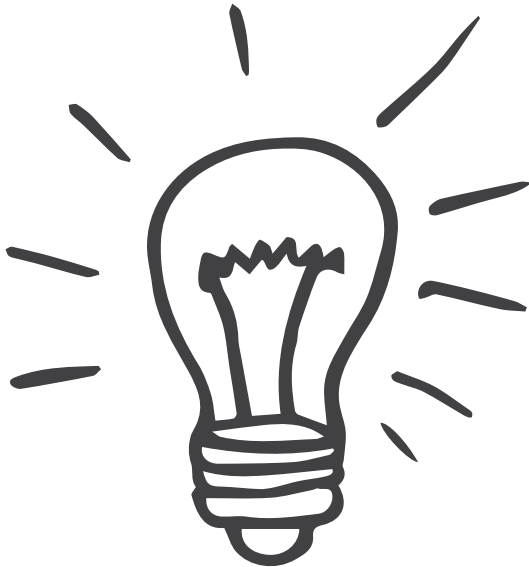


10 LESSONS

I Learned My First Year in eLearning



Sharing is Caring!

Thank you for downloading and reading my very first eBook! I spent the past several years pondering the creation of this eBook, and I'm so happy I finally made the time to write it!

I dedicate this eBook to all the eLearning designers out there who never dreamed of being eLearning designers. If that's you, you know what I mean.

I encourage you to share this eBook with your colleagues, work buddies, or anyone who is a new eLearning designer.

Lastly, please visit and check out my website and blog at www.timslade.com. I post some pretty cool stuff there!

Thanks for reading!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Slade'.



10 LESSONS

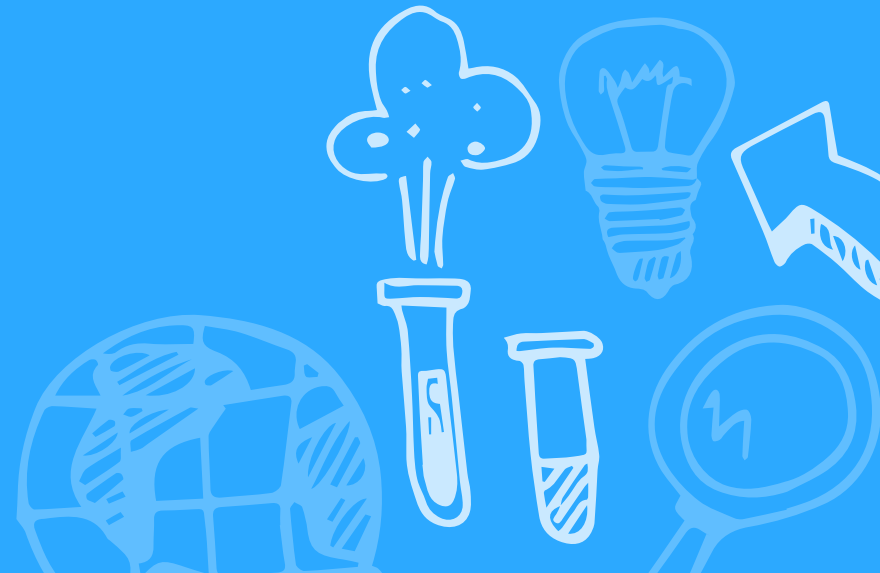
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INTRODUCTION

A little something about myself.



INTRODUCTION

A little something about myself.

Can I tell you a secret? I'm not really an eLearning designer.

My eLearning journey started in the spring of 2009, while I was working as a Loss Prevention Supervisor for Kohl's Department Stores. My job was pretty simple: sit in a tiny office, watch cameras, and catch shoplifters. I always like to say that loss prevention is one step up from being a mall cop. But that never bothered me. Not only was I good at catching shoplifters, but I also enjoyed it tremendously!

I had been working in the field of retail loss prevention for almost seven years when I was offered the unique opportunity to join the Kohl's Corporate Loss Prevention Team in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. At the time, I knew this was my opportunity to jump into a salaried position and further my loss prevention career. I was now working as a Loss Prevention Training Coordinator—I was a "corporate guy" with a career trajectory. In 2011, I even earned my undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice.



This is how I fell into the world of eLearning.

During that first year in my new job, the direction of my career dramatically changed. I helped develop an onboarding program for new loss prevention employees and single-handedly developed five new eLearning courses on how to catch shoplifters. I learned how to use my first eLearning authoring tool (Articulate Studio '09) and several graphic design tools. I also uncovered hidden talents for presentation design and visual communications.

After settling into my first eLearning job at Kohl's, I quickly realized I was no longer viewed as the "corporate loss prevention guy." I was now the guy who could "make things look pretty on the screen." Although I was still working within the Loss Prevention Department, loss prevention was no longer my function—it just happened to be the subject of my work, which was now eLearning and graphic design.



Here I was in 2009,
nervously managing a
film shoot for my first
eLearning project.

Why did I write this eBook?

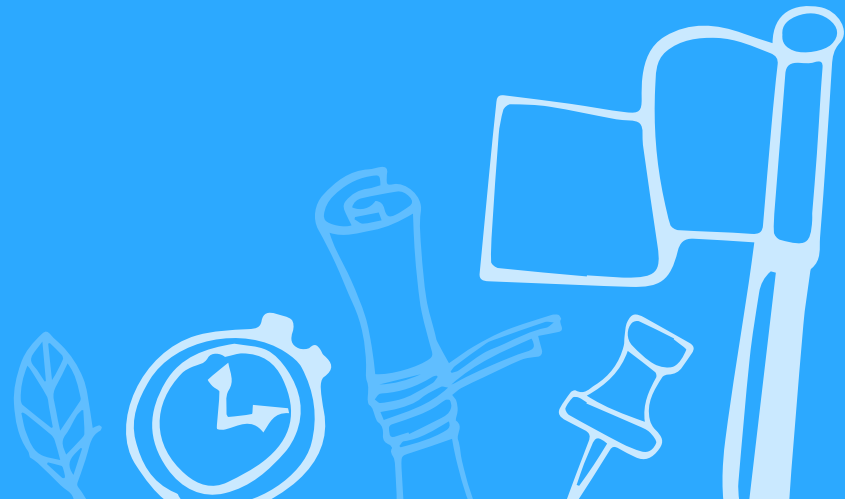
- I wrote this eBook because my first year in eLearning wasn't easy, and I think most of you can relate to that.
- I wrote this eBook because you've likely discovered that eLearning is so much more than just instructional design, and that's intimidating.
- I wrote this eBook because you might feel like the most unqualified eLearning designer on the face of the earth, and the truth is you're not alone.
- I wrote this eBook for all of you who never dreamed of becoming eLearning designers, and somehow fell into it...and learned to love it like me.

