EID-500 Needs Assessment

Perform a needs assessment on your selected target audience by completing the prompts below. Use your textbook and other readings to assist in the completion of this template.

Stage 1: Identify and Describe a Performance Problem

Define the Performance Problem	
Write a performance problem statement that you will aim to improve with an instructional solution. ***Example Problem Statement:*** *New homeowners do not know how to replace a kitchen faucet. (See the course syllabus for additional example performance problem statements.)*	
Individual X (formerly Twitter) users, particularly aspiring content creators and personal brand builders with accounts under 5,000 followers, lack the skills to grow their accounts effectively.	
Describe Performance	
Write a description of what the target audience is currently doing, what should be happening, and the difference between the two. You can use similar language to the performance problem statement. Describe any gaps in performance that the instructional solution should address.	
Current Performance:	**Small accounts average only 0.11% weekly follower growth, with median impressions per post hovering at 2,121 and engagement rates as low as 0.5% for non-viral content, often exacerbated by algorithm biases favoring established users and resulting in visibility drops of up to 50% for inconsistent posters (Backlinko, 2025; Sprout Social, 2025; SocialPilot, 2025)**
Desired Performance:	**Achieving sustainable monthly growth of 15-25%, with engagement rates reaching 1.6-3% through optimized strategies, enabling users to build meaningful networks, monetize via subscriptions or ads, and maintain long-term activity without burnout (SocialPilot, 2025; UseVisuals, 2025; TweetArchivist, 2025).**
Performance Gap:	**The absence of systematic knowledge and skills in algorithm navigation, content optimization, and community engagement tactics, which manifests as "shouting into a void" where quality posts receive minimal reach (fewer than 100 impressions despite originality), algorithm demotions for edits or low reciprocity, and a cycle of demoralization where 99% of new creators fail to break 1,000 followers within six**

	months due to 2021-era advice mismatched to 2025's evolving ecosystem (SocialBee, 2025; Brandwatch, 2025; SocialPilot, 2025; Stefaniak, 2021).

Describe who Identified the Problem and Expectations
Write a brief description of the parties who identified this as a problem and how they determined this problem exists (e.g., feedback, performance data, industry trends). List the expectations for the new instructional solution.
This problem was identified through personal observation as an X user facing similar stagnation while trying to build an online presence as a digital content creator, validated by widespread user reports on the X platform itself of throttled reach and favoritism toward large, established accounts. This is corroborated by industry analyses highlighting a projected 10 million user decline in 2025 amid dissatisfaction with growth barriers (BackLinko, 2025; SocialPilot, 2025). Expectations for the new instructional solution, a scalable digital product such as an interactive online course or growth toolkit, are to deliver a targeted, evidence-based training that closes this gap by equipping users with adapted strategies, resulting in measurable outcomes like20-50% increased reach in 30 days, reduced abandonment rates, and empowered self-sustained growth, ultimately transforming X into a viable tool for personal and professional advancement in alignment with instructional design principles emphasizing performance improvement through needs-driven interventions (Clark, 2015; Stefaniak, 2021; Rothwell &Kazanas, 2008).

Stage 2: Plan and Conduct Data Collection

Data Collection Plan

Create a plan detailing a variety of diverse data sources and data collection methods that will inform your needs assessment. Explain how each data source and data collection method will support your investigation. Aim to include at least three human and/or non-human data sources.

Following the creation of your plan, collect the data.

Analysis Purpose	Data Source (n-count)	Data Collection Method	Rationale
☒ Learner ☐ Content ☐ Environment	X users discussing growth challenges (n=20)	X semantic and keyword searches for real-time user experiences and frustrations	Capturing authentic voices from small accounts (posts about "invisibility" despite quality content) provides qualitative insights into learner motivations, barriers, and current competencies, supporting empathetic analysis of target audience needs (Stefaniak, 2021)
☐ Learner ☒ Content ☐ Environment	Industry reports and statistics on X growth and algorithms (n=5)	Web searches and browsing specific web pages (SocialBee, Hootsuite) for	Empirical data on benchmarks (engagement rates, algorithmic mechanics) informs essential content like strategy development and metrics, ensuring the instructional solution is grounded in current 2025 trends (SocialBee, 2025;

