Facilitator Training Program Manual

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**Facilitator Training Program Manual**

**Training program audience**

The training program audience is adult education facilitators without previous experience in distance education. The facilitator must display skills in a traditional classroom environment, must be comfortable with adult learning theories, course design, assessments, evaluation, and instructional skills. It is important that the facilitator has experience in a traditional classroom setting where there was a use of computers for operating systems and web tools.

**Training program goals**

The course purpose is to develop successful online facilitators who can use the skills learned and previous knowledge to be effective distance facilitators. Below are goals and objectives the facilitators will achieve throughout the training.

**Goal**: Establishing Presences

**Objective**: The learners will be able be visible and is present while facilitating in the online environment upon completion of this training.

**Goal**: Engaging learners and creating community

**Objective**: The learners will learn how to successfully engage learner and create communities within the online environment upon completion of the training

**Goal**: Course development

**Objective**: The learners will understand how to design an online course where they will establish presence and engage learners and create communities upon completion of the course

**Goal**: Providing effective facilitation when teaching courses developed by others

**Objective**: The learners will understand how to provide effective facilitation when teaching a course developed by others upon completion of the training.

**Training program objectives**

Upon conclusion of the training course trainees will be able to identify an “excellent online instructor” described by Palloff & Pratt (2011).

Trainees will be able to describe and understand the phases of online faculty development upon completion of the training

Trainee will be able to incorporate different technologies to engage distance learners upon completion of the course

Trainee will be able to explain the faculty development models for distance learning as described by Palloff & Pratt, (2011) upon completion of the training course.

Trainees will describe and gain knowledge on different technology tools that are used to create distance learning communities by the end of the training.

Trainees will compare and contrast the skills facilitators should have when it comes to synchronous learning vs. asynchronous learning.

Trainees will be able to identify theories of distance learning as well as describe theories for engaging distance learners.

Trainees will be able to describe mentoring programs for online faculty upon completion of the training program.

Trainees will gain knowledge on management and evaluation programs for facilitators upon completion of training.

Trainees will identify the learning platforms such as LMS/CMS that is used in distance learning

Trainees will be able to describe and discuss classroom management issues upon completion of training.

**Summative assessment of trainee learning**

Upon conclusion of the course trainees will be assessed based on the goals and objectives of the training. Training instructors will assess the trainees using many different tools of assessment such as true or false, multiple choices, essay questions, and fill in the blank.

The success of the program will be measure by an end of course survey that will be given to all trainees at the end of the training as well at the end of the first course that they facilitated in the online environment to see how effective the training was.

# Part II – Facilitator Skills and Instructional Materials

**Training materials**

When it comes to skills and materials there are many skills needed for effective learning facilitators to create effective distance learning. There are also strategies that may be used to present these skills to facilitators. When discussing skills needed for effective distance learning, phases of development for distance learning and theories for engaging distance will also be discussed. With theories of distance learning come theories for engaging distance learners.

**Identify the skills needed for effective distance learning facilitators.**

In this training course I will focus on two skills establishing presence and engaging learners and creating community. The first skill that will be discussed is presence. Presence is very important and the first thing a facilitator should do in an online environment. When presence is effectively established students will become more engaged. “Establishing presence is the process of demonstrating to others who we are in the online environment, as well as making social connections with others who share that environment with us” (Palloff & Pratt, 2001). This skill is very important to students because it shows them that the facilitator cares and is paying attention to them. In order for the facilitator to achieve this skill they must be involved in the learning environment by responding to discussions that the students are having in class. When this is done this shows that that the discussions are being read by facilitator. Using different types of technologies are also important and part of the development of the facilitator who is trying to establish presence in the learning environment. Using audio, video, and PowerPoint’s allow stimulation and it helps engage the student in the learning environment. Presence is very important for a facilitator to have according to facultyfocus.com “Students are expected to be engaged in the online learning environment but it doesn’t happen automatically. If you want your students to be engaged, you must model the type of behavior you seek.” A facilitator can’t expect his or her students to be involved if they are not.

The second skill that will be discussed is engaging learners and creating community. This skill was chosen because it is related to establishing presence and that is very important. The instructors must know how to incorporate social presence in an online classroom setting. According to the excellent online instructor, “Picciano (2002) notes that a sense of social presence correlates to a sense of belonging to a learning community” (Palloff & Pratt, 2001). When the facilitator engages learners and creates community they avoid the chance of students feeling lost, not included and isolated when it comes to their learning. When a facilitator uses this skill they create a learning environment that is safe, free of judging and allows students to share their opinions without being judged. Establishing community and engaging learners also allows student to interact with other students and learn with them to expand their learning experiences. According to facutyfocus.com “Exceptional facilitators must have a frequent and active presence in the discussion. It is recommended that you respond to at least three student responses to the discussion assignment on four different days during the assignment week” (Pelletier, 2013). Discussion allows the students and most important the facilitator to engage in learning and create community.