What you'll get from this eBook?

In this eBook, I'll share with you ten lessons I learned my first year in eLearning. These are the lessons that have helped shape my career and have helped me realize some common truths about working as an eLearning designer.

LESSON ONE

Most eLearning designers never dreamed of being eLearning designers.



LESSON ONE

Most eLearning designers never dreamed of being eLearning designers.

How did your eLearning career start? Did you go to college to become an eLearning designer? Did you dream of being an eLearning designer when you were a child? I bet not!

The truth is, most eLearning designers, like myself, ^{fell} ~~entered~~ into the world of eLearning by accident. You might have been good at something, and one day someone came along and said, “Hey! You’re great at your job. Do you want to become a trainer?”

If that was your experience, you might have thought you were advancing your career in whatever it was you were doing. In reality, you were propelling yourself into a brand-new career—something you never could’ve imagined for yourself.

When I was a kid, I dreamed of being a lot of different things: an actor, an architect, and even a lawyer.
I never dreamed of being an eLearning designer.



OMG! Did I just fool them
into thinking I'm a real
eLearning designer?



Embrace your career identity crisis.

Over the years, I've learned you can't always plan for what the future will bring—even when you think you know where your career is taking you. Regardless of your profession, career evolution is inevitable, especially if you're a career-minded individual.

A career identity crisis occurs most often when you jump into a job and learn a new skill or uncover a hidden talent. But, how do you deal with these new interests or talents when they have nothing to do with your planned career path? The answer is simple: you embrace it!

After I made the leap into eLearning, I uncovered talents and interests I never knew I had! When I left Kohl's in 2012, I created my own eLearning website, blog, and online portfolio. I also started freelancing as an eLearning designer.

Embracing a career identity crisis is how real growth occurs, and it introduces you to possibilities you never thought possible.

It's okay to feel like an impostor.

Although I embraced my new eLearning career (arms wide open), I felt totally unqualified—I felt like an impostor. I used to think it was a total fluke that I would pass each stage of an interview and ultimately land the job. And if I'm being honest, I still have those feelings today!

If you feel like a total impostor, you're not alone. The truth is, the eLearning industry is made up of individuals with a lot of diverse backgrounds. Yes, some have advanced degrees in education or instructional design, but most are like you and me!





LESSONS FROM AN EXPERT

Jeff Kortzenbosch



My first year of eLearning was primarily about learning how to use the tools at my disposal. Back then, we didn't have David Anderson's Weekly eLearning Challenges, so I scoured the Articulate Community on a daily basis looking at examples people shared and trying to rebuild them. This daily habit is what skyrocketed my development skills.

Mastering a trade takes practice...and then some more practice. So, go out there and start building stuff! Even if you never share it with the world, you are building your skills as an eLearning designer.

LESSON TWO

eLearning is much more than just instructional design.



LESSON TWO

eLearning is much more than just instructional design.

If I asked you what makes an eLearning course effective, how would you answer? Would you say instructional design? I'm sure you would—that's what everyone says! But, think for a minute about all of the other components that go into creating an eLearning course. It's not just instructional design—it's graphic design, user interface design, and visual communications!

Once you recognize that instructional design is just one piece of a larger medium for communicating learning content, you'll learn that instructional design alone can't make an eLearning course effective.



Instructional
Design



Graphic
Design



User Interface
Design



Visual
Communications

learn
People ~~eat~~ with their eyes first.

Here's some truth for you: humans are visual creatures! We "eat" with our eyes first, we fall in love with our eyes first, and we learn with our eyes first. It's because of this that graphic design in eLearning matters!

When I first started in eLearning, I put all my efforts into instructional design. Although I wanted my courses to look better, I really only worried about graphic design if I had the extra time at the end of a project.

If that sounds familiar, you might want to spend some extra time fine-tuning the way your courses look and feel.

Start with the basics: learn what colors and fonts work well together and how to create a clean and balanced layout. Practicing good graphic design techniques doesn't mean learning how to create custom graphics. Sometimes it's just a matter of moving things around on the screen until they look good.





User interface design is like a joke. If you have to explain it, it isn't that good.

When designing an eLearning course, how often do you think about the learner's experience? And, when I say "learner's experience," I'm not referring to the learning content! I'm talking about the literal experience your learners have while using your course.

Besides the development of learning content, think about all the other elements you have to develop to make your course functional and interactive. As an eLearning designer, your job also includes user interface design!

When an eLearning course is difficult to use, or lacks intuitiveness, it becomes a barrier to your learner!

Is there a clear path forward? Do buttons look like buttons? Is the navigation consistent from one slide to the next?

Making your course easy to use and navigate lets the learner focus on learning!



Never storyboard anything you can't communicate visually.

Do you know the difference between graphic design and visual communications? If not, you might be missing a huge opportunity to enhance the presentation of your learning content!

Graphic design relates to the way your course looks and feels. This is how your fonts, colors, images, graphics, layouts, and effects work together to create a cohesive design. Visual communications, on the other hand, relates to how you communicate ideas, processes, or procedures visually on the screen.

eLearning is a tool for visual communications. Carefully selecting a collection of images to represent an idea, creating a series of animations to explain a process, or designing a diagram to show the relationship between different concepts are all visual communications. When storyboarding your learning content, you must always consider how you plan to visually communicate it on the screen.

When you start with bullet points in your storyboard, you'll end up with bullet points on your slides. It's the simple truth!

LESSONS FROM AN EXPERT

Ashley Chiasson



I spent my first year in eLearning literally learning all about eLearning! I was coming from a background in Psychology and Linguistics and was trying to navigate a profession that, months earlier, I had known absolutely nothing about! It was a fast and furious first year spent learning multiple authoring tools, a lot of acronyms, and how to move from one phase of development to another.

My first year gave me the confidence to jump in and learn new technologies without any prior training. I truly believe that confidence has helped greatly as I've navigated client requests and technological shifts over the previous nine years of my eLearning career.

As a child, I was curious to a fault. My first year in eLearning renewed my sense of curiosity and allowed me to make peace with the fact that you can never be too curious when learning new things!

LESSON THREE

eLearning is just one piece of a larger ecosystem for learning.



