

11 More DSA Tips for Doing Large Instructional Design Projects

By Darryl Sink

<i>Secure Strong Sponsorship</i>	The person coordinating the Subject Experts and major resources must monitor the project at a detailed enough level to assure everyone has the resources they need at the right time—after all it is a large project.
<i>Qualified Staff</i>	Consider the difference between using more people (<u>quantity</u>) vs. using more qualified people (<u>quality</u>). Assigning more people to the task can speed up completion, but may affect the flow of work, the consistency of writing style, or the quality of the project.
<i>Dividing Responsibilities</i>	To meet a tight timeline when there is more than one type of product, divide responsibilities by product. For example in a blended learning project, use a different developer(s) for say the e-learning modules, instructor led modules, and Standard Operating Modules (SOPs). Then have a senior level developer to supervise the overall flow and coordination of the project.
<i>Test a Module Early in the Project</i>	As soon as you can, create the first modules or product and try it out with a member(s) from the target audience or someone with the same background. Feed the information gained <u>forward</u> . That is, use what you learn in the development of the remaining modules or products.
<i>Plan for Reviews and Feedback</i>	Remember that sign-offs are an important part of the development process. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let reviewers know well in advance when they can expect materials for review and approval.• Include a statement on what you specifically expect them to do in the review.• Assign dates for the reviewers to deliver their feedback.• Use a Project Planning Chart to communicate deadlines to everyone involved with the project.

Communication	Ensure that all the team members know their individual roles, responsibilities, and deadlines. Establish regular communications.
Consistent Methodology	Everyone should use a consistent approach to develop the product. Establish this approach up front and monitor it to make sure it is working efficiently.
Project Coordinator	I recommend having a junior developer handle all logistical, production and communication matters. A senior developer should direct the project. Usually neither person should be writing the program.
Project Director	The project director must be experienced enough to anticipate problems and solve them quickly when they occur.
Work Flow	Establish the workflow early. Test it to see if you have any problems before the project is too far along. Make it as easy for the developers to use as possible.
Team Commitment	Make sure everyone knows the business need behind the project and everyone must buy into the effort it is going to require. Maintain commitment by providing lots of positive reinforcement.

NOTE:

We suggest you consider using the set of tips as a checklist when considering *what it will take* to do a great job with large projects. Of course, please add to this checklist from your own experience and that of your team for future large projects.