

EVALUATION PLAN AND REPORT **myLearn™**

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Executive Summary

What do learners need to be able to do, and in what situations do they need to do those things? This question poses a certain number of challenges when the learner is in a full time working situation. Online e-learning programs are continuing to gain popularity amongst corporations and institutions. As the access afforded by distance education increases the number of people served, must develop processes that ensure quality in their programs (Schott, Chernish, Dooley, & Lindner, 2003). This paper describes the research undertaken to develop an evaluation plan for a fully online training resource called myLearn™.

This resource facilitates in many areas, from highly technical topics to software application instruction, as well as business skills development and legal compliance awareness. Through a review of the literature and consultations with program administration a plan was developed with the purpose of assessing the state of the program in reference to its goals, determining a roadmap for program improvement, and providing a framework for future program decision-making.

The purpose of this paper is to document the assessment process to assist program administrators in adapting it for use in improvements to the program. Although data was collected using extant data, surveys, and interviews, and analyzed using quantitative and qualitative analysis, the results of the analyses are not discussed here. The emphasis of this paper is in the resulting evaluation plan. The theoretical framework, process, methodology, and resulting plan for evaluating the online degree program are described herein. Specifically addressed is how an employee's development of professional and personal skills was created and translated into a plan for use by other employees.

Client Assumptions

myLearn™ is not intended to replace instructor-led training courses. It is assumed the target client for MyLearn is the University staff as a supplemental training resource. This provides greater opportunity for personal and professional growth.

Introduction

myLearn™ is a program sponsored by the University of Missouri (UM) Office of Human Resources. This office and the directors of the Staff Development Unit are the clients for this report. At end of the semester they plan for changes of the user interface and topic selection.

myLearn™ offers an ongoing commitment to the continuing development of faculty and staff. myLearn™ offers training resources in many areas, from highly technical topics to software application instruction, as well as business skills development and legal compliance awareness.

myLearn™ is not intended to replace instructor-led training courses. Rather, it will supplement traditional training methods and leverage the UM System Staff's existing resources by providing greater opportunity for development of professional and personal skills. This establishes a solid foundation for success, and sends a ripple effect of improvements across many areas of business performance. The objectives the myLearn™ program wish to provide UM employees are:

- Improve the quality of employee performance to have better communication, processes, and project management skills.
- Departmental satisfaction increases because tasks are delivered faster, quality is higher, and communication and consulting skills improve.
- Productivity increases because employees better understand the university's needs.

What are we looking for in this evaluation? The purpose of this paper is to document the assessment process to assist the University of Missouri human resource office in adapting myLearn™ for use in their own carriers. We are also determining changes for experience of the user interface so the employees have an enjoyable time learning with myLearn™. Finally a determination will be made whether or not the selection of topics provided in myLearn™ are what university employees want to learn. Please keep in mind this evaluation is being taken part by two novices in evaluating a performance support system. While we enjoy writing and going through a thorough user evaluation of myLearn™ there might be some aspects that we have forgot to include.

Background

Since myLearn™ is a private program for staffed employees of the University of Missouri System, the program is paid for directly by the Office of Human Resources. They utilize this program as an extended service for any individual needing to learn specific skills for applications or concepts used in Higher education. myLearn™ services are professional skills education and related services that provide organizations not being able to send their employees out for instructor-led training an opportunity to learn and benefit from training. myLearn™ services do not have to be in accordance with the employees individualized department mission, they are of no cost to the individual, and meet the standards of the state education agency. A more detailed description of myLearn™ services is provided in the following paragraphs. In the one year that the myLearn™ program has been in existence data has been collected regarding the social functioning of the university staff as well as satisfaction surveys of directors and executives. However, most of this data has not been systematically analyzed nor reported. Additionally, quantitative data reflecting whether or not the program has been implemented as

designed was lacking. Consequently, the directors of the myLearn™ program wanted to collect and analyze more concrete data to systematically assess whether the program was being implemented as designed and if it was adding value to the target population. For these reasons the directors sought a carefully planned program evaluation that would provide them with information which would be helpful in determining the strengths of the program and areas for program improvement.

