

G3625-F

Design for learning

—a facilitator's guide

by **Joan E. Cybela**

University of Wisconsin–Extension ■ Cooperative Extension

An educational design core competency module

What is Design for Learning?

In short, *Design for Learning* is a hands-on process to help Extension faculty design creative and effective educational experiences for adults. The module enables faculty to learn at their own pace over a three-month period, and still maintain a sense of connectedness, accountability and closure. How? By using an assortment of distance education and other media to involve them in reading, writing, reflecting, listening and interacting with each other and with resource people.

What materials and resources will you need as a facilitator?

You will need the educational resources provided with this module, which include—

▼ This publication:

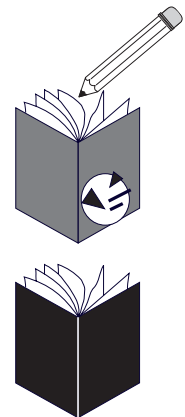
Design for Learning—A Facilitator's Guide
by Joan E. Cybela
(University of Wisconsin–Extension,
1994)

▼ A workbook/guide:

Design for Learning—A Self-Paced Guide
by Joan E. Cybela and Edrie Greer
(University of Wisconsin–Extension,
1994)

▼ A book:

Mastering the Teaching of Adults by
Jerold Apps
(Krieger Publishing, 1991)





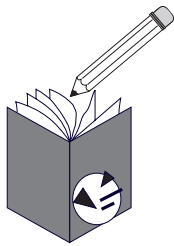
- ▼ Three audio cassette tapes:
 - Creating Dynamic Adult Learning Experiences* featuring Stephen Brookfield's interviews with Malcolm Knowles, Alan Knox, Raymond Wlodkowski and Leonard Nadler (two tapes, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987)
 - Discovering and Developing the Teacher Within You* featuring Joan Cybela's interview with Jerold Apps (University of Wisconsin-Extension, 1993)



- ▼ Access to audio teleconferencing and electronic mail.

Take some time to get acquainted with these resources. You can do that by:

1. Reviewing the following portions of *Design for Learning—A Self-Paced Guide*
 - ▼ Pages 4-11 for information about the module, its philosophy, learning objectives, format and other elements.
 - ▼ Pages 15-51 to become more familiar with Units 1-5 and the ways in which learners interact with the educational design concepts.
 - ▼ Pages 52-75 to discover a rich assortment of supplementary resources available to you and your learners.



2. Listening to the following tapes
 - ▼ *Discovering and Developing the Teacher Within You* to explore new insights on teaching, learning and designing educational experiences.
 - ▼ *Creating Dynamic Adult Learning Experiences* to discover how renowned educators from around the country and the world view the adult learning experience.
3. Reading from *Mastering the Teaching of Adults* to reflect upon the art and science of adult teaching and learning from master educator Jerold Apps.



What will participants learn?

By the time participants have completed the readings, activities and audio segments that are referenced in *Design for Learning—A Self-Paced Guide*, they will be able to:

- ▼ Describe the five concepts inherent in good educational design—
 - Understanding learners and their needs
 - Examining and organizing content
 - Selecting appropriate teaching tools
 - Creating effective learning environments
 - Assessing learning outcomes
- ▼ Apply these concepts to an issue or situation in their extension work.

What are some characteristics of an effective facilitator?

If you've had experience with adult learning and educational design, you will feel very comfortable with these materials. Background in planning extension programs and experience with audio teleconferencing and electronic mail (e-mail) will also aid your work as a facilitator. Strong interpersonal skills and a willingness to listen, encourage, troubleshoot and support rather than control are crucial to success. It's important that you and the learners be able to contact each other easily and spontaneously throughout the three-month learning experience. Distance learning technologies provide an excellent vehicle for doing just that!

What does your role as a facilitator involve?

You'll find that your role as a facilitator is both an exciting and important one. Although the learning experience is designed to be as self-directed as possible, you'll assume several vital responsibilities. Let's take a look at them.

