

# Creating an Online Course From Existing Teaching Materials

## NEWSLETTER

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- *Storyboarding is a way of planning the multimedia components of your course. This makes image generation and authoring easier because it helps you plan how your course will actually look on screen.*
- *Graphics should help the student better understand the material covered on that page, or alert the student that this is an important page of content.*

## Welcome to the Silverchair Learning Systems Quarterly Newsletter.

It is our pleasure to provide this free newsletter to all parties interested in improving the quality of care through employee education.

At Silverchair Learning Systems, our sole focus is providing superior products and services to support the education and training of people employed in Senior Care organizations.

This quarter's newsletter is dedicated to providing helpful hints about how to create your own courses by using an Authoring tool. Authoring is the way for clients to customize their eLearning courses or to create their own eLearning courses.

This is intended to provide some insight into how to transfer an existing course into an eLearning format. It is not the only way, but it identifies some of the key issues. We hope that it is useful.

Please let me know what you think.



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## Tips for Creating an Online Course

If you have already had to narrow down your topic into something that can be delivered in a short time period (such as a PowerPoint presentation) you are well on your way to creating an online course on the topic.

Your main task now is getting what you currently have into a format (called a storyboard) that will enable you to quickly create an online version of your course. This newsletter is designed to help you complete this task.

### Anatomy of a Storyboard

Storyboarding is a way of planning the multimedia components of your course. This makes image generation and authoring easier because it helps you plan how your course will actually look on screen.

Think about a storyboard as chapters in a book, with a begin-

ning, a middle and an end. Silverchair Learning Systems recommends that you have no more than four to seven course activities in a course. If you find that you have more than seven ideas, you should either cut out low-priority chapters, or try to further divide your course into two smaller courses.

There is no one correct way to storyboard. Here is an example:

**Beginning Chapter:** The first chapter should try to answer the question, "What is this, and why should you care?" (A sample title would be, "What are standard precautions, and why do I need to use them?").

**Middle Chapters:** These chapters should give examples of how and when an employee should apply a practice or procedure. Each activity should cover one

specific piece of the whole course. (For example, in a standard precautions course, these educational activities could be called "Hand Washing," "PPE" etc.).

**Last Chapter:** The last chapter should answer the question, "How does this topic relate to me in the larger scheme of things?" (For example, you could explain the legal, occupational, or health consequences of not following standard precautions, as well as your facility's policies on following reporting exposures).



## CREATING AN ONLINE COURSE FROM EXISTING TEACHING MATERIALS

### Writing Content Pages

Now that you have your chapters identified, you can focus on the individual content pages that make up each chapter.

When writing content pages, follow these simple guidelines:

1. Separate your content by idea or idea groups so that each page covers only one content area. If you have many short, unrelated ideas, group them on one page using a bulleted list.

2. *Be concise.* Since the text will appear on a computer screen, cut out as many words as possible. The more words on your screen, the more cluttered the screen looks, and the more difficult it is for the employee to identify major points. Keep your pages between 17 and 37 words.

3. Make sure that each chapter is well organized. Ideas should logically flow from one page to the next. Keep in mind that students taking your online course may choose to do a “short” chapter first and may not go from chapter #1 to #2, but instead go to chapter #4. So, each chapter should be able to

“stand alone” and have a beginning, a middle and an end.

4. Keep the number of pages for each chapter between 5 and 15 pages.

### Planning for Multimedia Components

For each content page, include suggestions for graphics. Graphics will help the student better understand the material covered on the page, or alert the student that this is an important page of content. Try to avoid having a graphic on the page just for the sake of having something for the student to look at. In that instance, students will remember the picture but not necessarily the content!

### Review Questions

Include a review question at the end of each educational activity that addresses the most important point in that educational activity.

It is important to write educationally sound review questions.

When writing review questions, follow these guidelines:

- Make the review question relevant.
- Watch your language! Avoid slang or any term or abbreviation that the student may not

know.

- Don't negatively phrase a question (Example: “Which of the following is not...”)

- Multiple Choice questions can have 2 or more answer choices, but we suggest offering the student no more than 4 choices.

- You will be asked to write feedback for your student for each review question.

- Make the feedback specific to the question and answers. For wrong answers, the feedback should identify the misconception that makes that answer wrong and identify the correct answer.

### Writing test questions

Once your storyboard is complete, begin writing your test questions. You should have at least 10 test questions for your course.

To determine what questions the test should include, ask yourself, “Who will be taking this test?” and, “If they can only come away with 10 key concepts, what would they be?” These are the points you should emphasize when writing test questions.



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