An evaluation of a professional skills program has relevance for psychological workplace environment skills research and applications. There is a need to evaluate these programs to determine what benefits such programs add to higher learning faculty and staff, particularly given the costs of program design and implementation as well as due to lack of documentation of non-school based programs addressing this population.

Many organizations, both profit and nonprofit organizations are at present in the process of drastically revising their management so that they are better geared to their environment and in particular to their customers (Boam and Sparrow, 1992). It appears that each organization has increasingly to prove its added value. This leads to a higher pressure of work in the organizations, as proving the added value places a lot of demands on innovation, creativity, customer friendliness and quality improvement. The battle against the competitors can no longer be conducted on the basis of a reactive competitive policy. It has to be conducted using a proactive policy, based on the inner strengths of the organization itself. Business success is increasingly based on the improvement and strengthening of the "core business" of the individual organization. It is not about always being just one step ahead of the competition but about being continuously ahead of the competition, by mobilizing individual strengths, knowledge and expertise in the organization. In short, this means appealing to and utilizing potential in the

organization as the success factor for an organization's survival.

Purpose

Formative Purpose

- To provide feedback for human resource directors to modify future learning activities and experiences;
- To identify and fix group or individual problems;
- To focus on professional development processes, in order to increase staff efficacy and reduce the negative impact of extrinsic motivation;
- To improve employees' metacognitive awareness of how they learn new professional skills.
- Ongoing assessment allows both for fine-tuning of instruction and individual focus on progress.
- Involve reviews by the principal investigators, the directors of professional development, and either an internal or external evaluator.

Summative Purpose

- Assess the quality and success of a myLearn™ in offering continuing professional development of University faculty and staff.
- Present the information collected for myLearn™ activities and outcomes
- Determine the improvements needed to for myLearn™ user interface.
- Involve reviews by the principal investigators, the directors of professional development, and either an internal or external evaluator.

Audience

In order to result in a useful and effective valuation, stakeholders were identified and formal agreements reached on the goals and expectations of the evaluation process. In this case, the primary stakeholders were identified as the program directors for professional development in human resources. Secondary stakeholders include the vice president of human resources and any staff members of the University that take it upon themselves for professional skill development. Primary stakeholders were notified of the project evaluation in a brief interview, it was determined that their vision of the program goals and evaluation needs result in the following goals:

- (A) Maintain a program focus and skill development offerings that compare favorably with other professional development programs,
- (B) Incorporate a better user experience design,
- (C) Offer a set of proficiencies that provide staff members with proper competencies based on current needs and trends in their respective field.

Decisions

- It should be assumed that staff and faculty of the University of Missouri System that find out about myLearn™, have very little knowledge how to use the program.
- Employees generate results that have monetary value to the organizations that employ them.
- Employees differ in the degree to which they produce results even when they hold the same position and operate within like circumstances.

- Since program durations can vary, durations defined in the analysis are based on averages.
- The skill gain defaults are conservative estimates based on the values reported by the myLearn™ users.

Questions

1. To what extent is the myLearn™ program providing professional skills development to University System employees during working hours? (That is, what are the attendance and completion rates?)
2. To what extent do the programs have the desired effects on the attitudes and behaviors that affect office productivity? (For instance, do the participants have better attitudes about work office applications use and improved self-esteem?)
3. To what extent do the programs decrease productivity and increase academic achievement?
4. How timely and cost-effective has the performance of myLearn™ been?
5. How well has myLearn™ performed in terms of producing the expected outputs?
6. How well has myLearn™ performed in achieving the purpose?
7. To what extent has myLearn™ contributed to the goal of the program or sector it supports?
8. Does learning and development measurably improve organizational performance?

Method

Step 1.

Gain the commitment of key stakeholders and program actors of myLearn™ to a formative evaluation as a collective learning and change-oriented process. This will require among other things negotiation about access and the use of information, clarification of roles and relationships, and agreement about what kinds of information will be relevant for which kinds of stakeholders.

Step 2.

