ADDIE: The Training Cycle
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The training cycle, commonly called an Instructional Systems Design (ISD), is the first thing trainers think about when designing or developing training programs. Developed initially by the U.S. military to effectively create training programs, there are about 100 different ISD models. The most widely known model is ADDIE. The acronym ADDIE represents the six steps required to design, deliver, and continue to improve the delivery of training:

- Analyze
- Design
- Develop
- Implement
- Evaluate

It’s important to picture these steps in a circular model to remind us to continually improve what we’ve done. It is also important to keep Knowles’ adult learning principles in mind as you implement the training cycle.

The training cycle starts with an analysis. Evaluate is the final step in the cycle, but what you learn during evaluation is input to analyze the program and determine if it is the best it can be. This training cycle is used whether you are designing from scratch or just tailoring a training program you purchased from a vendor. Let’s examine each in more detail and define what you complete in each.
Analyze
The first stage of The Training Cycle is called analysis in the ADDIE acronym. Generally, you need to conduct an assessment and analyze the data, to identify specific needs. There are two main reasons for completing an assessment and analysis.

First, you want to make sure there is a reason to conduct training. You may discover that after conducting the analysis the relevant issue can be addressed by something other than training. For example, you may be able to do on-the-job coaching; or online content may exist that could be delivered either asynchronously or synchronously; or you may feel that an article in the company newsletter alerts employees to the information needed.

Second, if you do determine that training is necessary, the analysis tells you exactly what should be taught in the training session. It also helps determine your training objectives.

There are many ways to conduct assessments. You can use a formal instrument that measures a person’s skill or knowledge, or one that simply measures a person’s preference. You can use written questionnaires or you can use personal interviews with employees or supervisors. If you use interviews, you can meet with individuals one-on-one, or you can conduct small focus groups. Another way to assess a need is to observe an employee working or to take a work sample. You can also use records or reports that already exist.

Your goal in collecting this data is to determine the gap between a job requirement and an individual’s actual skill or knowledge. Bottom line is to determine what is preventing the desired performance. You use this information in the next stage of The Training Cycle.

Design
After you have determined that there is a legitimate training need, your next step is to state exactly what you want the training to accomplish. You do this by writing objectives. There are two kinds of objectives from two perspectives used in training:

The learning/performance objective: This is a statement of the performance (knowledge or skill) that is desired after the training has been conducted. Whether you call them learning or performance objectives doesn’t matter, as long as you realize that the purpose is to demonstrate what your participants have learned and can perform. What behavior changes did they make? Learning objectives should be based on the information you discovered during the analysis step. For example, at the end of this training session, “Participants will be able to design participant-focused learning activities.”

The training objective: This is a statement of what the instructor hopes to accomplish during the training session. This may be an outcome, or it may be a description of what the instructor plans to do in order to accomplish the learning objectives. For example, “This session will create a positive learning climate that encourages participants to get involved and to ask questions.”

Some trainers include both learning and training objectives in their design. Learning objectives are a required step in every good training design. Training objectives help the trainer to focus on designing and delivering a first-class training program by setting targets for the trainer to achieve.

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Learners are told what the learning objectives are at the beginning of a training session. And preferably at the same time they are told about the training. But wait, I am getting ahead of myself. I have not yet begun the design process! That’s what the next stage of The Training Cycle is all about.

**Develop**

After you determine the objectives, you can begin to develop the program. This is the stage of The Training Cycle that I like best. You decide exactly what you’re going to do to accomplish the objectives you set. There are many things to consider in designing a training program.

If you haven’t already you will decide the type of delivery that will be the focus to achieve the best results: onsite classroom, virtual classroom, self-paced e-learning, performance support tools, self-study, or a combination of these and others in a blended learning solution. These questions will help determine the type and location of the training.

- How many participants need new knowledge and/or skills?
- Where are participants located?
- How much time is required?
- How much consistency is needed?
- When is training required?
- How many participants will be in each class?
- What level of trainer expertise will be required?

You may also decide whether you even need to develop the content. Given thousands of product available, you may decide instead to purchase pre-designed off-the-shelf content and customize it. Whether you design or customize, consider your audience; the best training techniques; how to provide opportunities to practice; what will be meaningful; how they will implement learning in the real world; how it will improve performance; how to add creativity to the program; in addition to ensuring that learning objectives are met. You also build in methods to ensure that the learning is applied back on the job, and a process to evaluate the program’s effectiveness.

If you design it, a big task ahead of you is developing the materials. What participant materials do the learners need? What audiovisual materials and equipment will you use? If it is an online course, what technical support will you require? Will your learners require job aids — either paper or online? While this stage can be exciting, it can also be exhausting.
Implement
This is The Training Cycle stage where you actually conduct the training program. A trainer completes a huge amount of preparation before the program. Even after an excellent job of preparing, there is no guarantee that the program will go off without a hitch. That’s why some trainers pilot a program with a group of pseudo-learners who provide feedback before the session is ready for prime time.

You use both presentation and facilitation skills in both a traditional and virtual classroom. We discuss the variations in skills throughout the book. As a trainer, you're a presenter and a facilitator:

- Presenters provide more information. If much of the information is new or technical, you may need to present. The preferred role, however, is as a facilitator.
- Facilitators play more of a catalyst role and ensure learners' participation. A good trainer is often synonymous with the term “facilitator.”

Excellent delivery skills are required whether you are facilitating a virtual or traditional classroom. While you’re conducting the training, you want to constantly read your audience to see whether you’re meeting their needs. If you see that an approach isn’t working, stop and try another. Don’t be afraid to stray from the agenda if it would be more helpful to the learners. This is the stage where platform experience and good facilitation skills are required.

Evaluate
When it’s over, it’s not over. The evaluation stage is an important part of The Training Cycle for three reasons.

- First, the evaluation tells you whether or not the objectives were accomplished.
- Second, information from the evaluation stage should be fed into the assess and analyze stage. It is used to improve the training program should it be conducted again. This is why this model is circular.
- Finally, evaluation information serves as the basis for determining needs for future programs or other changes an organization may need to make.

The cycle is complete and the process starts all over again

Remember
If you want to achieve a goal, start with the end in mind. In this case it means that you start with the Evaluation Stage. What do you want to accomplish? What does your stakeholder expect? How will what is learned enhance the organization’s goals? What will success look like? Your evaluation must be a part of the thought process as you begin the design at the Analysis stage.