		summaries of trends and tactics	SocialPilot, 2025; Backlinko, 2025; Rothwell & Kazanas, 2008)
☐ Learner ☐ Content ☒ Environment	Academic literature on needs assessment and instructional design (n=3)	Document analysis of textbooks and readings	Methodological frameworks validate the investigation process, highlighting environmental implications like digital access and support systems for online learning settings (Stefaniak, 2021; Clark, 2015; Rothwell & Kazanas, 2008)
☒ Learner ☒ Content ☐ Environment	Expert guides and analytics tools for X (n=4)	Browsing web pages for in-depth tactics and user demographics	Detailed insights into demographics and content stepsbridge learner and content analyses, providing a robust rationale for design decisions (Sprout Social, 2025; UseVisuals, 2025; TweetArchivist, 2025)

Data Collection Summary
Write a summary of your data collection experience. Include challenges that arose, how they were addressed, and what you will do differently in the future when collecting learner data.
The data collection involved integrating web and X searches and academic reviews to gather comprehensive insights, revealing core challenges like algorithmic shifts and burnout. Challenges include data volatility (such as the rapid and ongoing changes to the X recommendation algorithm over the last quarter of 2025), addressed by prioritizing recent sources and cross-verification; source bias in promotional guides was mitigated through user posts and academic rigor. In the future, I would incorporate primary surveys for more personalized learner data to enhance depth and adaptability (Stefaniak, 2021; Clark, 2015).

Stage 3: Determine Learner Needs Using an Empathetic Process

Conduct Analyses with Data	
Analyze Learner Characteristics	
Write a brief description of the target audience and the implications for design using evidence from the data you collected in Stage 2.	
Who is the target audience? (e.g., demographics, total number of individuals)	Primarily Gen Z and millennial males (aged 18-34, comprising 25% of users with 12% growth since 2022), tech-savvy but often self-taught creators from diverse backgrounds (software engineers, marketers, hobbyist digital content creators), totaling an estimated 140 million active users facing growth issues (SocialPilot, 2025; BackLinko, 2025; Sprout Social, 2025).

What motivates these individuals?	Motivated by personal branding, income generation, and community building, but frustrated by inconsistent results leading to demoralization (Various X Users, 2025; Stefaniak, 2021).
What are their current knowledge levels or competencies related to the topic? List their specific skills or knowledge areas.	Current levels are basic, with competencies in posting but gaps in algorithm mastery, content diversification, and metrics tracking; many know outdated tactics but lack 2025-specific skills like video prioritization (SocialBee, 2025; BrandWatch, 2025).
What are their learning preferences or formats? (e.g., (asynchronous, synchronous, self-paced, instructor-led, online, face-to-face, hybrid)	Preferences lean toward asynchronous, self-paced online formats due to busy schedules and digital nativity (Various X Users, 2025; Clark, 2015).
What is their familiarity with and access to different forms of technology? (e.g., Wi-Fi, smartphones, LMS)	High familiarity with smartphones, Wi-Fi, and apps like X; access to LMS or online tools is common but varies by socioeconomic factors (Sprout Social, 2025; Rothwell& Kazanas, 2025).
What are potential implications the target audience's unique characteristics may have for the design of the instructional solution?	Implications include bite-sized, mobile-friendly modules with interactive elements to match tech-savvy preferences, while addressing motivation dips through empathetic narratives (Stefaniak, 2021).
Analyze the Content	
Describe the essential content. Identify what information is need-to-know and nice-to-know.	
What are the foundational components of the topic or skill being addressed? For any procedural skills, list all steps for completing the task. Reach out to subject matter experts if necessary.	Foundational components: Algorithm mastery (favoring conversations), strategy development (daily engagement, visual content), metrics evaluation. Procedural steps: 1. Select niche 2. Optimize profile 3. Create engaging posts (hooks, calls to action) 4. Engage reciprocally (replies, threads) 5. Analyze metrics and iterate (SocialBee, 2025; Brandwatch, 2025)
How long does it take to complete the task?	Initial setup: 1-2 hours; ongoing daily engagement: 30-60 minutes; full growth cycle: 3-6 months (UseVisuals, 2025)