Your role as educator

- ▼ You are in a key position to model the concepts being taught in these materials. Make and take the time to get to know your learners and encourage them to get to know each other. You have much to learn from each other in this three-month period, and the interaction will be rich once you establish a comfortable base.
- ▼ Review with learners the content to be covered, the module's learning objectives and the various strategies ("teaching tools") being used to accomplish all of the above. Pages 4–11 in *Design for Learning—A Self-Paced Guide* will walk you through all of this.
- ▼ Invite your learners to identify how and where they prefer to learn. Acquaint them with the variety of learning resources in this module that accommodate different learning styles.
- ▼ Encourage your learners to listen to themselves, to trust their instincts, to value their past experiences and to be confident in their own learning ability. Help them to feel comfortable with "unlearning" what no longer fits, and to welcome "relearning" as they apply new concepts.
- ▼ Prompt your learners to reach out to others when they feel the need, to "test the waters," to experiment with ideas and explore possibilities. This experience provides an exciting place to succeed—but also a "safe" place to fail!
- ▼ Help your learners recognize that the personal value of this learning experience will depend upon its relevance in their professional lives. Encourage them to apply the concepts to issues and situations that they now or will soon face in Extension. Page 71 in *Design for Learning—A Self-Paced Guide* will be especially helpful in this process. And most important, devote a significant portion of each of your audio teleconferences to discussing learners' issues and situations, their experiences in applying the concepts, their questions, frustrations and insights. The group interaction can and will be abundant and meaningful.
- ▼ Related to this issue is the final sharing of each others' work. Prior to the last audio teleconference, invite learners to send copies of their work from Units 1–5, Applying the Concepts: Your Issue Statement to the other participants. This work doesn't need to be polished; it can be in draft form. The purpose is to see how others "made sense of," or interpreted, these concepts. In the final teleconference, these works can be referenced, shared and discussed.
- ▼ As the educator, you are also the evaluator for this learning exercise. On page 55 in *Design for Learning—A Self-Paced Guide* you will find an example of an evaluation tool that has been used to help assess the module's learning outcomes.
- ▼ And last **but not least**: Alert your learners to the excitement inherent in self-paced independent learning, and **caution** them as well about the risks and pitfalls. It is amazingly easy to put off today what we think we can do tomorrow. Emphasize the importance of good self-discipline, setting up weekly "design for learning" study dates, and then honoring them. You can temper the natural human tendency to procrastinate if you schedule group meetings via audio tele-

conference after each of the five units. These meetings, strongly recommended by our pilot participants, provide a good forum to track progress, address questions or resolve problems.

Your role as a communicator/ coordinator

- ▼ You are the primary catalyst for providing communication as a group. Through audio teleconferencing and e-mail (or other means if those are not available), you'll be meeting and communicating with learners throughout the experience. Given the number of persons and time involved, that's no small task!
- ▼ Specifically, you'll hold teleconferences as a group six times: first to launch the group, and then every two to three weeks as you finish each of the first five units in *Design for Learning—A Self-Paced Guide*. The sixth and final teleconference also provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on the entire learning experience—what worked, what didn't, how learners applied the materials to their situations in Extension, and how they might continue to do so. Also, try to determine how the learners felt about this particular format. The evaluation form found on page 55 in *Design for Learning—A Self-Paced Guide* can be completed by learners and returned to a

designated location after this final teleconference. When you obtain the tabulated results, share them with the learners.

- ▼ You'll also maintain contact with learners via e-mail to keep them informed about teleconference dates and other relevant information. Determine how frequently participants check their e-mail, and work out any scheduling or technical snags that become apparent.
- ▼ Once again, invite learners to communicate with each other as a group or as individuals throughout the process. They might do this by telephone, e-mail, or face-to-face when convenient. Encourage them to share their work from each of the units in the workbook/guide—particularly at the end of the process.

Conclusion

So there you have it—an overview of your role as facilitator in this dynamic experience we call *Design for Learning*. Take satisfaction in all that you bring to this process, and celebrate all you have gained at its completion. Your time and energy are greatly appreciated, as together we make a difference through education!

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