**Describe the phases of development for distance learning facilitators.**

The phases of development a facilitator needs in order to achieve a skill are visitor, novice, apprentice, insider, and master. The visitor phase is the facilitator who is not really into technology but has used some tools to engage his or her students. Novice phase is the facilitator who has never taught in an online environment but uses tools of technology to enhance the face to face interaction her or she has with their students. Apprentice phase is the facilitator who has taught in the online environment not a lot but they understand the skills that are needed in order to be a distance instructor or facilitator. An insider is someone who has taught many online classes who feel comfortable teaching in the online environment and has basic knowledge of the skills they must have. Finally there is the master phase, in this phase the facilitator has taught multiple online classes and has massed incorporating technology in the online classroom setting. They are comfortable with the skills that are needed in order to effectively teach in the online environment. As you can see each of the phases finally gets to the point where the facilitator masters the skills they need in order to be effective distance facilitators. These phases are needed in order to achieve the skills of presence and engage learners and creating community. One form of training a facilitator should receive to support the skills of presence and engaging learning and creating community is mentoring. Often time a more experience facilitator will mentor new facilitators that are new to the online teaching environment. This is done usually when they are developing or teaching their first online class.

**Identify the theories of distance learning**

There are many theories when it comes to how people learn. When it comes to theories of distance learning. The training will focus on Transactional Distance Theory, communal constructivism, and multimodality.

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| **Theories** | **Descriptions** | **Examples** |
| Transactional Distance Theory | The notion of transactional  Distance is a relative one, and involves a set of three variables that operate in relation to the degree of transactional distance between the teachers and learners: dialogue, program structure and learner autonomy. In particular, there was reference to the (then) newly available practice of ‘teleconferencing’,  enabling distributed learners to converse simultaneously with each other and  The teacher. | TDT happens between students and teachers where the students and the teachers are separated by geography which may lead to communication gaps; this can be avoided with multiple communication channels and the instructor taking leader ship. |
| Communal Constructivism | “In communal constructivism, the individual contributes to  and benefits from a community which provides a living repository of learning” | Communal Constructivism happens when students share experience and create dialogue that leads to discussion. Learning happens through others experiences and discussion for example if the instructor prompts the class to share their experience on online learning. |
| Multimodality | “Most e-learning communication is via computer interface (whether on a desktop, laptop or handheld), and these computer interfaces are multimodal in nature. Even if communication of this sort is relatively monomodal (as, for example, in a page of verbal text or, alternatively, the presentation of a single un-captioned image), the contemporary computing  environment is not without other conventions and modes that appear in the complex of the application, window, and operating system structuring of a screen” | Multimodality focus on the multiple channels of communication when it comes to an online course, for example using discussions, team assignments, a Varity of technology devices to connect with the instructor and peers. |

**Describe the theories for engaging distance learners.**

Engaging distance learners can sometimes be difficult. In a traditional classroom setting instructors are physically present and are able to grab the students. In the online environment the instructor and student are separate by distance as explained above in the Transactional Distance Theory. Malcolm Knowles five adult learning theory assumptions to e learning can help engage distance learning. The two assumptions that will be discussed to engage learners are Adult learner experience, Readiness to learn, Motivation to learn.

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| **Theories/Assumptions** | **Descriptions** | **Examples** |
| Adult learner experience | Adults are allowed to share experiences based on his or her background or levels of experience | For example a instructor can ask the student to share their experiences or views with the class on adults returning to school in their adulthood |
| Readiness to learn | In cooperating online learning tools into the curriculum that allows students to reach out to others they normal would not reach out to | For example a instructor may create a activity that involves students using tools and sites like Google plus and LinkedIn or other social networks they can use to share and collaborate with others |
| Motivation to learn | Students must be given a reason why they are doing each assignment or activity in order to stay motivated | For example if an instructor as the students complete a team assignment on team building, it is important that the instructor clearly defines the assignment and how it helps them build team building skills. |

# Part IV – Issues and Classroom Management

**A minimum of three different technology tools for student collaboration, such as the following:**

There are a plethora of technology tools that facilitators can us for student collaboration. The tools must fit into the learning environment correctly in order to be successful. Wikis are websites that the students can us to collaborate with other students to create and edit web pages. Wikis can build community when it comes to group projects where the students work to get here and share ideas. Skype is a great way for visual learners to collaborate. Skype is a great way for students to hear and see each other in real time where they can collaborate on assignments as a group. Blogs is also a great tool for student collaboration. Blogs can be used by students post thoughts and ideas allowing others to respond to them