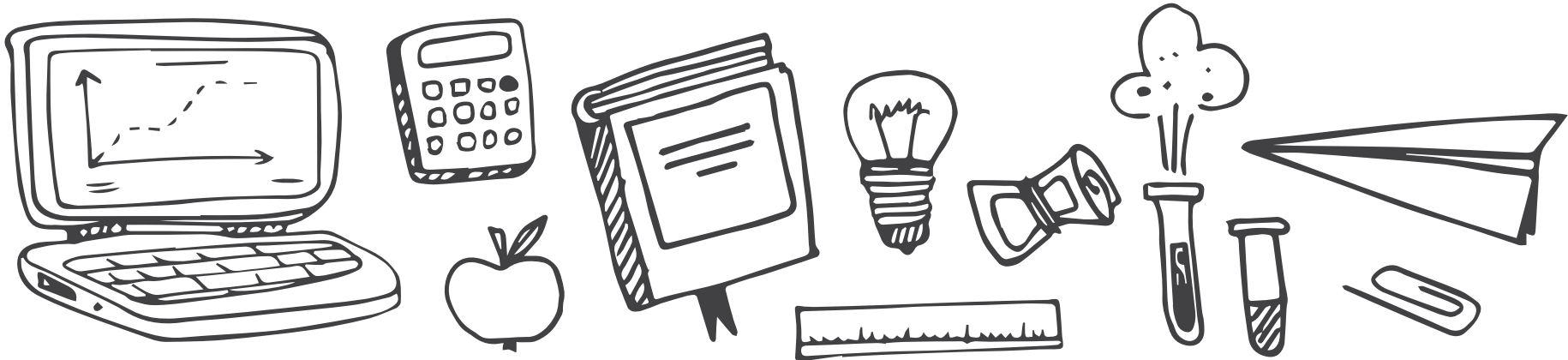
LESSON THREE

eLearning is just one piece of a larger ecosystem for learning.

During my first year in eLearning, I was obsessed! I operated under the premise that every learning problem could be solved with an eLearning course. Even when the classroom proved to be more effective in certain situations, I was convinced I could recreate the same learner experience and effectiveness in an eLearning format. I was wrong!

I quickly learned that eLearning is just one piece of a larger ecosystem for learning. Because people learn in a variety of ways, it's important to provide variety in your learning strategy! No single learning methodology works for everyone.

eLearning is powerful, but it's not the end-all, be-all!





There will always be a need for the classroom.

Think about all the amazing things you can do with technology and how fast it's changing. Technology lets you shop online, video-chat with family and friends on the other side of the world, and much more.

Although eLearning isn't going to be the tool used to send humans to Mars, it can still do some pretty cool things and create some great learning experiences. With eLearning, you can create a scenario to simulate a discussion with a customer or create an interaction to simulate a software program or piece of equipment.

Despite all the cool things you can do with eLearning, it's important to remember that eLearning doesn't replace the classroom. There will always be a need for the classroom!

There are some things the classroom is better for:

- Face-to-face interactions
- Individualized attention
- Group discussions

eLearning isn't always the right solution.

We still operate in a world where eLearning is a buzzword—a shiny new toy for an organization to obsess over!

It's easy for an organization to adopt eLearning with the idea that it can replace all other learning solutions. And why not? eLearning offers a lot of benefits: it can cut travel costs, deliver a consistent message, and reach a geographically dispersed audience.

Despite these advantages, eLearning isn't always the right (or only) solution. As a learning professional, your job isn't just to design learning content—your job is to recommend the best way to approach a learning problem, and sometimes the solution isn't eLearning!

Here are some things you can create that aren't eLearning:

- Instructor-led class
- Job aid or handout
- How-to video
- Self-paced training manual





LESSONS FROM AN EXPERT

Miranda Lee



During my first year in eLearning, I learned not to turn down eLearning projects that seem too technical. The expectations of an eLearning designer are very different than they used to be. For example, it's important for an eLearning designer to have an understanding of what Javascript can do, but with today's eLearning authoring tools, it's not as important to have actual coding experience.

When you're challenged with a highly technical project, don't shy away because you feel your skills aren't as advanced as they need to be. If the project requires you to learn a new skill, it's the perfect opportunity to grow!

LESSON FOUR

Be obsessed about the learner experience.

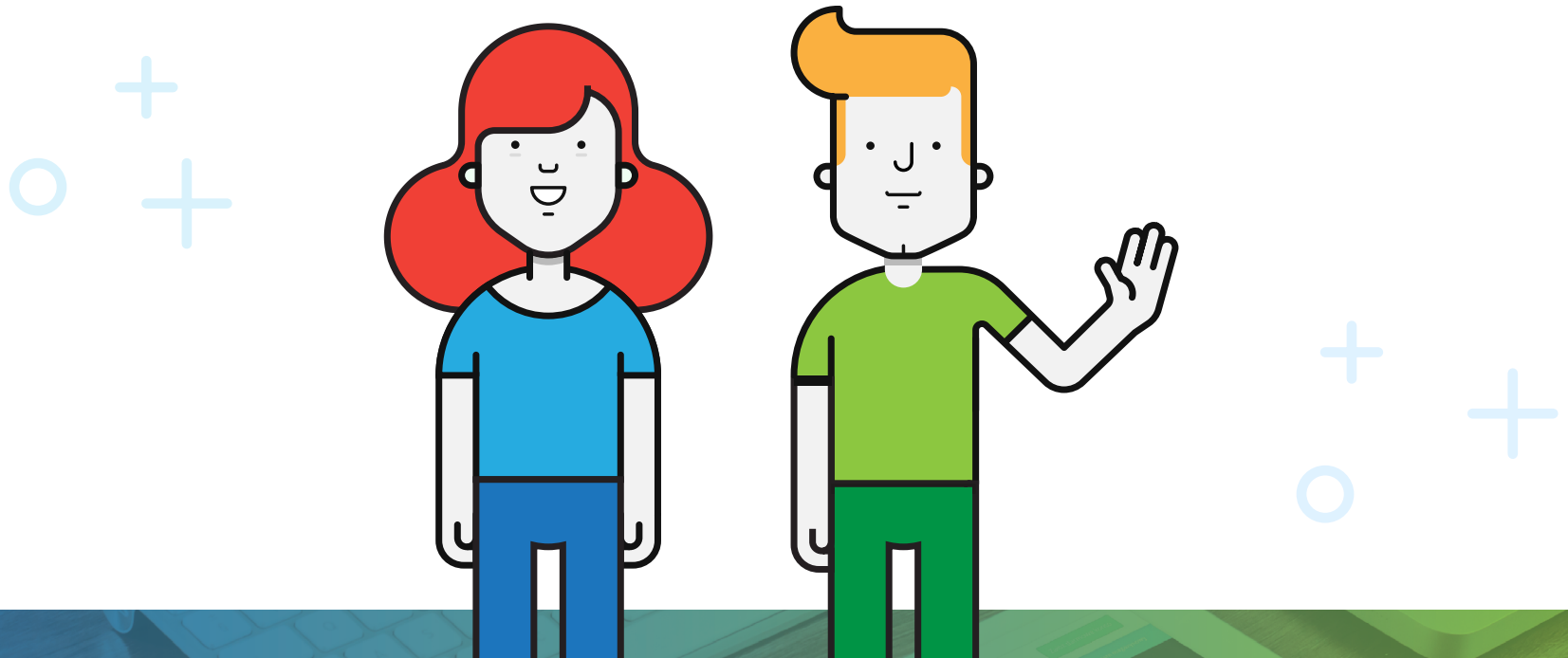


LESSON FOUR

Be obsessed about the learner experience.

