SME-ID Collaboration for Content Development: FAQs

1. Who exactly is a subject matter expert (SME)? Why do they need to know instructional design or collaborate with instructional designers?

Answer: Subject matter experts (SME) can either be "Workplace SMEs" or "Academic SMEs". If the domain experts are "Workplace SMEs", they will not understand pedagogy. If the domain experts are "Academic SMEs", they will understand pedagogy, but may not be in touch with workplace requirements and problems.

SMEs are well-versed with the content to be disseminated - the "what" of learning, but may not be as knowledgeable with the methodology - the "how" of learning. This makes the material that they create content-centric – something that goes against the grain of Design Thinking, which propagates user-centric design.

SMEs are just about catching up with Technology. Integrating ICT with content (again, the "how") is yet another challenge they face in designing and delivering effective and engaging learning material.

2. We have the content and domain expertise to deliver training. Is it not adequate to partner with content developers to convert this into learning material?

Answer: No. Here is why:

Subject Matter Experts	Content Developers
• Workplace SMEs may not understand the characteristics of a diverse and heterogeneous group of learners. • They may not know how to best leverage the strengths of a specific delivery medium (except, maybe classroom, for Academic SMEs) • They may not know how to mitigate the weaknesses s of a specific delivery medium (except, maybe classroom, for Academic SMEs)	• Content developers are good writers, but not always skilled instructional designers. • They do not understand pedagogy, learning design or multimedia design principles. • They work using the design, format and templates that are provided to them by instructional design experts.

3. How can this be addressed so that the learning material that reaches the learners is most effective?

Answer: These gaps can be addressed by engaging instructional designers to design your training material. Here is how:
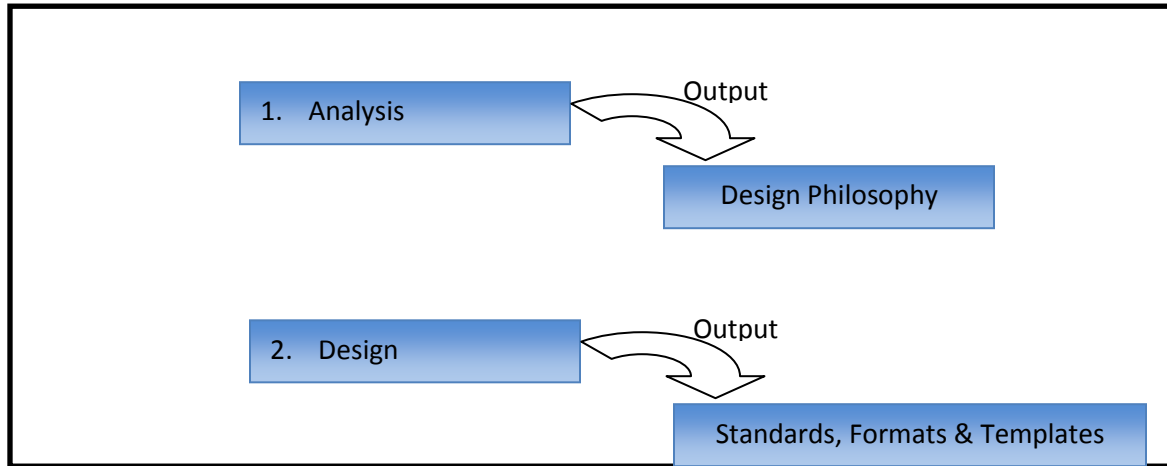
- Instructional designers have a sound knowledge of the following: instructional & multimedia design principles, higher education pedagogy, technology-based learning & distance learning philosophy, and motivation theories. They use this knowledge to help you create an effective "**learning design philosophy"**.

- When you are looking at volume production, you will need to define standards, style guides, delivery formats and templates. Instructional design experts will help you in the creation of all these.

Instructional Design & Multimedia Principles
Higher Education Pedagogy
Technology-based Learning & Distance Learning Philosophy
Motivation Theories

