (TRIP)

Sub-assignments include:

- **Instructional Goals:** Based on our work in class on defining the skills, approaches, and attitudes necessary for 21st century citizens (literacy skills or others), define your primary instructional goals for the instructional environment that you will be developing in this class.
- **Proposal:** Describe and justify an instructional environment for a specific audience: outline the content, assignments, learning outcomes, and technologies used to be used.
- **Learner-Centered Design 1:** Identify, locate, interview (based on your Proposal), and report on 4-8 appropriate learners for your TRIP. Recruit them for future review sessions.
- **Materials and Detailed plans:** Create a syllaweb where you collect instructional materials and plans for the actual TRIP.
- **Learner-Centered Design 2:** Recruit four learners to review your materials and complete at least one coherent lesson in your TRIP. Observe and report on their responses to your TRIP.
- **Mini-teaches:** Revise your TRIP based on learner feedback. Prepare a presentation and a mini-teach that illustrates how your technology-rich design is consistent with the readings and discussions of HU 4630.
- **Final Project:** Prepare a final TRIP portfolio (online) based on class feedback.

These sub-assignments will be scattered over the last ten weeks of the course.

**TRIP Sub-assignment 1: Instructional Goals.**

Based on our work in class--defining the skills, approaches, and attitudes (SAAs) necessary for 21st century citizens (literacy skills or others)--define your primary instructional goals for the instructional environment that you will be developing in this class.

What to do:

1. **During class we will be collecting our combined wisdom about the SAAs necessary for current society.** To do that we will first brainstorm, discuss and prioritize ideas about the problems that learners exhibit. Then we will brainstorm, discuss, and prioritize ideas about the ideal working environment for those learners; and finally follow that with a similar process for determining the SAAs for a 21st century
citizen. All this brainstorming and prioritizing will be collected online in a knowledge-base (WebBoard, skipper.hu.mtu.edu/~rselfe).

2. You will then be asked to synthesize from this knowledge-base a core of instructional goals that will help drive your decisions about assignments, activities, and technologies that you will use in the larger TRIP assignment.

3. Based on your instructional goals, you’ll begin developing a TRIP proposal.

**TRIP Sub-assignment 2: TRIP Proposal**

Construct an online proposal for an ideal TRIP. Consider that you are not just writing a lesson plan or unit plan, but developing a description of a learning environment. Consider describing these components:

- the intended learner
- a typical, realistic physical environment in which your learners will be working
- a typical, realistic digital environment in which your learners will be working
- the content to be covered that come out of the instructional goals from Sub-assignment 1.
- assignments and sequenced activities that will help the learner internalize the content, skills, approaches, and attitudes you hope to encourage.
- the resources and resource people that will help learners succeed.
- The assessment methods you’ll use to evaluate both their learning and your TRIP

Consider the fact that you will then be contacting and interviewing, either in one focus group or individually at least 4, but no more that 8 appropriate learners based on this proposal.

**TRIP Sub-assignment 3: Learner-Centered Design 1.**

To complete this sub-assignment successfully, you will need to do some substantial planning and follow-up work.

1. Based on the description of your appropriate learner in the TRIP Proposal, locate 4-8 people willing to be interviewed individually, in pairs, or in a small focus group.

2. After introducing them to the purpose of the interview, provide materials (online or in hard copy) that make it easy for them to review and discuss your TRIP.

3. Prepare open-ended questions that will encourage them to talk freely to you and with each other about the value and viability of your proposal and plan.

4. Take copious notes and, if possible, audio record their comments. You might also consider meeting online and collecting their thoughts and suggestions synchronously (on the Northwoods MOO) or
asynchronously (on a WebBoard arena email list). This will require more logistical and preparatory work, while it captures their conversation more thoroughly.

5. Prepare a final permission statement that allows you to use their comments in a presentation and also gives them a chance to volunteer for a TRIP review session later in the term.

6. Prepare a plan for revising your TRIP proposal based on their feedback and mine. Collect all the feedback materials (these Learner-Centered Design 1 materials) in one place for your final TRIP portfolio.

TRIP Sub-assignment 4: Materials and Detailed Plan.

Based on the feedback from learners, fellow classmates, and me, construct your technology-rich instructional environment and content materials. Essentially you will be fleshing out a revised version of your TRIP proposal:

- collecting content and support material,
- contacting specialists to communicate with classes remotely,
- writing sequenced assignments,
- creating project ideas, and
- setting up the technologies necessary to lead a learner toward the goals on which the TRIP is based.

Be sure to describe how you intend to assess not only the learners, but also the TRIP itself. We will be discussing alternative and "formative" assessment strategies during the term. This will be your chance to apply them to a real learning environment.

TRIP Sub-assignment 5: Learner-Centered Design 2.

Find 3-4 appropriate "learners" to complete a sub-lesson and then review your TRI environment and materials with them. Make sure it takes them no more than 1/2 hour to complete the test lesson and ten minutes to complete the review of the revised TRI environment and materials.