Too often, the learner becomes a bystander or an afterthought in the eLearning development process. So much time and effort is focused towards pleasing your stakeholders and subject matter experts, it's easy to forget about your most important customer: the learner!

Yes, your stakeholders are customers, too. And yes, you want to make them happy. But, you must consider the learner's experience in every decision you make during the development of an eLearning course!





really
↓
Would you want to sit through that eLearning course?

*Are you
sure?!*

Let's be 100% honest with each other, shall we? Have you ever created an eLearning course that even *you* wouldn't want to sit through?

If you answered no to that question, either you've never created an eLearning course OR you're lying!

Creating an engaging, interactive, visually pleasing, and effective eLearning course isn't easy—it takes time! Think about how often you sacrifice the learner's experience to meet a deadline or make your subject matter experts happy.

A great way to gauge the quality of your work is to put yourself in the shoes of your learner. Think about the world your learners live in and their roles within their organization.

Once you're in the mindset of your learners, ask yourself:

- Would I want to sit through this course?
- Is this content relevant to my job? If so, how?
- Will I remember what I learned in this course?
- Am I bored? If so, why?

Still want to sit through that course?

& engagement
↓

Locking your eLearning courses won't make learning happen.

Do you trust your learners? If your learners had the option to quickly click through your entire eLearning course in a few seconds, would they? If so, why?

I used to lock all of my eLearning courses. I forced the learner to watch every second of every slide before moving forward. It took me a long time before I realized I was doing this, not because I didn't trust my learners, but because I knew my eLearning courses were so disengaging that even I would want to click straight through them!

The truth is, locking down a course doesn't make learning or engagement happen! Yes, there are times when you might be required to lock down a course (i.e., state laws, etc.), but in most cases, it's not necessary!

Your learners aren't untrustworthy criminals—unlock your eLearning courses!



I'll just zone out while I wait for that Next button to work!

LESSONS FROM AN EXPERT

Matt Guyan

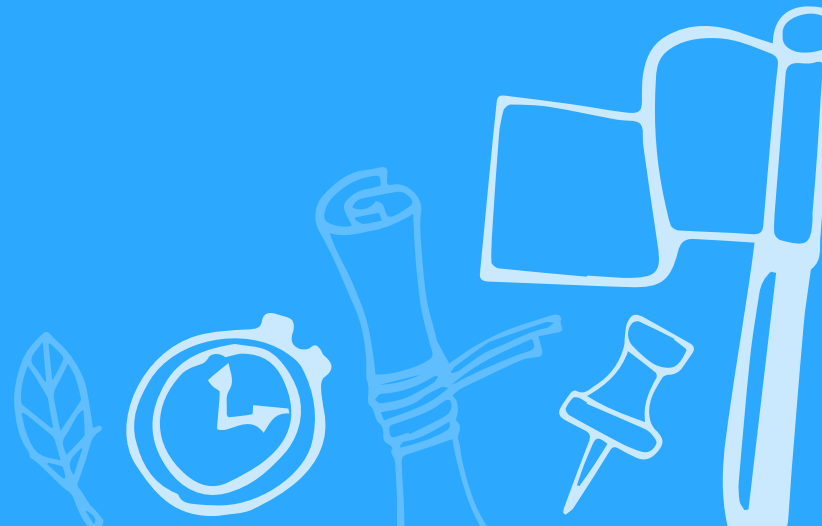


When I started working in eLearning, I didn't know too much. I started reading books on instructional design so that I wouldn't get found out! While the books were helpful, I soon discovered that many skills are required to be a good eLearning designer. I realized how important it was to keep learning, practicing, and developing my skills.

Thankfully, there are lots of people out there willing to help—they write blogs and eBooks, they create YouTube videos, and they share articles on eLearning websites, LinkedIn, and Twitter. It's your job to find them and connect with them! Everyone starts as a beginner, and while experience takes time to develop, remember that you're not alone!

LESSON FIVE

Don't work for your stakeholders;
partner with them.



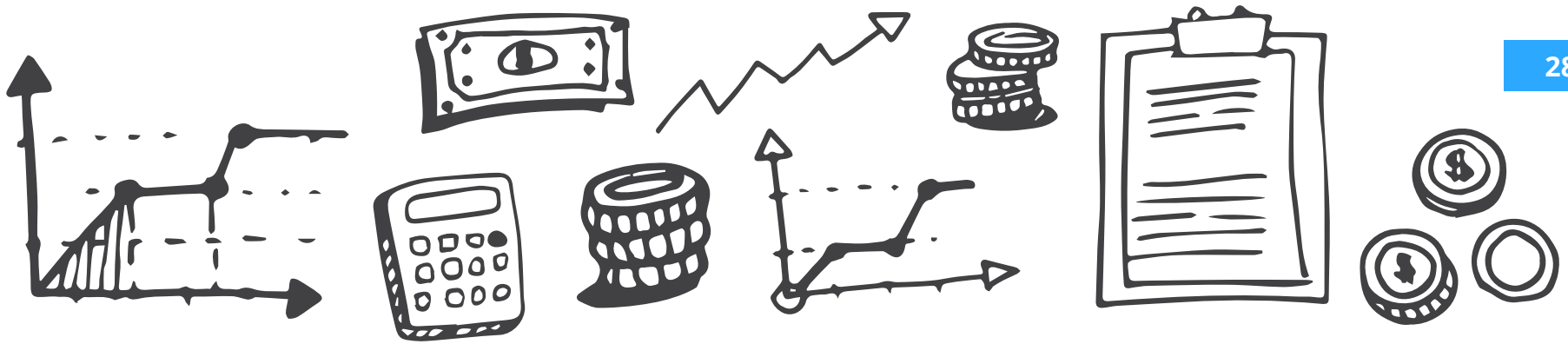
LESSON FIVE

Don't work for your stakeholders; partner with them.

Working with your stakeholders and subject matter experts isn't always the easiest part of developing an eLearning course. Subject matter experts can sometimes be demanding. And they can even (unintentionally) be barriers to success if they are unaware of the development process or instructional design standards. But they play an important role for you as an eLearning designer.