Creating an evaluation infrastructure to support a learning, change-oriented, developmental activity. This includes working with program staff on an ongoing basis to:

- create a culture that supports risk-taking, reduces fear of failure, and values lessons learned from mistakes
- establish channels of communication that support the dissemination of information and allow organizational members to learn from one another in ways that contribute to new insights and shared understandings
- create new opportunities for shared learning and knowledge creation
- modify systems and structures that inhibit organizational learning

Step 3.

Find out about the decision-making cycle, the different stakeholder groups and their respective information needs and interests. These might include policy makers and program makers at central level, local site program managers, and operational staff. Where there is a lack of appropriate mechanisms or opportunities for feedback, the

evaluator will need to establish a structured way to provide relevant stakeholders with feedback.

Step 4.

Involve an ongoing cycle of data gathering and analysis. Participative approach will be taken to include those that foster and support interaction, dialogue, learning and action.

Step 5.

Supply findings and facilitating processes of myLearn™ to primary stakeholders.

Evaluation Question(s)	Data Sources				
	Formative			Summative	
	Survey	Usability Study	Work Performance	Usability Study Summary	Work Performance
1		X			
2		X			
3		X			
4	X				
5	X	X		X	
6		X		X	
7	X	X	X		X
8	X	X	X		X

Sample

- Administrative assistants
 - This group of staff members utilize myLearn™ to help in the advancement of both personal and professional skill sets. Personal skill sets might include better verbal communication, effective management processes and learning to deal with executive activities. myLearn™ being a resource with a great deal of content focused on technical skills learning fits nicely with the goals of this group desire

to learn. Software program tutorials ranging from Microsoft Word to database programming are available in myLearn™.

- Summative analysis will consist of asking a range of questions directly to this group of staff members about the user interface of myLearn™.
- Formative analysis will be conducted later after this group has a chance to use the myLearn™ system.
- First Year Faculty
 - These individuals are members of the University of Missouri faculty that have just been hired to teach in their respective college. They will be chosen from a program that is managed by the office of academic affairs titled University of Missouri faculty scholars. As first-year professors there are many technical and professional skills to utilize to effectively teach. myLearn™ consists of a great deal of material to help not only first-year faculty members but also vetted professors.
 - Summative analysis will consist of asking a range of questions about the user interface of myLearn™.
 - Formative analysis will take place whether the performance system was able to aid the newly acquired professors.

Data Collection Strategies

- Documentation
- Create a concept map for myLearn™
- Count feedback from University of Missouri employees.

Instruments

Formative:

- Feedback. An employee provides oral or written feedback to using MyLearn™ for professional development.
- Self-assessment. Users reflect on and monitor their progress.
- Observation. A person observes and records an employee's level of engagement, academic and/or affective behavior; develops a plan of action to support that staff member; implements the plan; and continues to record observations to determine its effectiveness.
- Portfolios. A growth portfolio can be used to create a record of staff/faculty member's growth in a number of areas. For example, a department secretary may use myLearn™ to learn how to write grant proposals for their department.

Summative:

- Department specific projects.
- Standardized assessments.
- Portfolios. These provide evidence to support attainment of stated learning objectives.

Data Analysis Strategies

Analysis of gathered data will be broken down and categorized into areas of the formative purposes: Immediate repair of noted problems, modifications for future use, staff motivation through professional development processes.

Results

Recommendations

Summary

Limitations

Logistics

- Computer
- An e-mail client
- Surveymonkey.com
- A car

Timeline

Task	January	February	March	April	May
Meeting with Stakeholders	22				
Draft Plan		12 27			
Client Review		19 27			
Plan Approval		27			
Data Collection		27	4	6	
Data Analysis			4	6	
Evaluation Report				1	14
Client Review					7 14
Final report					7 14

Evaluation Timeline

Budget

- Total evaluation cost \$0.00

References

Boam, Rosemary, and Paul Sparrow. *Designing and Achieving Competency: A Competency-based Approach to Developing People and Organizations*. London: McGraw-Hill, 1992. Print.

