Course Description
Students will investigate various synchronous and asynchronous learning technologies that can contribute to the building and sharing of individual and organizational knowledge. Based on analysis of learners' performance needs, organizational culture and goals, and potential technical obstacles, students will design blended learning approaches for improving workplace learning and performance by combining face-to-face learning and eLearning.

Course Format
OPWL 550 is a course with a learner-centered focus that requires highly active student participation. Instruction will consist of assigned readings, video lectures, online discussion, student-generated information and content, hands-on activities, and project-based assignments.

Required Course Materials

Other Reading Materials – Each week a list of articles will be provided for you in addition to the required textbook. The articles are available through the BSU library or from public websites, and the article or a URL will be posted within Blackboard for your convenience.

Computer & Hardware – The class activities require you to use a desktop or laptop computer to access and participate in the course and for developing eLearning instruction. In addition, you may need a microphone or headset (for audio recording), and a speaker or headphones.

Software – Tools for word processing, creating presentations, or developing spreadsheets is also required for completing various assignments for this class (i.e., Microsoft Office, Open Office, Google Docs).

Course Goals
By successfully completing the course, you will be able to:
- Identify performance improvement situations that could be enhanced by blended learning solution
- Identify when and how to use different methods and media (ex. face-to-face, virtual synchronous, asynchronous, mobile learning, social learning, and informal learning) to achieve the desired results
- Identify potential obstacles that can prevent a blended learning solution from functioning effectively
- Design a performance-oriented blended learning solution by applying learning theory and instructional design principles
- Identify the benefits, limitations and potential of mobile solutions in blended learning
Course Objectives

Course topics include, but are not limited to:
1. Define the term “Blended Learning.”
2. Describe the benefits and challenges of designing a blended learning solution.
3. Analyze a performance improvement situation to identify factors (organization/culture, audience, content) that may influence design solutions.
4. Describe the role of needs assessment data in the design of instructional interventions.
5. Evaluate a given blended design solution according to best practices.
6. Describe the benefits and weaknesses of various organizational blended instructional interventions.
7. Describe methods for evaluating the effectiveness of organizational training interventions.
8. Recommend appropriate training interventions based on a variety of instructional objectives.
9. Apply a theoretical analysis tool to your own performance improvement situation.
11. Identify effective delivery modalities for different types of content in blended instructional interventions.
12. Based on performance needs, select an appropriate evidence-based combination of asynchronous and synchronous strategies.
13. Develop appropriately linked instructional activities within a single objective and across multiple instructional objectives.
15. Demonstrate competency with an instructional presentation tool.
16. Explain strategies for the successful implementation of organizational training interventions.

Prior eLearning Competency

This class provides instruction in many interconnected aspects of eLearning, not just the ability to create instructional interventions using blended learning techniques. Therefore, there is no option to test out of this class by showing competence in one or more of the software applications being used for the creation of blended learning solutions. Students who enter this class with prior application competencies will be able to expand their knowledge and skills of the applications.

Weekly Class Discussions

All students are required to assume ownership of their own learning. Therefore, students are expected to proactively coordinate their learning needs with the instructor. Normal cues such as body language and face-to-face communication are minimal in the online environment and have to be supplemented using other means such as regular discussion board activities. Research shows that high levels of participation helps individual students succeed and is crucial to the overall quality of the course. In sum, your interactive, weekly participation is essential for everyone in the class. Regular and interactive participation in weekly class discussions is important to your performance in this class. Specific weekly requirements will be posted in the weekly folders with associated due dates. For tracking your participation record, you will earn 0 - 4 points each week depending on your participation level; your participation level is gauged through your activity in the weekly discussions. Understanding and application of the content and processes presented in the course readings and discussions are critical to your success in the class. Because it is important for us to cover topics quickly and allow you adequate hands-on time to complete the weekly activities, it is expected that you complete ALL course readings and participation assignments for this class.
General Requirements:

**Quality**: You are expected to post *substantive* messages that contribute to sharing and creating knowledge. Simple comments such as 'you made a good point' or 'I agree with you' without an additional detailed explanation are not acceptable. Elaborate upon classmates' comments to bring the discussion to a higher level (e.g., why you think differently, or which article supports your argument). Always complete the reading assignments before you engage in discussions. Conduct additional research on your own and bring 'new knowledge' to the table. *Remember to justify your assertions by providing references or links in APA format.*

**Quantity**: A week is 7 days starting on Monday and ending on Sunday at 11:00 PM (MDT). Usually several discussion questions or activities will be posted, and you will be asked to post your mid-week response(s) (i.e., your first response, which can be a direct response to the discussion question/activity or a response to your classmate's posting, depending on the specific directions posted in the weekly assignments folder) NLT Wednesday, 11:00 PM MDT and participate in discussions at least two times (two different days) during the week. You are expected to post 4-6 messages per week.

**Blended Learning Technology Presentation (Individual Project)**

Online, Blended and eLearning are constantly evolving and new tools, technologies and techniques are constantly being developed. One role of the instructional designer and other training professionals is to evaluate these tools and techniques and then improve the utility and quality of training interventions by deploying the tools that improve quality and add value for the organization.

For this assignment, you will have the opportunity to evaluate a tool, technology or technique and then present your findings to the rest of the class using presentation software and conducting a student-led discussion about your presentation.

The instructor will provide you with a date for your presentation and a list of possible topics will be posted in Blackboard. You will construct a 10- to 15-minute presentation by selecting one of the presentation tools compiled by Jane Hart located in the Course Resources area in Blackboard. If you have other presentation tools of methods in mind not included on this list, please request permission from the instructor first. The rationale for this assignment is two-fold:
1. You will get applied practice using a presentation tool and facilitating a discussion in an asynchronous learning environment.
2. Research continues to demonstrate that teaching the content you are trying to learn is an effective instruction strategy that helps you commit learning to long-term memory. Complete details for this assignment including a list of deliverables and evaluation criteria will be posted in Blackboard in the Course Information area.

**Blended Learning Solution Design (Team Project)**

For this assignment you will work in teams consisting of no more that 3 students. As a team, you will design a blended learning solution to address a performance need at an organization agreed on by the team. The organization can be the workplace of a team member, or another organization such as a non-profit that team members have identified a performance need for. *Prior to beginning your design, the project must be approved by the instructor.* The design project consists of two parts:
Part A: Blended Learning Analysis (Due Week 5):
For Part A of this assignment, your team will provide:
  • An executive summary of the client organization
  • A description of the performance gap to be addressed
  • Details of the factors that will influence your design decisions which may include, but are not limited to:
    o Organizational Culture
    o Program Goals
    o Audience
    o Resources
    o Time
    o Content
    o Technology
    o Limitations
    o Other additional characteristics that may influence design

Part B: Blended Learning Solution (Due Week 10):
Include Part A with changes, revisions or updates
Blended Learning Solution Design:
  • Identification of specific instructional goals and objectives for the blended learning solution
  • Description of delivery modalities and methodologies
  • Description of the instructional activities that have been designed to meet the instructional objectives
  • Description of how your blended learning solution will:
    o Impacts the Design
    o Impacts the Participants
    o Impacts the Facilitation Team
    o Impacts the Organization
    o Impact the Job
    o Impact ROI
    o Assessment Plan (see Hofman and Miner, pp. 56-57 for more detail)