The truth is: you and your subject matter experts need each other! They possess information you need to solve their problem—it's symbiosis!





Uncover and help your stakeholders reach their goals.

Too often, subject matter experts think of eLearning in terms of what learners need to be “aware of.” In reality, learners don’t need to “be aware” of anything! What learners really need is the knowledge, skills, and practice to change or emulate specific behaviors. This is important because behaviors tend to have a direct correlation to a business result and are measurable against a goal.

At the end of the day, your stakeholders and subject matter experts care most about business results. Designing your eLearning content around specific and measurable goals not only helps you get buy-in from your stakeholders, but it also helps you design measurable, performance-based learning content!

Uncover and help your stakeholders reach their goals by asking these questions:

- What goals or metrics can be most affected by this course?
- What behaviors have the most positive effect on these goals or metrics?
- How much of an effect would you like this course to have on these goals or metrics?

Don't be steamrolled by your subject matter experts.

Subject matter experts are like a box of chocolates... you know the rest! In my experience, subject matter experts fall into two categories:

- Too involved
- Not involved enough

It's rare to find a subject matter expert who sits between these two extremes; however, you should be most cautious of the one who's too involved.

You see, during my first year in eLearning, I quickly learned that a lot of people (mostly over-involved subject matter experts) think anyone can be a trainer. As you'll learn later in this eBook, eLearning is a glorified PowerPoint, right?

NOT!

Beware of those subject matter experts who believe they know more than you about the creation of learning content. Stand strong in your authority as an eLearning designer, and don't get steamrolled!





LESSONS FROM AN EXPERT

David Charney



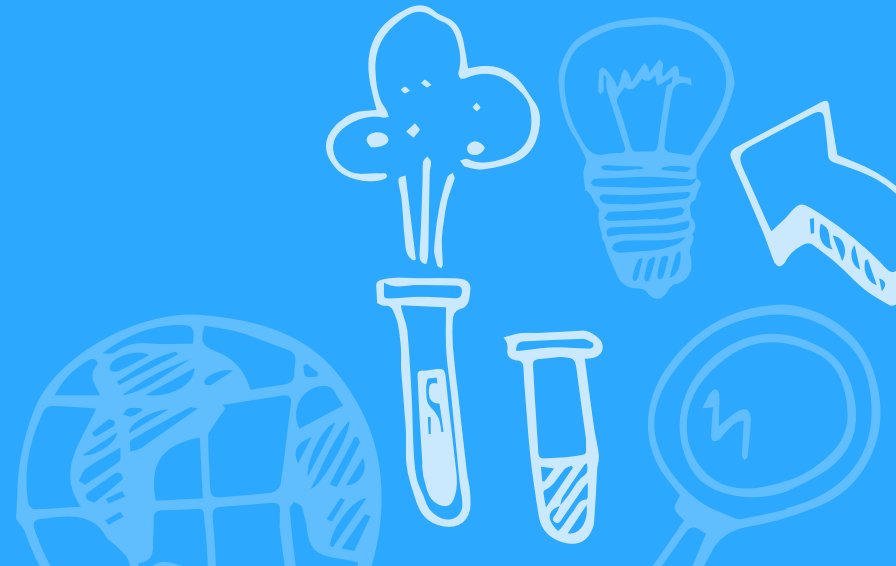
The first eLearning project I was involved with had me stumped. I sat at the computer and felt like I was staring at a blank canvas! I didn't know where to begin.

Somehow, I managed to work through that first project, then the second, and the third, and that is when I had a realization. My first step shouldn't be to sit down at the computer and write storyboards, design slides, or create drag-and-drop interactions (which every eLearning website told me was important for some reason), but rather, to determine what my learners actually needed to be able to do once they finished the course.

Once I realized the importance of defining what the learner needed to do, everything else fell into place!

LESSON SIX

Clicking doesn't equal meaningful interactivity.



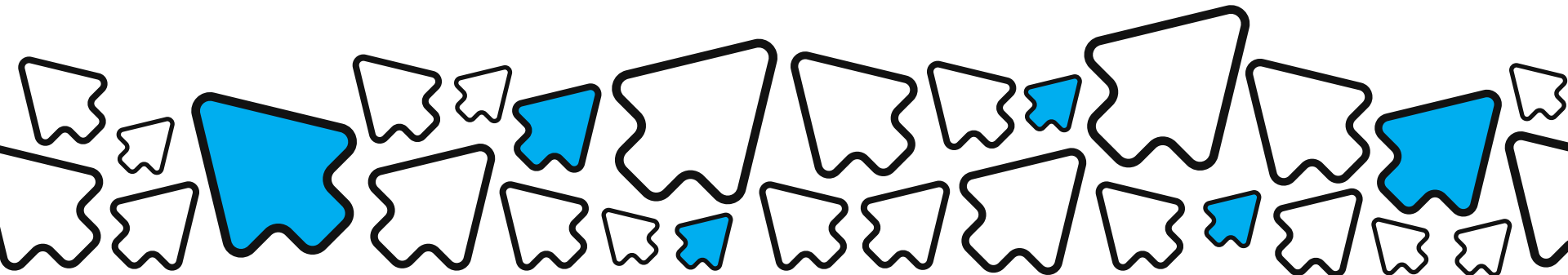
LESSON SIX

Clicking doesn't equal meaningful interactivity.

My very first eLearning project consisted of a series of five eLearning courses, created in Articulate Studio '09. I remember expending most of my efforts on what I thought the learner needed to know and how to present it on my slides. As I look back on that series of eLearning courses, it looked more like a self-playing PowerPoint presentation, rather than a performance-based, interactive learning experience.

The special thing about eLearning is all the different ways you can present your learning content. You can synchronize animated images and text with audio narration to create a visual story or require the learner to interact with the course to discover the learning content.

When I first started in eLearning, my concept of interactivity was limited to the learner clicking to reveal some learning content. Although this simplified, click-to-reveal type of interactivity does make a course interactive, it doesn't create *meaningful* interactivity.



Clicking doesn't require the learner to use their critical thinking skills.

When you think about making an eLearning course interactive, what does that *really* mean? Does it mean adding a button for the learner to click? What happens when the learner clicks that button?

Learner clicks a button.  Content is revealed.

When you're new to eLearning, your concept of creating interactive content might be as simple as the learner clicking to reveal some learning content. However, let me ask you this: how much knowledge or critical thinking does it take for the learner to execute this task? Not much!

With this type of click-to-reveal interactivity, the most the learner needs to know is how to use a mouse to click a button! In other words, the interaction isn't meaningful.