**A description of the different distance learners**

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| Cultural | Cultural learners learn from their peers who come from the same culture and share the same language and maybe even experience the same things. It is the facilitators job to create a since of community to help students of different cultures collaborate and feel comfortable. |
| Experiential | Experiential learners are hands on and learn by actually doing. It is the facilitator’s job to provided assignments that allows the students to be hands on in the online classroom setting. Allowing the students to practice their skills will all the student to fully engage into the classroom |
| Prior learning experiences: nontraditional learners | Nontraditional learners are sometimes older adults with career experience who can bring those experiences into the classroom to help build a community. Nontraditional learners will be able to collaborate in different ways that will bring upon discussion. |

**A description of the differences between synchronous and asynchronous facilitation skills**

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| **Synchronous** | **Asynchronous** |
| Synchronous occurs face to face in real time. Once the facilitator delivers the information the student will receive it immediately. Chatting and face to face communication are both examples of synchronous. Synchronous would work best in an environment that consist of a large group of students. Synchronous may not be ideal for students who are really busy and need more flexibility due to life itself. | Asynchronous occurs online, not in real time like synchronous. Information is still delivered but may not reach students as fast as in a synchronous classroom. Emails and discussion boards are both examples of the communication that goes on in an asynchronous classroom. Asynchronous is very convient for adult students who need flexibility in their schedule when it comes to school. |

**A minimum of three technology management issues and resolutions**

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| **Technology issue** | **Description** | **Resolutions** |
| Unfamiliar with LMS | As a first time facilitator or student it may be hard getting familiar with the LMS | Tutorials will be provided on the LMS and available for use by both the facilitator and the student. Assistance from technical support will also be available. |
| Broken links | A web page or web site may be un able to access due to typo, out of date information, or no longer available. | The facilitator must have and provide backup resources in case this does happen |
| Software problems | Software problems may occur when one least expects it. The software may be out of date, or just be down due to server error | Distance learning facilitator must be able to provide additional software. Tutorials will also be provided on software problems. |

**Classroom management issues and resolutions**

**Learner feedback**

Learner feedback is very important in the online classroom environment. Using learner feedback properly can help determine the course effectiveness. “course evaluations should not focus on whether or not the student liked the instructor, but whether the course provided an opportunity for learning through the quality of the learning experience designed, the quality of learner–instructor interaction, and whether the course supported the achievement of learning objectives”(Palloff & Pratt, 2011 p. 92). Feedback can be provided in many formats messages, comments, and audio.

**Challenging behaviors**

In the online learning environment a facilitator may encounter challenging behaviors for example cyber-bullying, inappropriate post, and lack of participation or engagement. A facilitator who is prepared and set clear expectations for the classroom will avoid the above challenging behaviors. If the student starts the class knowing the expectation they are avoiding any issues. Outlining the participating guidelines in the beginning of the class will help with the lack of participation issue. Being engage in the class and creating community will also help. Providing a code of conduct that list students must show respect to other students and facilitators the students must follow while in class is also important. Not every class will run perfect so challeging behaviors may occur when they do is important that the facilitator acts immediately.

Course Schedule

Day One

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| **Time** | **Topic** | **Notes** |
| 9am - 10am | Program introduction/ Training program goals | Facilitator will introduce themselves as well as the instructor |
| 10am- 11am | Objectives |  |
| 11am- 12pm | Skills for distance learning |  |
| 12pm- 1 pm | Lunch |  |
| 1pm- 2pm | Phases of development |  |
| 2pm- 3pm | Theories of distance learning |  |
| 3pm- 4pm | Theories for engaging distance learners |  |
| 4pm- 4:30pm | Closing | Feedback any questions may be asked |

Day Two

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| **Time** | **Topic** | **Notes** |
| 9am - 10am | Mentoring program for faculty | Introduction to mentoring |
| 10am- 11am | Performance status of the mentor |  |
| 11am- 12pm | Experience with distance education |  |
| 12pm- 1 pm | Lunch |  |
| 1pm- 2pm | Mentoring experience criteria |  |
| 2pm- 3pm | Management and evaluation programs for facilitators |  |
| 3pm- 4pm | Learning platform (LMS)/ Technology tools |  |
| 4pm- 4:30pm | Closing | Feedback any questions may be asked |

Day Three

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| **Time** | **Topic** | **Notes** |
| 9am - 10am | Technology tools used for collaboration |  |
| 10am- 11am | Description of the different distance learners |  |
| 11am- 12pm | Synchronous Vs asynchronous facilitation skills |  |
| 12pm- 1 pm | Lunch |  |
| 1pm- 2pm | technology management issues and resolutions |  |
| 2pm- 3pm | Classroom management issues and resolutions |  |
| 3pm- 4pm | Learner feedback and Challenging behaviors |  |
| 4pm- 4:30pm | Closing/ wrap up | Feedback any questions may be asked Course evaluation |

Reference

Palloff, R.M. & Pratt, K. (2011). The excellent online instructor: Strategies for professional development. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Retrieved from <https://portal.phoenix.edu/library.html>

Pelletier, P. (2013, September). What online teachers need to know? Faculty Focus, (), Retrieved from http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/what-online-teachers-need-to-know/