"Tips for mentors to Support online training"

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Introduction

This document will provide valuable information for the mentors on supporting online training as a form to gain new knowledge and attain new skills.

The ETC.4SE mentors will be expected to create new content to some degree in order to facilitate training provision to the project target group. Creating content for online training might be challenging and new, and we hope this guide will support their learning process.

This document will primarily, describe the different learning processes that end users can select and provide examples.

It will continue to describe the different types of interactions involved in online training and conclude this section with one example. Finally, it will refer to online digital content creation and tips for mentors.

We hope you find this interesting.

Learning processes – how can it be used by teachers and trainers?

Different learning approaches

- Education differs and can be presented in many forms, all depending on how you approach and design it. The main importance is that it fit our values, our experiences but mainly our target audience. There are many forms available to select from ranging from behaviourist to constructivist, to social networking, peer learning, lesson studies, problem-based learning, learning with technologies and many more, with newer forms such as MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and Open Innovation structures, gaining ground. Each teacher/mentor should focus on what they need to transfer and consider the best option to do so.

How can I use this?

Each trainer/mentor has his/her ways of approaching and delivering training, whether this is formal or informal. A learning approach in a school differs from that of vocational training and university studies. One thing is common though, practical examples help and allow the trainees to retain the information. In order to teach social entrepreneurship to your trainees, try to select an approach that will have a direct benefit to them i.e.

- Think of the best time of year to include this in your training delivery.

- Create a project and have group work done by your learners. There are plenty of information resources on the ETC.4SE website.

- Use of technology: find testimonials from YouTube, the Internet and have your trainees create a multimedia project. In this way, they will integrate their research skills with their ICT skills. Make sure you are confident in using these technologies as well in order to help your trainees.

Different roles in the community: trainer/learner

- An open learning community is considered one of the most successful methods of learning where trainer and learner are inter-related and interconnected. The information flows freely both sides allowing also, learner-learner interaction. This stimulates information sharing and role-playing allowing learners to take initiatives and be in control

of their own learning path. Communities are common and represented on Learning Management Systems (examples are Wordpress, Moodle, Blackboard and SumTotal), closed networking sites such as BuddyPress for example, but also blogs created by schools to allow information sharing.

Autonomous learning

- Autonomous learning is characterised by learning at your own pace and at your own time. The actual meaning is that a learner sits by him/herself and studies. When in an online or e-environment, the trainer/course designer must appropriately design the course to allow the learner access to all relevant tools and course information in order to complete it autonomously. This means, self-assessment questions, exercises with links to evaluation tools, course material and tools for communication with the trainer (such as a discussion forum / email). Related to training on the 13 steps of the ETC.4SE Model, examples for autonomous study are PowerPoint presentations or PDF files with information, and URL links to specific sites.

How can I, as mentor, use this?

As a mentor your options are many, you need to integrate training material on social entrepreneurship within your information delivery or course and allow the trainee time for assessment, reflection and further discussion with you online or, if pre-determined, in a classroom setting. Depending on the topic of training i.e. leadership, social innovation, social entrepreneurship, management etc. you can add sections you have found on the Internet, through your own research, through bibliography or the EU website into your training.

- How do you usually search for information, which sources do you use?
- Do you need multilingual information or information in various formats (online, books, URLs, PDFs, leaflets etc.)?
- If you have experience in providing autonomous learning, what type of assessment do you use?

Collaborative learning

- Collaborative learning is the opposite of autonomous and is characterised by working in groups, either online or in a classroom. Unlike autonomous learning, people engaged in collaborative learning capitalize on one another's resources and skills (asking one another for information, evaluating one another's ideas, monitoring one another's work, etc. leading to active interaction, sharing of experiences and engagement in a common task. Trainers can use conversation analysis evaluation methods to assess this method but also statistical analysis of results.

How can I use this?

Collaborative learning is one of the most successful training methods and allows for great interactivity between trainees. As a trainer /mentor, you can create short interactive role-playing game with your trainees allowing them promotion of skills and competences such as:

- Searching for information,
- Competition between groups,
- Communication and collaboration skills,
- How can it be promoted in Education?

Face to face learning

- Face to Face learning is the most common approach used in education today offering both advantages and disadvantages. The trainer/learner role is more evident, and interaction depends on how the course material is structured and delivered. This method is mostly used when training social entrepreneurship today, with trainers integrating videos, testimonials, information and case studies during class. Group work can be organised to allow exchange of information and knowledge sharing.

How can I use this?

Although the European Commission has published a plethora of information on social entrepreneurship on their websites, a trainer/mentor has to go through all this information to collect / extract what is necessary for their training. Face to Face training is the most used in delivering this type of information to trainees. Organisations in Europe, use face to face training scenarios to teach the topics above. They use role plays, games and interactive activities to stimulate discussions, interaction, decision making and exchange of information. This has proven to be very successful and are promoting this through structured training provision.

Below, are tips for mentors wishing to create online training material.

Before starting to design training material, the training content need to have a specific structure. Usually in online training the following topics are considered:

- Its role and importance – consider the role of the training material you are creating? i.e. what is the objective you wish to obtain?
- Needs to be autonomous – structure your course and modules in small autonomous training lessons.
- Is in the centre – does not play a supporting role – the training material is the key material that a user needs to study,
- Needs to motivate and attract the trainee – structure it in such as way that will motivate and interest the user.
- Changes the way the trainee interacts with it – add features such as navigation, interaction, comments etc. The trainee/user needs to have control of the information provide to them.
- You write for reading on the screen – Think about small sentences, key points etc. Don't use large texts with scrolling for online reading.

Think of creating a content template with the following information included. This will help you structure your autonomous, small lessons and they will be uniform.

1. Presentation of content – one slide where you shortly present the content
2. Structure of the training material
    1. Title – one slide with the title
    2. Learning objective – one slide with the learning objectives which need to be measurable.
    3. Learning content – the actual content. This can range between 10-50 slides maximum.
    4. Assessment – how will you measure the objectives and the learning outcomes. Consider including multiple choice questions, activities, case studies etc.
    5. Summary – conclude your lesson by summarising the key points.

Once the training material has been created and uploaded on the selected platform, a mentor needs to start their support work. Several stages are included within this phase. Mentors need to prepare their trainees, prior to their session, during the session and after the session. Below you can find some tips for each step.

Prepare your learners for online interaction:

- have you sent an invitation email?
  - have you got replies from all participants?
  - have you solved any initial technical problems i.e. have you asked your participants to try out the software they will use
  - have you sent the final invitation?

Answer questions <u>before</u> the synchronous part:

- FAQ section on the platform. (updatable)

- Questions related to the time, content, structure of content/ course, trainer, trainees, certifications etc.

- Estimate around 5 minutes Q&A session in the beginning.

- Very important!!!! Do not forget to set the ground rules!

  - Communication and interaction

  - Noise and interventions

  - Trainee participation

Answer questions <u>during</u> the synchronous part:

- Have an assistant checking the Chat and forum

- Make regular breaks to check for new questions and answer them.

- Try to group questions and answer many in one go.

- Ask for trainee feedback and if they have understood the answers.

- If you use chat sessions, record the chat session and post it on the forum when the session is finished.

Conclusion

The above constitute a small part of the mentor's role for online training. Mentor primarily need to support trainees in the allocated tasks and their work is usually conducted face to face. On an online training environment, their professional profile need to include some additional tasks and competences such as being able to write training resources/content for online training. In addition, mentors need to be able to support their trainees using online communication tools. We hope you found the above guide interesting.

The ETC.4SE training team.