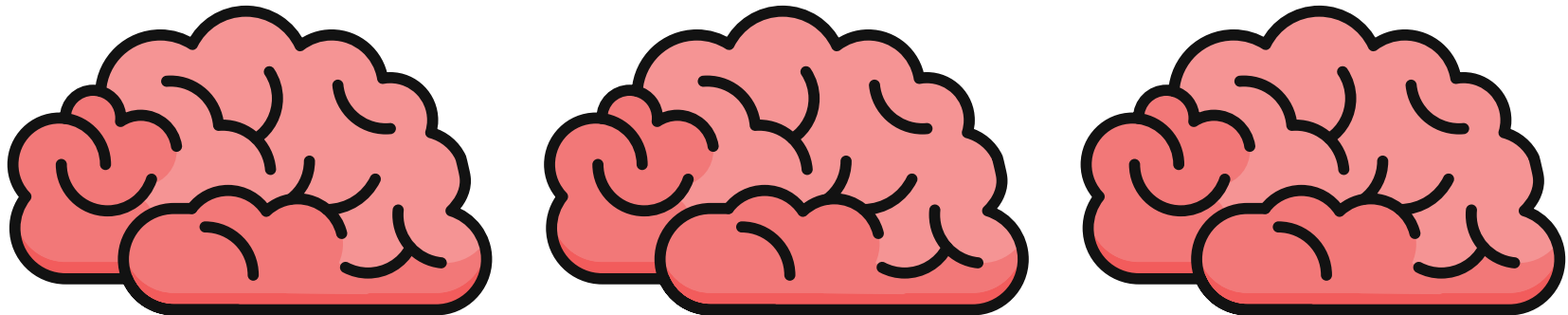
Create interactions that require the learner to think before clicking.

Don't get me wrong; I don't have anything against click-to-reveal interactions! I use them all the time to group my content in different ways. Click-to-reveal interactions are perfect for outlining chronological events in an interactive timeline or for organizing the steps of a process in a tabbed interaction. The issue with click-to-reveal interactions is when they're the only form of interactivity you include in your eLearning course.

When designing an eLearning course, strive to create interactions that require the learner to think before clicking. This means the learner is challenged to make some decision or provide a response based on the knowledge provided earlier in the course.

Here are some examples of interactivity that require the learner to think:

- The learner is asked how to select an appropriate response to an angry customer.
- The learner is asked to sort items by dragging and dropping them into multiple categories.
- The learner is asked to type their response to an employee's complaint.



LESSONS FROM AN EXPERT

Deadra Welcome



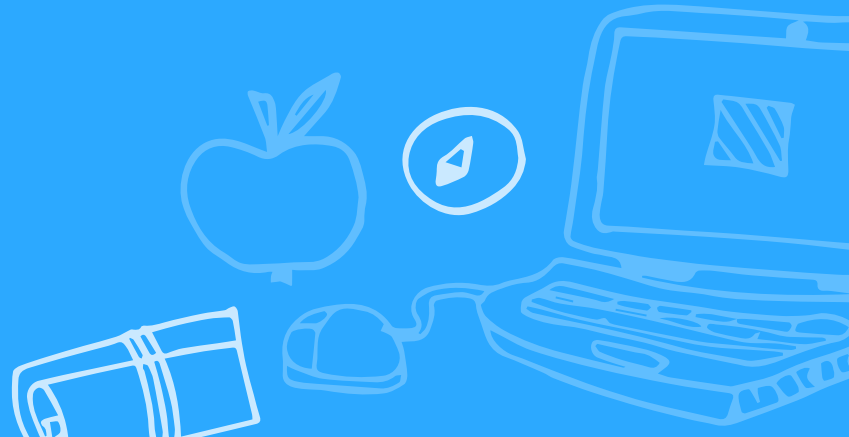
I spent my first year in eLearning trying to understand the difference between instructional design for online learning and instructional design for classroom learning. When I first started in learning and development, the term “eLearning” was still relatively new, and my training was focused on the classroom environment.

Of course, when I started to think about using eLearning as an alternative method for training delivery, I was really confused. As I learned more about eLearning, I realized that instructional design is instructional design, regardless of how the learning content is delivered!

Effective training, whether for an online or classroom environment, starts with solid analysis and design. Yes, there are additional steps in the development of eLearning content; however, your instructional design still needs to be anchored in identifying what the learner needs to do at the end of the training.

LESSON SEVEN

Your subject matter experts don't know what they need until you show it to them.



LESSON SEVEN

Your subject matter experts don't know what they need until you show it to them.

Let me be super-duper honest: your subject matter experts don't know the difference between what they want and what they need.

During my first year in eLearning, I made the mistake of assuming that my subject matter experts knew what they needed. I was wrong! I quickly learned that my subject matter experts *wanted* a lot of different things, but were completely clueless of what they *needed*.

As an eLearning designer, it's your job to show your subject matter experts what they need. Don't waste your time waiting for them to explain it to you. If you do, you run the risk of them asking you to convert their bullet-point-riddled presentation into eLearning. And that's not a good thing!

Don't let your subject matter experts become their own worst enemy!





A large percentage of your job is educating your subject matter experts.

When starting a new project, it's easy to assume your subject matter experts understand the eLearning development process. Although your subject matter experts may have been involved in many different projects, that's no guarantee they'll understand things like storyboards, prototypes, or review cycles.

When working with subject matter experts, don't make the mistake of failing to educate them about the eLearning development process. During your initial meetings, take the time to explain the development process and the purpose behind it. Explain what they should expect during each phase of the process, and explain any terms they may not understand. Ask questions during your initial kickoff meeting to learn what perceptions they have about eLearning. Taking the extra time to educate your subject matter experts not only makes your life easier, but it also demonstrates your expertise and builds credibility.



Involve your subject matter experts early and often.

Designing an eLearning course is a lot like building a house: the closer you get to completion, the harder it is to make changes.

For example, let's say you're building your dream home. The foundation has been poured, the walls are up, and the finishing touches are being added. At the last minute, you decide to change your mind about the location of the kitchen. At this point in the construction process, how much work and time will it take to move the kitchen? The answer: a lot!

Have your subject matter experts ever done this to you when developing an eLearning course? Sometimes, even the smallest change to a color or the content can result in hours of rework.

Involving your subject matter experts early and often is how you prevent this. Just like finalizing the location of the kitchen occurs while reviewing the blueprint, finalizing the content of a course occurs while reviewing the storyboard!



LESSONS FROM AN EXPERT

Margie Meacham



I was an independent training consultant when I got my first eLearning design gig. I was hungry for an opportunity with this particular Fortune 100 company, so I accepted the assignment even though I really had no idea what I was doing. I was familiar with PowerPoint, but had no idea what other tools were out there.

