

Week 7 - Training Guide

Sir,

Your decision to develop training curriculum based on a blended learning format is plausible and could prove to be effective in your efforts to improve the training program. To ensure we both have the same definition of blended learning and are on the same page, the blended learning format is a combination of face to face instruction and computer mediated activities such as online collaboration, instructor facilitated discussions, and server based activities. With that in mind, I recommend you consider the following aspects of training in a blended learning environment.

1. Examine the training materials you are currently using and decide what modules would be best for face to face and which modules would be most effective administered online. A mistake some facilitators make is simply dumping a face to face course into a Course Management System (CMS). This practice is called “shovelware” (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2012). Developing online training modules involves more than converting student handouts, slides, and graphics to an online format. My recommendations are as follows:
 - a) You must first determine the desired outcome of the training. This will probably be the same outcome that is currently being expected of the trainees.
 - b) Establish training or learning objectives that will lead the trainees toward your overall outcome of the training or Terminal Learning Objective.
 - c) Which objectives would best fit into an online format? Modules involving safety, operating philosophy, ethics, and sexual harassment have been delivered and discussed in discussion forums and wikis in other programs.
 - d) How will you assess the learner’s progress and evaluate their comprehension of the material at the end of the course? I recommend a “criterion-referenced” or outcome based form of assessment. This type of assessment measures the trainees’ performance against a predetermined set of standards (Simonson et al, 2012) and typically scored or graded. A simple “Go/ No Go” form of grading would suffice for scoring.
2. Assuming the trainees that will attend the course are adults, they will bring a myriad of life experiences and knowledge to the course. Each will have a

viewpoint and an opinion to voice in any given module and, incidentally, some will have been exposed the material in a previous occupation. You will be faced with the task of providing instruction that will keep them on task yet allow them to voice their own relative experiences and thoughts.

Interactivity is the preferred method for accomplishing this teaching task. This would enable the trainers the ability to facilitate online conversations and guide the trainees in productive training with long-term retention.

3. Once you put your training program into motion, your role as the training manager will change as you administer the class. During the face to face portion, you could lecture and have question and answer sessions. You could also use small group tactics and challenge the trainees with problem scenarios to work through and provide you with their solutions. During the online portion, you will primarily be a facilitator. You should strive to cause the trainees to reflect and become actively involved in their own learning. "The key to active learning is to keep the learners involved...not just busy (Simonson et al, 2012)".

As a facilitator, you will not "teach" but will guide the trainees toward the learning objective in a thought provoking and non-authoritarian way. Creating discussion topics that will challenge the trainees and cause them to reflect will move your course forward in a positive way. This will form a dynamic learning community (Simonson et al, 2012) that will engage the students and yourself by adopting learning strategies

References:

Simonson, M., Smaldino, S., Albright, M., & Zvacek, S. (2012). *Teaching and learning at a distance: Foundations of distance education* (5th ed.) Boston, MA: Pearson.