

Information Management Resource Kit

Module on Building Electronic Communities and Networks

UNIT 4. DESIGNING AN ONLINE COMMUNITY

LESSON 8. TRAINING FOR A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE COMMUNITY

NOTE

Please note that this PDF version does not have the interactive features offered through the IMARK courseware such as exercises with feedback, pop-ups, animations etc.

We recommend that you take the lesson using the interactive courseware environment, and use the PDF version for printing the lesson and to use as a reference after you have completed the course.



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Objectives

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- explain the purpose of **assessing training needs** for planning a training initiative;
- identify the main steps for **defining the topics** of a training course;
- recognize strategies for choosing **delivery formats**.



The importance of training



An online community is a distributed network that can support itself.

Members of a community can **support each other** with both background and “just in time training” to make using the tools effective.

Moreover, the project coordinator as well as those who facilitate and participate in the online community, can receive deep benefits also from well designed **training initiatives**.

The importance of training

Online community training is the process of providing on-going opportunities for people to improve not only their **technology skills**, but also their **online community participatory skills**.

The participants of an online community should be...



- comfortable with **the online tools** (e.g. e-mail discussion lists or web based discussion boards),
- well versed in the **social principles** of participation, and
- willing to **share their views and information** online within a **community setting**.

The importance of training

Specifically, this is the impact of training on...

General participants



Training increases users' comfort level, confidence, and basic competency in using the online community. Users feel less isolated, and more empowered. Training helps users train and support other users, both informally and formally.

Facilitators



Training can help facilitators better understand and be responsive to online community members' desires and needs. It helps facilitators improve knowledge sharing and encourage all users to participate.

Project coordinator



Training helps project coordinators be more efficient in managing the online community and transforming raw information exchange into content which is useful for a broader group of people or to reach outcomes.

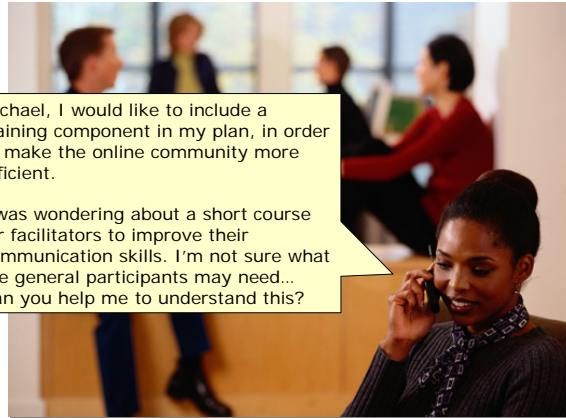
Technical staff



Training may help technical staff install and maintain the online tools and infrastructure.

Assessing training needs

Amina is the coordinator of an online project for a radio broadcasters community. She is calling Michael, an expert trainer, to have some help in planning a training programme for the community.



Michael, I would like to include a training component in my plan, in order to make the online community more efficient.

I was wondering about a short course for facilitators to improve their communication skills. I'm not sure what the general participants may need... Can you help me to understand this?

Assessing training needs

Michael accepts Amina's request and introduces her to some basic principles of training.

Different kinds of participants should master specific skills. For example, general participants should have basic computer and online communication skills, while facilitators should also be able to manage an online group.

You can use competencies descriptions to identify these skills.



See the interactive lesson to find out more about competencies needed for:

-  **General participants**
-  **Facilitators**
-  **Project coordinator**

Assessing training needs



I see that facilitators should have a number of different competencies, in areas from hardware to online communication... Do we need to cover all these topics in our course?

What do you think is the most correct answer to Amina's question?

- Yes, we do, as we need to be sure facilitators will master all the required competencies.
- Not necessarily. It depends on the competencies facilitators already have.
- Not necessarily. It depends on how we will deliver the course (e.g., self paced study or training workshops).

Please click on the answer of your choice

Assessing training needs

In order to develop an effective training plan, you should first assess the communication and technology skills of your participants.

A skills assessment will help you decide **what to include** in the training initiative, **target the level** (beginner, intermediate, advanced) and **design** training activities and materials.



The assessment tools help you to identify which users may also be appropriate trainers of other users.

In many cases, your project participants may have little or no prior experience with using computers. In that case, the assessment forms and processes will serve as a "pre-test" to help gauge the effectiveness of your training efforts.

Skills assessments can be performed by trainer observation or learner self-assessment.

Assessing training needs

Imagine you want to assess the basic computer skills of general participants.



You can use **self-assessment forms**, designed to help you identify people who need training as well as people who can train others. The person completing the form rates their core computer skills **using a scale**. You can use them in large formal training workshops or distribute them as part of self-paced learning tutorials.



If you are using trainer observations, you can indicate how well the person is completing a task on an **observation checklist**.

The same methods can be used to assess and determine the training needs for **non-technical** skills.