On my first day, I met another designer on the team. I was afraid to ask for help because I didn't want to appear unqualified, even though I probably was. But I reached out for help and soon found that everyone was happy to steer me in the right direction. I had other gifts that I could share with my new colleagues, and soon we were all learning and growing together.

The most important thing I learned is that eLearning isn't just a job or a training delivery modality; it's a community. Don't be afraid to ask for help and don't sell yourself short. Everyone has a unique talent and perspective to share. We're all better when we work together.

LESSON EIGHT

Becoming a good eLearning designer requires a lot of practice.



LESSON EIGHT

Becoming a good eLearning designer requires a lot of practice.

I hate to be a downer about this one, but, not everyone is cut out to be an eLearning designer. I don't say this to discourage you, but rather, to be honest about the amount of effort required to become a good eLearning designer.

During my first year in eLearning, I really struggled. I didn't fully realize and respect the skills and practice required to be a good eLearning designer.

It wasn't until I pushed myself outside of my comfort zone that I started to grow. I forced myself to research the fundamentals of good instructional design, the use of good graphic design techniques, and everything in-between. These efforts eventually paid off.

Good eLearning designers aren't good because they're cut out for it, but rather, because they put in the practice needed to become good at it!



Design eLearning...even when you're not getting paid.

Let me start by saying that I don't mean you should work for free! Becoming a successful eLearning designer requires you to practice your craft. Although you'll get a lot of practice working on eLearning projects at work, it's not always enough to expand your skills and talent.



invest

Successful eLearning designers ~~spend~~ ^{invest} their extra time designing eLearning on their own. It might seem crazy, but doing this gives you an opportunity to create content you might not otherwise get to with projects at work. This enables you to flex and build your creative muscles. It also offers you the opportunity to build your portfolio. The truth is, if you aren't willing to design eLearning on your own time to improve your skills, you might want to rethink how passionate you really are about becoming an eLearning designer!

LESSONS FROM AN EXPERT

Alexander Salas



Becoming an eLearning designer has been the most rewarding learning experience for me because it has led me to learn many other creative disciplines. I first learned about the eLearning industry and community two years ago. Before then, my skills were instructional design and PowerPoint design.

The multimedia capabilities of eLearning sparked my imagination and made me curious about other opportunities to create different types of learning content. Shortly after that, I bought a video camera, learned about video production, and started practicing those skills on a regular basis. Since then, I've learned how to design learning games, build websites, incorporate augmented reality, manage an LMS, and edit images. I've learned how to use these skills to enrich my eLearning content.

The biggest lesson for me is that eLearning isn't just about adding buttons to a slide—eLearning can be anything you can imagine!

LESSON NINE

Never reveal your secrets.



LESSON NINE

Never reveal your secrets.

Years ago, eLearning development required programming knowledge—something I would've had zero interest in learning. However, tools like Articulate Storyline and Articulate Studio have made the creation of eLearning content easier than ever before! Anyone who knows how to use PowerPoint to create a presentation can use a tool like Articulate Storyline. That's both a good and bad thing for folks like you and me!

Despite how easy the tools have become to use, the “art” of good eLearning design is still a specialized skill.



Who needs an eLearning designer when I can convert this PowerPoint myself?!



eLearning isn't glorified PowerPoint design, but a lot of people think it is!

During my first year in eLearning, I learned how to design eLearning content with Articulate Studio—a tool that uses PowerPoint for the bulk of the authoring environment. I was amazed at how easy it was to create eLearning content with a program I already knew how to use. I made a mistake when I shared this excitement with my subject matter experts.

You see, your subject matter experts rarely see, understand, and respect the amount of instructional design, graphic design, and user interface design required to create an effective eLearning course. They only see a deck of slides.

Despite the fact that most eLearning authoring tools are slide-based, and even work a lot like PowerPoint, never equate eLearning design with PowerPoint design. They aren't the same!

If your subject matter experts think all you do is create glorified PowerPoint presentations, they'll undervalue what you do!



LESSONS FROM AN EXPERT

Bianca Woods



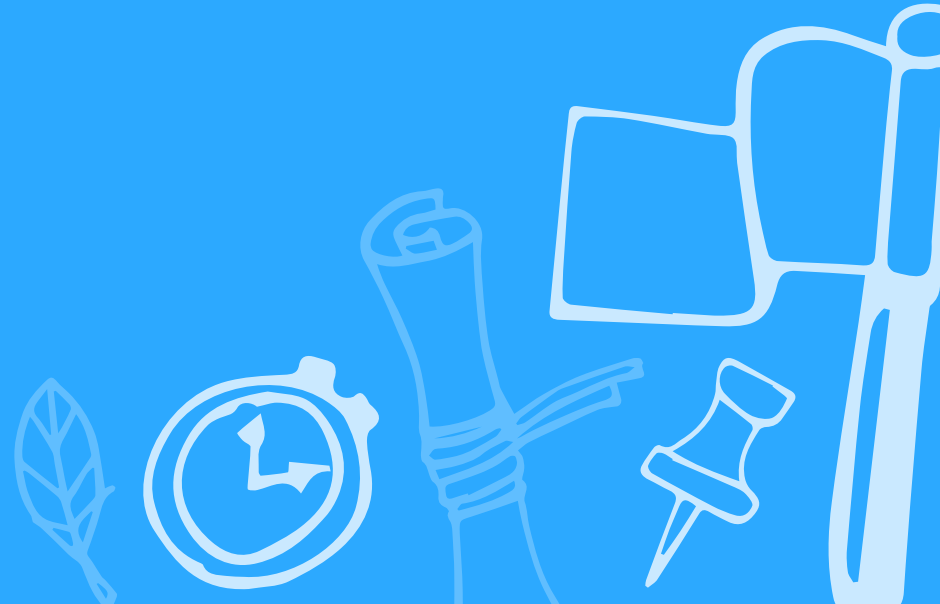
My first year in eLearning involved a lot of “not knowing what I didn’t know.” And that can make it tricky to even know where to start building your skills!

What I found most useful for getting past that point was to regularly talk to other people in my field about their projects. Asking others about how they solved the challenges they were working to overcome, discussing what their thoughts and development processes were, and even taking a look at their in-progress work compared to the final product taught me so much about which holes I had in my own learning and development skills and how I could start filling them.

Learning to learn from others was the biggest lesson I learned my first year in eLearning!

LESSON TEN

Share everything you know.