1. First have them complete a sub-lesson, one typical of the lessons you will use in your TRI environment.
2. Observe carefully and take notes on how they react as the lesson proceeds.
3. Next provide them with an overview of your TRI environment (orally with some handouts or projected examples).
4. Prepare open ended questions in case they don't volunteer comments and suggestions for your TRIP. Try your hardest not to be defensive about suggestions for change.

You may make this sub-lesson interactive--between teacher and student(s) or student and student(s) (face-to-face (f2f) or online)--or you may plan for a self-paced, individual sub-lesson. It can be technically complex
or quite simple. Be able to justify your choice of technological environments based on previously established goals.

We will also take time over several class periods to conduct similar usability tests in class with each other as subjects. I call these mini-teaches.

**TRIP Sub-assignment 6: Mini-teaches**

In class we will reverse the process from Sub-assignment 5. In a short oral presentation with supporting handouts, projection, or both, you will layout your TRI environment and content unit. We will then be able to assume the role of the learner more accurately. You will then lead us through your sub-lesson. We'll make time for comments and suggestions from the class after each mini-teach.

**TRIP Sub-assignment 7: Final TRI Environment Portfolio**

After making changes to your TRI environment and materials based on your feedback from learners, classmates, and me, prepare a final portfolio. Collect and organize all digital and hardcopy planning documents, usability documents, drafts and revisions of your TRI materials (using a folder and burned CDs). Write a final, one page reflection on this entire process, focussing on how you will streamline it for actual use in training or teaching situations. Neatness, clarity, and organization are valued here ;-).

**Readings**

See class schedule at www.hu.mtu.edu/~rselfe/5080/schedule.html for the most up-to-date listing. <www.hu.mtu.edu/~rselfe/4630/schedule.html

**Grading**

Grading is a strange process in all classes. People either do excellent, thoughtful work and hand everything in on time for an A. Or they get almost all of it done on time but have to rush through some of the projects and writing for a B. Or they just breeze through and get the bare minimum done for a C. Some folks get in a bind, miss several assignments and end up with an X (a conditional grade which allows you to complete that work within one term before it turns to an F). People who are failing or who can't find the time to keep up, drop. I encourage that.
What grading SHOULD be is a formative process that allows you and I to interact on a regular basis about
the class goals, your observations about your own learning, and about the course itself. That's why I use the
Learning Record Online system (LRO <lro.cwr.utaexas.edu>). It allows for all of the above and more. As
you can see in the Assignments section, there are scheduled activities, projects and papers in this class. I will
keep track of whether you complete them in a timely manner and the quality of each. I'll "grade" those using
the scale roughly outlined in the paragraph above. That's what I will bring to the grading table, other than my
observations about your willingness to participate in class activities. You, on the other hand, bring something
to the grading table as well. You will have a say in your own grade by entering (twice per week)
"observations" about the course "strands" (course goals, see below). Each observation can have two sections:

1. (Not optional) Objective observations about a specific class activity and how that activity is related to
one or more of the class strands (goals). These observations should not be based on your feelings (e.g.,
exhilaration or frustration) about the activity, but what is actually occurring (reality).

Yes, I do know how ridiculous words like "objective" and "reality" can sound in a post-modern context.
We might talk about this and this type of assessment system in class. This sort of conversation would be
interesting (an instance of what I would call a "critical" approach to technology) especially in light of
the fact that the LRO is supposed to be adaptable to learning situations from primary schools to
graduate schools.

2. (Optional) Feeling-based comments about how you are dealing with the technologies, the assignments,
the readings, . . . . I find these kinds of comments particularly useful in the ongoing usability process of
redesigning this class.

I suggest that you number the parts of your twice-weekly observations on the LRO.

Class Strands (Goals)
These are worded as "outcomes" much like those you will be required to write as teachers or trainers. Class
members should

- Demonstrate an ability to operate multiple computer systems (Macintosh, PC, & some UNIX systems)
in support of instructional and professional goals.
- Evaluate and use web-based systems and related technologies to support the instructional process.
- Identify and apply "best practices" of technology-rich instruction, learning research, and assessment to
local and remote educational experiences.
- Demonstrate knowledge of uses of networked systems and stand-alone computers for communications,
knowledge sharing, and presentational purposes.
- Demonstrate an ability to bring local, distant, and international resource people into the classroom via
appropriate Internet technologies.
- Design and develop technology-rich student learning activities and environments that allow for
individual, large-group and small-group interaction.
• Design technology-rich instructional experiences for students with limited access to computing resources at home or in the community.
• Identify appropriate open-source, freeware online systems and content resources that have minimal impact on educational IT resources and financially challenged students.
• Demonstrate a knowledge of the ethical (e.g., intellectual property/fair use), legal (e.g., ADA requirements) and human issues (e.g., socio-economic dimensions of access) of computing and technology use.
• Demonstrate a technical, fiscal, and policy-level understanding of sustainable technological systems (technological activism).
• Identify and evaluate changing literacy practices in student populations and modify instruction in order to take advantage of appropriate practices.

Hey, that's a lot of stuff! I may trim these down for your work on the LRO. But these are the official outcomes for the course. Check 'em out.