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Learning Design Philosophy
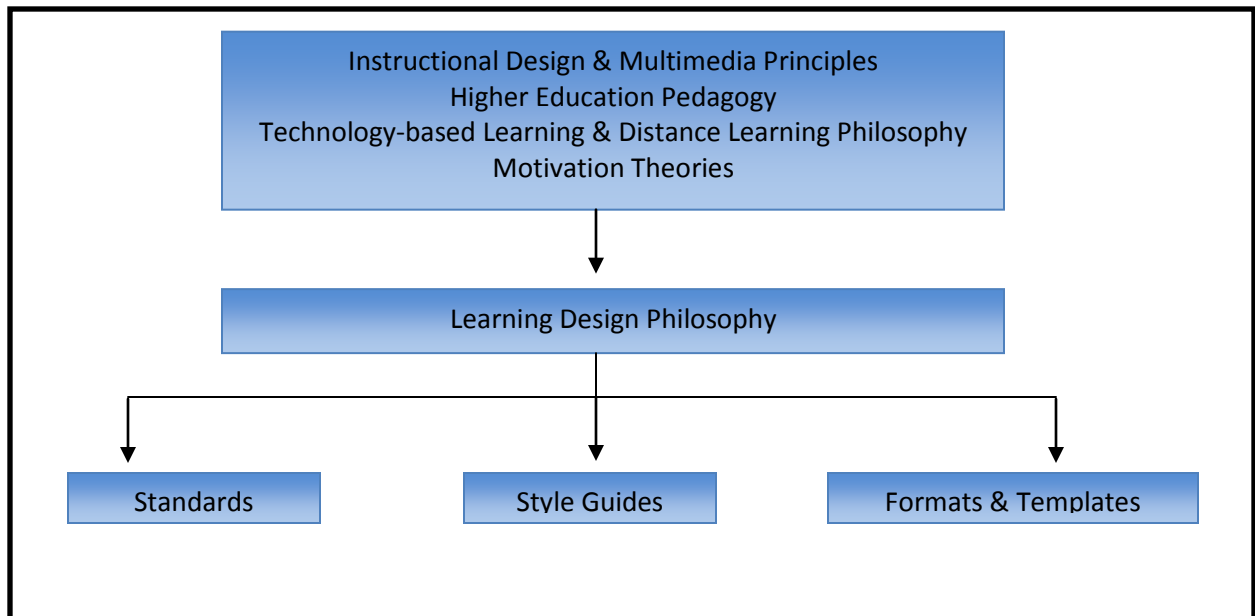
Standards | Style Guides | Formats & Templates

4. What exactly will the instructional designers do?

Answer: Instructional designers will complete the following activities:

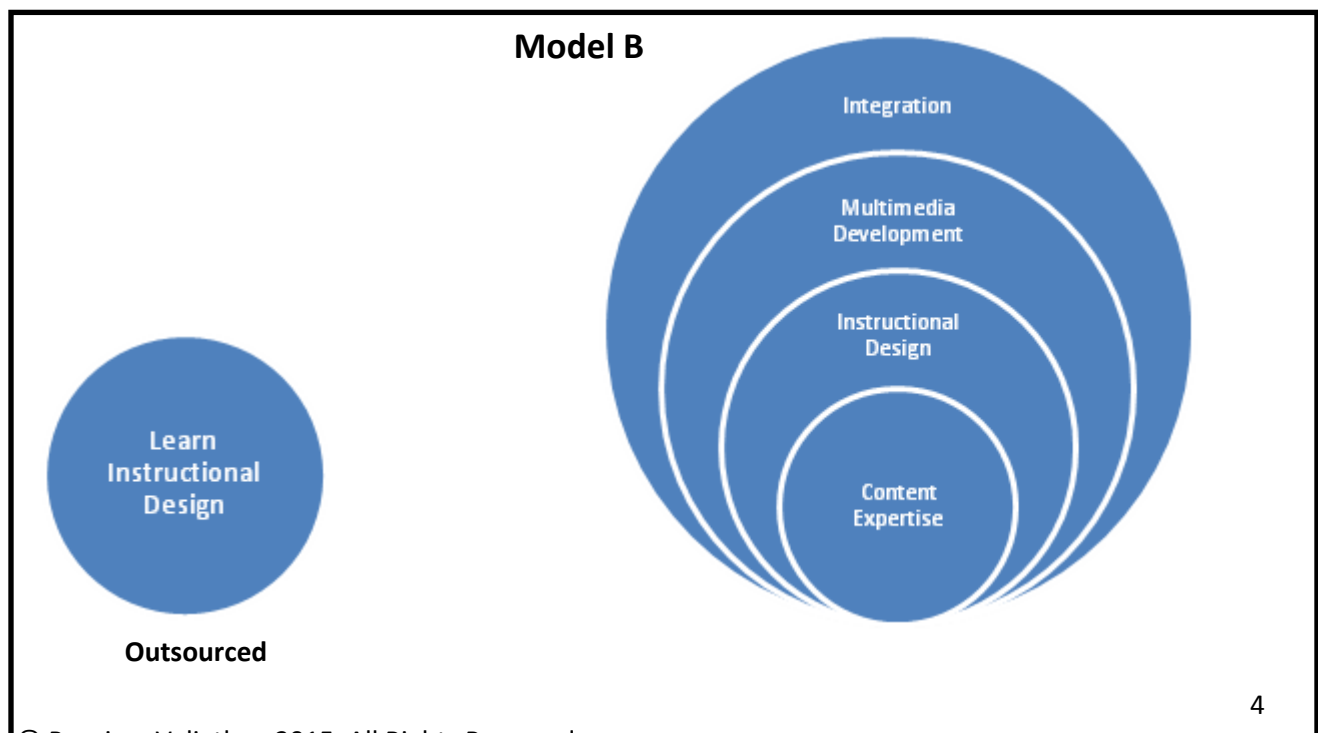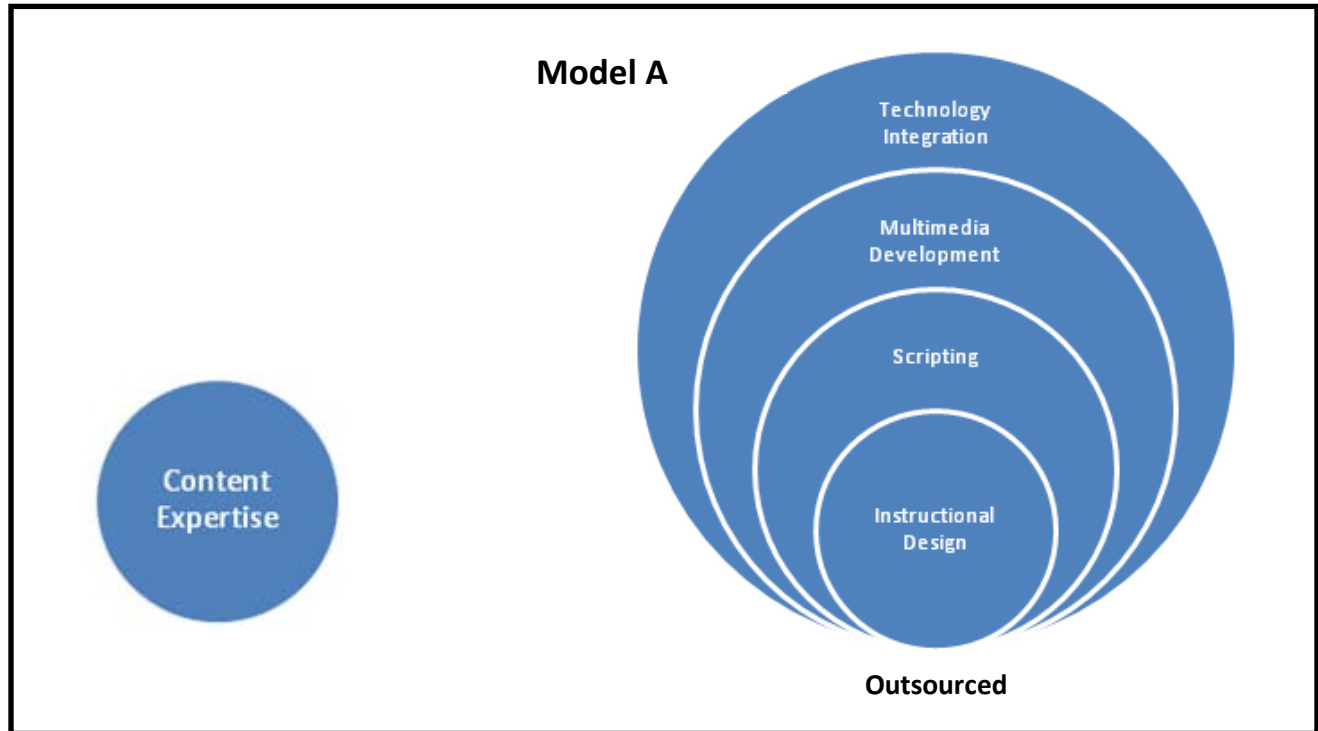| ANALYSIS	DESIGN
1. **Define the target audience**: Who are our learners? What motivates them? What are their strengths? What are their constraints?	1. **Identify the right mix or blend of technology and classroom-based learning:** Which material should be technology-based, and which should be delivered physically in the classroom?
2. **Define the need of the target audience:** Why would the target audience want to go through our courseware? How will it help them in the job market?	2. **Identify the right technology for delivering the online courses:** Static HTML Pages, Videos, or Discussion Forum? What content should be delivered through "push" technology and what should be delivered through "pull" technology?
3. **Define the outcome of a course or training:** What will the learners be able to do after completing the training successfully?	3. **Identify the right strategies for designing the learning material:** Reading Material, Animations, Simulations, Projects, Web-based tutorial, Discussions etc.
	4. **Identify motivation strategies:** Build in interventions to ensure that the learners do not feel isolated in parts which involve technology-based learning.

5. **Will this not be handled if we outsource this work to a content development company?**

Answer: Yes and No, depending upon the outsourcing model you would like to adopt.

Model A

Technology Integration

Multimedia Development

Scripting

Instructional Design

Content Expertise

Outsourced

Model B

Integration

Multimedia Development

Instructional Design

Content Expertise

Learn Instructional Design

Outsourced

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6. Which model is better?

Both have some advantages and disadvantages. Here is a list:

	Model A	Model B
Design	Design will be driven by the partner	Design will be driven by you
Cost	Expensive, since you will need to partner with big companies or mid-sized companies	Less expensive, since it allows you to partner with smaller companies and start-ups
Core Competency	Instructional design training can be outsourced – this will empower your subject matter experts and trainers to create engaging content by themselves.	You can, to build instructional design competency, recruit or partner with instructional design experts.
On-going Support	You will need ongoing support from the partner for content modifications and updates, changes to lesson plans etc.	Since you will have skills in-house you will be able to manage changes on your own