Schott, M., Chernish, W., Dooley, K. E., & Lindner, J. R. (2003). Innovations in distance learning program development and delivery. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, VI (II). Retrieved February, 12 2013 from <http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/summer62/schott62.html>

Appendix A

Formative Data Collection Tools

1. User Feedback Survey

**Scale rating: 1 strongly disagree- 7 strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. I thought the site and its features were easy to use							
2. I think that I would need to be more technically literate to use the site							
3. I would imagine that most people would learn to use the site very quickly							
4. I found the information that I needed easily							
5. I felt very confident using the system							

***Please answer the following questions to further help us make the myLearn™ experience more enjoyable and productive.*

6. How would you improve the computer based training?

7. What is the least valuable about the myLearn™ program?

8. What is most valuable about the myLearn™ program?

Appendix B

2. Self Assessment

1. Comment on the how easy it is to find materials on myLearn™.

2. Comment on any work you accomplished in addition to while using myLearn™.

3. What training/developmental activities did you plan to use during this session? Were these plans completed? On time? Be prepared to discuss how accomplishment in these areas has impacted your performance.

4. What do you consider to be your work-related strengths and weaknesses?

5. Describe areas for improvement in terms of your current job responsibilities.

6. What growth opportunities are you looking for?

Appendix C

Summative Data collection tool

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		NA
1. Overall, I am satisfied with how easy it is to use this system	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
2. It was simple to use this system	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
3. I can effectively complete my work using this system	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
4. I am able to complete my work quickly using this system	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
5. I am able to efficiently complete my work using this system	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
6. I feel comfortable using this system	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
7. It was easy to learn to use this system	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
8. I believe I became productive quickly using this system	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
9. The system gives error messages that clearly tell me how to fix problems	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
10. Whenever I make a mistake using the system, I recover easily and quickly	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
11. The information (such as online help, on-screen messages, and other documentation) provided with this system is clear	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
12. It is easy to find the information I needed	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
13. The information provided for the system is easy to understand	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
14. The information is effective in helping me complete the tasks and scenarios	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
15. The organization of information on the system screens is clear	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
16. The interface of this system is pleasant	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
17. I like using the interface of this system	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
18. This system has all the functions and capabilities I expect it to have	strongly disagree								strongly agree	
19. Overall, I am satisfied with this system	strongly disagree								strongly agree	

Appendix D

4. Portfolio

We would ask participants to use the “My Progress” feature of myLearn™ and save it as a PDF to be submitted to Marguerite and David.

Screenshot:

Learner Records Progress Report:		Login Name: champlind Learner Name: Champlin, David				
STARTED						
Title	ID	Last Accessed	First Accessed	Completed	Current Score	High Score
Sarbanes-Oxley: Whistleblower Protection	HR0172	Jan 24, 2013	Jan 24, 2013		-	-
Sharepoint 2010 for Power Users	lp_colum_doit_SP2010PowerUsers			0%	n/a	n/a
Business Writing	lp_umsys_business_writing			0%	n/a	n/a
Communicating Effectively	lp_umsys_communicating_effectively			0%	n/a	n/a
Email Essentials	lp_umsys_email_essentials			0%	n/a	n/a
Listening Effectively	lp_umsys_listening_effectively			0%	n/a	n/a
Presentation Skills	lp_umsys_presentation_skills			0%	n/a	n/a
Time Management	lp_umsys_time_management			0%	n/a	n/a
Virtual Teaming	lp_umsys_virtual_teaming			0%	n/a	n/a
Work/Life Balance	lp_umsys_worklife_balance			0%	n/a	n/a
<i>Courses Started: 10</i>						
COMPLETED						
Title	ID	Last Accessed	First Accessed	Completed	Current Score	High Score
No completed events found.						
<i>Course Completions: 0</i>						

Appendix E

Summative Data Collection Tool

1. Observation Usability Summary

Summary of Users and Usability Tests

		Participant 1	Participant 2
User Profile	Age / Gender		
	Internet Experience		
	Profession		
Test Context	Comments		
	Usability Test Method		
	Date of Test		
	Platform / Browser		

Summary of Observations

	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
Description of the task			
Time spent to complete the task(s)			
Errors or problems identified by a user			
Overall user Comments			