In the "Job aids" section of this lesson you will find tools (forms and checklists) to assess and determine the training needs for technical and non-technical skills.

Designing a training initiative



Then, you can summarize results of your assessment activity. Results from assessment are used to target training needs and articulate a training initiative. For example, imagine this is the **result of your assessment** of basic computer skills:

People who will participate in the online community have a satisfactory ability in word processing and printing. Of the 50 people examined, 20 people are not comfortable with e-mail, especially with the functions of sending and saving attachments and e-mail archiving.

Based on this, you can proceed to write a **description of core competency area(s)** on which you will be providing training to community members and why. In other words, you describe the overall results and capabilities you hope to achieve by implementing your training plan:



E-mail Use Core Competency

We will provide training on some functions in our e-mail program so that all community users have an increased comfort level with e-mail and can use it effectively.

Designing a training initiative

Now the trainer identifies what specific skills or system-related tasks will be improved for the learners as a result of the learning process.

In other words, he defines the **learning objectives**.

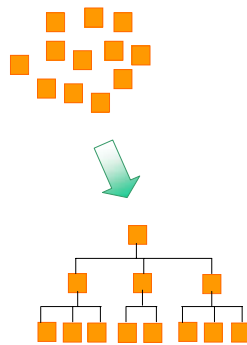
The formulation of a learning objective is a clear, concise affirmation of the abilities that the student should acquire by the end of the course.

An example of a learning objective is: "At the end of the lesson, the learner will be able to save an attachment on her/his computer".

The trainer will also detail the **indicators of success** which will demonstrate that the learning objectives have been met. These indicators are directly related to the learning objectives (e.g. "the learner can save an attachment in 2 minutes without any guidance").




Designing a training initiative



The trainer thinks about whether or not the learners need to accomplish the objectives **in a certain order**.

The trainer does this in consultation with the individuals who, through the skills assessment, were identified as being able to train others.

Then the trainer develops the outline of lessons for the training.

 **See the interactive lesson for some sample topics you may want to include in a training initiative**

Designing a training initiative

Imagine the assessment and design stage have produced the following results. Can you classify them?

- a
- At the end of the Unit, learners will:
 - be aware of the importance of Netiquette, and
 - be able to use Netiquette principles in their online messages.
 - The Unit will provide training on the principles of Netiquette so that participants improve their online communication skills.
 - Participants are able to use all the online discussion tools, but they don't know anything about Netiquette.
 - Unit: Principles of Netiquette
Lesson 1: Why Netiquette is important
Lesson 2: How to use Netiquette principles in your messages.

- Assessment results
- Expected training results
- Learning objectives
- Topics of the training Unit

Click on each option, drag it and drop it in the corresponding box.
When you have finished, click on the Check Answer button.

Delivery formats

Then, the trainer must choose the **delivery formats** of the training. These are the methods of transferring offerings to learners.



Training activities can be delivered in a number of ways, depending on issues like:

- budget and number of learners;
- social and cultural context;
- available materials and time needed to produce new materials; and
- available human resources (tutors, trainers, etc.).

You will need to get community input to determine which format will work best for your project.

On the next screens you will have a look at some of the most common delivery formats.

Delivery formats



Self-Paced Training

Many people are capable of learning by using self-paced tutorials, manuals, help menus and instruction books.

Many projects in developing countries have used multi-media distributed on CD-ROMs because they enable people to be trained efficiently, as they can do it in their own time.

Also, the training materials can be used to support peer training. Don't forget about video and web based training options.

Delivery formats

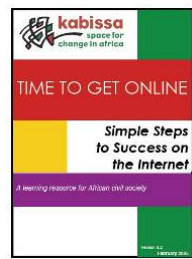
Self-Paced Training: two examples



The **Akshaya Project in Kerala India** uses a self-paced CD-ROM tutorial to teach basic e-literacy skills.

The exercises, although meant for computer literacy at all levels, have special appeal for the young, especially the multimedia inputs. The interactive content takes you through the various stages of learning in an effortless and thoroughly enjoyable manner.

<http://www.akshaya.net/courseprgms.html>



Kabissa developed materials to help civil society activists and organizers to get online, learn the essential "steps to success on the Internet" and to integrate the Internet into their organizations.

The materials follow Kabissa's proven methodology for going through the four steps of connecting to and taking advantage of the benefits of the Internet: connecting, accessing, interacting and advocating.

Material can be downloaded at:

<http://www.timetogetonline.org/content/view/19/43>

Delivery formats

Small Group/One-to-One Informal Instruction

Typically the training is delivered by a peer or someone from the community who has mastered the skill and can teach someone else. Sometimes the training is done face-to-face or what is known as “shoulder to shoulder.”



The trainer sits next to the person being trained and coaches, guides or supports them in their learning. In other cases, the training takes place via e-mail, phone, or through some kind of online meeting space.

