ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

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How to become an instructional designer: useful courses

More and more companies are looking for instructional designers to respond to the growth of online training. How to become an instructional designer?

The idea of working in eLearning is supported by the many companies that are looking for multimedia experts able to modernize corporate training through **LMS platforms**, training management systems. Before understanding how to become an online training designer, it is useful to clarify the role of this **eLearning professional**. From here you will have a clearer idea of the skills needed to perform this role and the most suitable training path to achieve it.

Instructional design: what is it?

Instructional design is a process of identifying the **learning needs** of a certain target group in order to create or identify learning experiences that best meet those needs and achieve corporate and **institutional learning objectives**. In the context of eLearning, the instructional designer develops a multimedia strategy that engages beneficiaries in their own learning process, and designs and manages the delivery of courses.

Instructional designer: what does he/she do?

An instructional designer must be able to use eLearning-specific tools in a virtual or blended learning environment. Taking a tour on LinkedIn, among the real job openings for some **eLearning professionals**, the most in-demand skills are:

- Organizing and managing webinars and online training events
- Design and manage a virtual classroom
- Develop online courses using authoring tools
- Monitor online forums and communities

Soft skills include creativity, leadership, organization, change management skills, English and/or other project languages.

How does one become an online training designer?

There is no formal academic path or exam to work as an instructional designer. Of course, there is a wide range of short courses or masters, free or paid. Training and experience are the high road to acquiring the necessary technology and design skills. On the net you can find several training courses, in eLearning or mixed mode, to become online instructional designers.

Instructional Design foundations and applications course

Instructional Design foundations and applications is a course offered by the University of Illinois. It is a 4-week introductory course to familiarize you with the theoretical and practical concepts behind **instructional design**. Course topics include major instructional design models, analysis of needs, training environment and beneficiaries, and identification of instructional goals and objectives.

This course is suitable for aspiring trainers taking their first steps in instructional design. It may also be useful for subject matter experts, SMEs, who want to collaborate on the creation of an eLearning course.

The NATO eLearning Instructional Design Course

NATO's eLearning Instructional Design Course is a great example of a specific training course for working as an eLearning designer. The course is fee-based and open to NATO personnel and a few identified organizations and is delivered in a blended mode. We mention it because it clearly lists some basic skills that every eLearning designer should acquire:

- **Project management**: the goal is to implement an eLearning project within a team.
- Instructional design systems: apply the **ADDIE model** to the created eLearning project, respecting certain parameters.
- **eLearning strategies** to apply to your project
- Put into practice an eLearning project according to the good practices discussed in the group.
- Evaluation of the eLearning project

Sites such as Edx, Coursera, Federica.eu of the University of Naples, offer an overview of the available courses: many are free, upon payment of a fee to obtain the certificate; others are paid because they go beyond the simple course and become a real **master or specialized course** lasting several months.

Whatever the chosen path, the ideal is to start from one's own training needs in order to deepen through training and practice the fundamental aspects of the work of an online training designer: design, eLearning tools, strategy and innovation, communication.

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