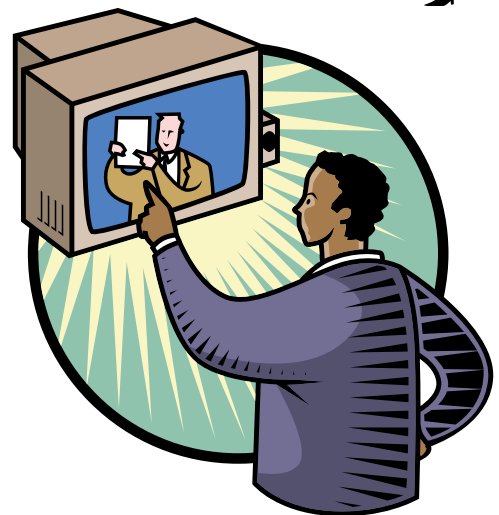
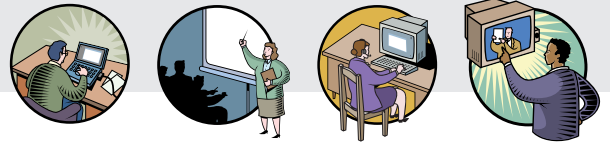


Preparing for use of Learning Package





Preparing for use of Learning Package

Most of the suggestions in this guideline will sound like common-sense to you, but if these simple checks are not carried out then the effectiveness of your learning package could be significantly reduced. Do not assume that everything is in place as this can often lead to problems. For example, you may think that your learners know how to use the VLE, but are you sure? If they are not familiar with the VLE, it may have an impact on the learning process.

Hints and Tips

Most of the checklist points have been learnt through bitter experience. It is usually safer to assume that the learners or tutors have less experience with the VLE or other any software than you first think!

Checklist

Have the learners covered the prerequisites stated in your original Learning Package Specification form (see the **Identify package to be developed** guideline)?

Ensure that the necessary facilities are available and booked. This can be as simple as a classroom with a blackboard, desks and chairs or as complex as a teaching lab with enough computers for your learners and a computer with a projector to allow you to perform demonstrations. Headsets will be useful if the learning package has sound.

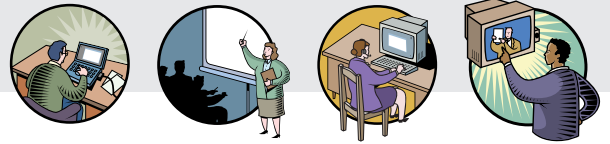
Think about the delivery environment for the learning package. Distractions to the learners can manifest themselves not only in the resource itself but also in the environment the resource is in. Make sure the learners can concentrate completely. Headsets will be useful if the learning package has sound.

Try logging on to the computers the learners will be using to make sure everything is functioning properly. If possible, login as a learner as their screens and facilities can sometimes be different from yours. For example, you may have PowerPoint available to you, but the learners may not. Try to check this sooner rather than later as your technical support team may not have time to fix things immediately.

If you have used links to external websites, make sure they are working (sometimes websites become unavailable when you least expect it!). Try to do this check as near to when the learners will use the sites as possible.

If a tutor other than yourself is using your package with learners, please give them some guidance with regard to how you expect the package to be used. For example, there may be some face to face discussion required at some point which is not explicitly stated in the package.

Another important consideration is what support will be providing during and after the



use of the package as this can improve the learning experience. We found in our pilots that learners like contact with tutors and even self-study learning packages may need to be supported. This may be as simple as having someone available to deal with issues arising (e.g. a website that is not available) but may also include managing the use of an online discussion forum, having a discussion group after completing the learning package to review the main learning points or having email support after the initial learning activities have been completed.

Using a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Try and check the following points as far in advance as possible because your VLE support team will be very busy. Providing new logins for learners as well as training may not be possible in a short space of time.

VLE Checklist

Do the learners have logins and access to the VLE?

Have the learners had training for the VLE?

Check to see what the resource looks like from the learners' viewpoint (the learner interface to a VLE often looks quite different to the tutor interface). Get a learner's login if possible.

If a tutor other than yourself is using your package with learners, please ensure that they are also familiar with the VLE and, in particular, what functions are used as part of your package (e.g. discussion groups, chat rooms).

These guidelines were produced as part of the JISC-funded project X4L Healthier Nation. You can find out about JISC at <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/>, the X4L Programme at http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=programme_x4l and X4L Healthier Nation at <http://extranet.lauder.ac.uk/x4l/>.