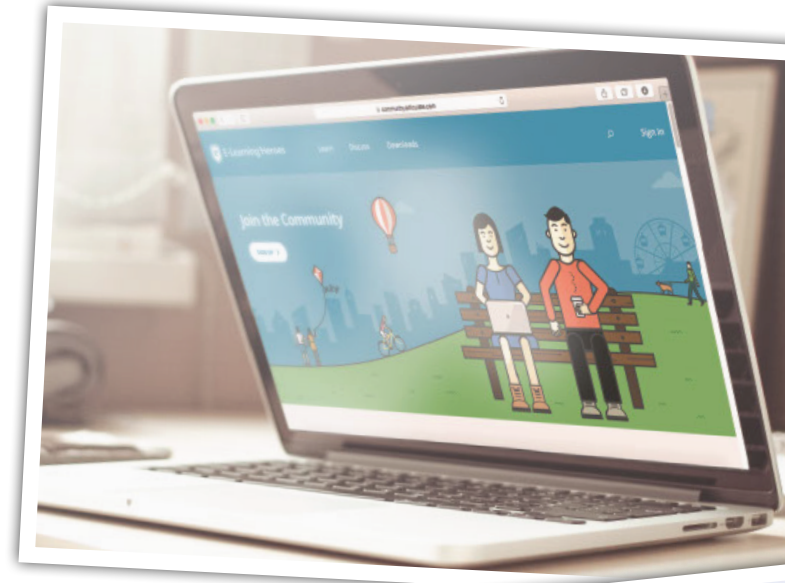
LESSON TEN

Share everything you know.

I've been working in the eLearning industry since 2009. In that time, my success as an eLearning designer hasn't been due to the number of eLearning courses I've created or the number of books I've read. My success as an eLearning designer is largely due to the community of designers within the eLearning industry.

I've benefited directly from others who have been so grateful to share everything they know. Over the years, I've tried my best to do the same: to share everything I know with people like you and the rest of the community.

By helping and inspiring others with my knowledge, I've also helped myself. Sharing everything I know has helped me to create a blog, speak at conferences, and even write this eBook. It's helped me snag amazing jobs, new clients, and new friends.





Be an expert of your experience.

Despite the benefits of sharing everything you know, it's not an easy thing to do. In fact, it's downright scary! When I first started in eLearning, I didn't think I had the authority to share my knowledge with others. Who was I to have an eLearning blog or speak at an eLearning conference?!

That changed for me when I mustered the courage to speak at my very first eLearning conference in March of 2014. I spoke at the Learning Solutions Conference & Expo on the ten things I learned my first year in eLearning (what a coincidence). I thought the presentation went horribly; however, I was shocked by the number of people who approached me after my session to thank me for sharing my story.

It was then I realized that I didn't need to be an expert in eLearning to be an expert in eLearning—I just needed to be an expert of my own experiences!

become
Fake it until you make it.

I started this eBook by telling you that I'm not really an eLearning designer—I just happen play one at work. The truth is, I've been faking it the entire time! Because I didn't grow up dreaming of becoming an eLearning designer, I've had to fake my way through it all.

Unless you went to school to become an eLearning designer (which most of you didn't), you've had or will have to fake it, too. And that's okay! I'm living proof that you can fake it until you become it.



LESSONS FROM AN EXPERT

Diane Elkins

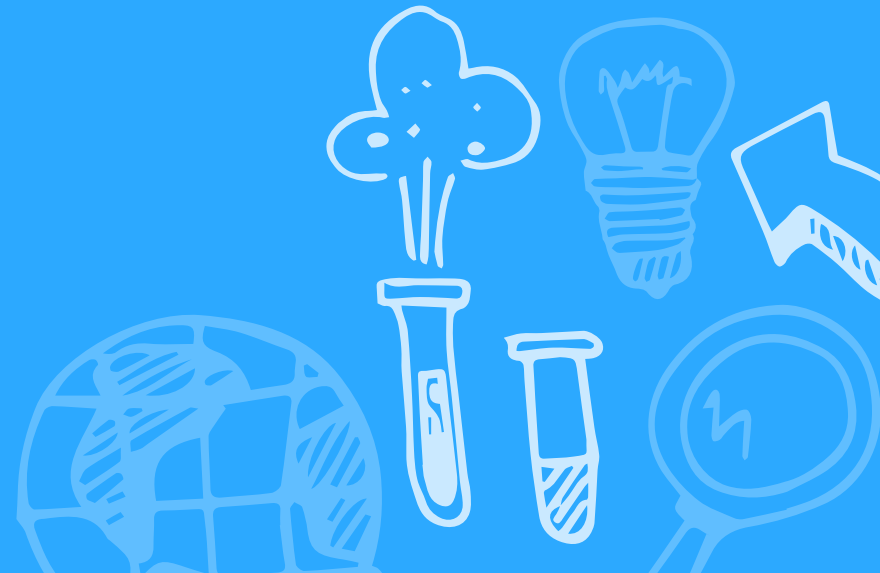


When I first started in eLearning, my business partner and I spent many a late night around her dining room table trying to finish projects and meet deadlines. I learned the hard way that everything takes a little longer than you think it will. My “gut” feeling was always overly optimistic. Plus, I assumed that writing the first draft of the storyboards and building the first draft of the online course were the most work.

Through years of late nights and, ultimately, some detailed time tracking, I have a better sense now of how long things really take. In particular, I know that client review cycles, internal edits, and final QA testing can take just as much time as creating first drafts. Now I can plan better for those “last few edits” that used to cause so many late nights.

CLOSING

Thanks for reading.



CLOSING

Thanks for reading.

Well, that's it! Thanks for reading my very first eBook! I hope you enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it! This eBook has been several years in the making, and I'm so excited to finally have it out there for people like you to enjoy.

Now it's your turn!

As you progress in your eLearning career, I want you to think about the big lessons you've learned (or will learn) and write them down somewhere. You never know when a new eLearning designer might be looking to you as an expert!

When that day comes, share the lessons you've learned!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'f. i.' with a horizontal line underneath the 'i'.



About the Author.

Tim Slade is a speaker, author, and award-winning eLearning designer. Tim has spent nearly a decade working to help others elevate their eLearning and visual communications content, and he has been recognized and awarded within the eLearning industry multiple times for his creative and innovative design aesthetics. Tim is a recognized Articulate Super Hero, co-author of the popular E-Learning Uncovered book series, a regular speaker at various national eLearning conferences, and author of The eLearning Designer's Blog at www.timslade.com.



Thanks for reading!

Do you know someone else who might like this eBook? If so, share it with them!



TIM SLADE

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Zalogowanie

Programy i usługi

**Księgujemy za Ciebie
bezproblemowo**

Własna firma

Wszystkie dokumenty (jak Ci wygodnie
przez maila, pocztą).

Problemy z programem? (jak Ci wygodnie
przez maila, pocztą).