Are there additional elements that would be nice for the learner to know, but are not crucial?	Nice-to-know: Knowledge of monetization process, cross platform integration; not crucial for basic growth (TweetArchivist, 2025).
Analyze the Environment	
Describe the environment where the audience will be engaging with the learning solution (e.g., work, home) and where they will be applying the new skills and knowledge (if different).	
What is the setting for the instruction? What is the setting for the application of the new knowledge and/or skills? Describe the physical layout and space.	Instruction: Mobile-first, asynchronous digital (home/office via apps or web). Application: Same online environment on X platform; no specific physical layout beyond personal devices.
Are there any technological requirements or limitations? (e.g., devices, software, internet)	Requirements: Smartphone/app access, stable internet; Limitations: Potential data caps or device variability (Sprout Social, 2025).
What support systems will be available? (e.g., mentors, tech support)	Available: Online communities, X Analytics tools, potential peer forums in the solution (TweetArchivist, 2025).
Are there any compliance or policy requirements for this instruction?	Compliance with X's terms (spam, platform manipulation, inauthentic behavior, etc.; accessibility standards for digital content (Rothwell & Kazanas, 2008).
What goals are the organization working towards with this instruction?	Goals: Empower users for sustainable growth, reducing platform abandonment (SocialPilot, 2025).
What are the potential implications the characteristics of the environment may have for the design of the instructional solution?	Implications: Agile, video-integrated design for mobile; flexible pacing to fit dynamic online settings (Clark, 2015).
Barriers to Success	

Describe any constraints that may hinder the implementation and effectiveness of your instructional solution. Think about any challenges that might arise for the target audience in a learning experience (e.g., language, accessibility, time constraints, technology). Discuss how using an empathetic process when determining learner needs can help mitigate these challenges.
Constraints include time constraints (balancing interactions with jobs), emotional demoralization from low visibility, algorithmic unpredictability, and skill gaps in authenticity. Using an empathetic process such as Stefaniak's learner-centered approach mitigates these by incorporating relatable stories, progress trackers, adaptive modules, and community support, fostering resilience (Stefaniak, 2021).

Stage 4: Synthesize Findings and Determine Training Decisions

Synthesize Findings and Make Decisions	
Contextualize the Training Needs	
Based on all the analyses you have done, determine the training needs. Think about any specific needs of the audience. Describe elements of a learning experience that would best support the audience. Keep in mind that these decisions can be iterative and may change as your project progresses.	
Compare the essential content with the target audience's current skills and knowledge of the topic. Note any missing skills or knowledge that are required to achieve the desired performance. What information and content should the instruction cover?	Audience has basic posting skills but misses algorithmic navigation, reciprocity, and analytics; instruction should cover these essentials plus content diversification (SocialBee, 2025; SocialPilot, 2025).
What should the setting be for the instruction? (e.g., (a)synchronous, self-paced, instructor-led, online, face-to-face, hybrid)	Asynchronous, self-paced online to suit mobile/digital environment (Clark, 2015).
What other needs of the target audience should be met in the instructional solution? How will the instruction meet these needs?	Needs: Motivation, burnout prevention; met through empathetic scenarios and trackers (Stefaniak, 2021).

What non-instructional recommendations, if any, would you suggest to support the target audience? How could the instructional and non-instructional solutions complement each other?	Recommendations: Use free X Analytics, join communities; complement by providing organic support alongside training (TweetArchivist, 2025).

Provide a Rationale

Defend your early design decisions. Describe how the various contexts and analyses informed the needs you determined. How will this design work to improve the performance problem statement?

Early decisions (modular, video-integrated with personalization) are informed by analyses showing algorithmic biases and learner frustrations; this improves the problem by fostering sustainable growth via evidence-based, empathetic design (Rothwell & Kazanas, 2008; Stefaniak, 2021).

Refine and Translate Needs into Goals

List 2–3 instructional goals (learning objectives) that will help meet the identified need.

HINT: Revisit the performance gap to ensure cohesiveness and alignment.

1. Learners will analyze and apply X algorithm principles to craft posts achieving 1.6% engagement, bridging visibility gaps.
2. Learners will implement daily engagement and content strategies to attain 15-25% monthly follower growth, addressing stagnation.
3. Learners will evaluate personal metrics and adapt tactics using empathetic self-reflection tools, mitigating burnout and barriers for long term success.

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