Sometimes this type of training can happen very informally in the social context of a shared computer resource, particularly a community technology centre or lab setting. Users, working independently, may watch other users or ask them questions when they need help.

Delivery formats

Small Group/One-on-One Informal Instruction: example



The Rural Alternatives Center in El Limon, Dominican Republic trains one person in a village who can then train the villagers on basic computer skills. Training is delivered in small groups or one-on-one.

See:
<http://www.cresp.cornell.edu/affiliates/ecopartners.php>

Image source:
<http://www.kiskeya-alternative.org/limon/imagen/kidcomp3.jpg>

Delivery formats



Train the Trainers Model

In this model, a small group of people from the community are trained so they can train other people in the community. They are chosen, based upon their having demonstrated both an aptitude and an inclination to learn with the idea of teaching others.



Formal Workshops and Seminars

This is training organized for large groups and can happen in a telecentre/computer lab or classroom setting.

Delivery formats

Train the Trainers Model: example



Image source:
<http://www.uconnect.org/pics/saraebntw25.jpg>

A description of a train the trainers approach for technology in a developing country:

"For instance, you train one trainer, chosen from the local clinic or hospital, another from the local school, one from the farming community, another from the local community, and one from the local business community, and so on, each of whom has been chosen, based upon his or her having demonstrated both an aptitude and an inclination to learn with the idea of teaching others."

From "Twin Pillars of Development, Capacity Building and Universal Access, through Train the Trainer Telecentres and Affordable Wireless Technologies"
by Daniel Stern, Project Director, Uconnect
<http://www.uconnect.org/telecom99twinpillars.htm>

Gender and cultural differences

When you choose a delivery format, remember to take into account gender and cultural issues, as they influence the effectiveness of the learning process.

What strategies would you suggest using for the following gender issues?

- a
- | | |
|---|---|
| Women typically do not receive formal technology training or have received only minimal training. | Make sure that training locations are easily accessible to women in your community. |
| Training materials and training delivery is often gender insensitive. | Use of formal one-on-one mentoring or coaching. Embedding training in existing women's social group structures. |
| Location of formal training is not at a place frequented by women given community social norms. | Make sure your training is scheduled at times when women can participate. |
| Women's dual responsibilities at home and at work often prohibit them from attending training activities because of "lack of time". | Ensure training materials include women's voices and include examples. |

Click on each option, drag it and drop it in the corresponding box.
When you have finished, click on the Check Answer button.

Gender and cultural differences

Linguistic issues are one of the aspects of cultural differences. How to respond to learners with **linguistic differences**?



The use of information and communication technologies may need to be accompanied by programmes geared toward teaching literacy skills, which includes reading and writing in their native language or in another internationally used language.



In some countries, there are ICT/native language initiatives that include fonts and word processing software that can be installed. Some projects have included linguistics in order to create materials and interfaces in native language.



You may face the perception that only highly-educated English language speakers can use computers. You can respond to it by showing successful examples.

Gender and cultural differences

The following are two examples of how some of the described strategies have been adopted for overcoming gender and language issues in training.

The "Empowering Resource Poor Women to Use ICT" project in India



Computers and Internet for Indigenous Peoples of Venezuela



See next slides to read the descriptions

Gender and cultural differences

Empowering Resource Poor Women to Use ICT

The UNESCO "Empowering Resource Poor Women to Use ICT" project in India uses many techniques to ensure gender equity in training.

Since the cultural norms of the society prevent women and young girls from mingling freely in the community buildings that house the computers, computers were placed in the households of women who were members of "self-help groups", to extend ICT benefits to poor women in the community.



Embedding the computers and training into the social structure of the community has ensured equity. Women can also bring their children along to a training meeting so that the process of learning and empowerment does not require them to reject existing roles and responsibilities.

Particular attention is given to income generating activities.

Source: <http://ictpr.nic.in/tamilnadu/>

Gender and cultural differences

Computers and Internet for Indigenous Peoples of Venezuela

This project integrated the native languages of the people it was meant to benefit, taking a linguistic barrier and making it into an asset to the project.

The project's aim is to contribute to the empowering of Venezuelan Indians, and to bridging the digital divide with a project that combines **(a)** the sharing of one computer among neighbouring Indian villages, **(b)** training in the use of computers and the Internet **(c)** improving the skills of reading and writing, reading comprehension, and critical reading as a means to making effective use of ICT **(d)** training in computer repair and maintenance **(e)** helping Indians to produce, house and maintain a web page that would enable them to disseminate information about their development projects, communities and culture, as well as to make their voices heard by a global audience.

A group of three villages agree to share a PC and to establish a set of rules to regulate the rotation of the equipment, maintenance and training. Once the equipment is in place and the participants receive the basic training, the operation is in local hands. They continue training in computer use, repair and maintenance, and in reading and writing--both in their native languages and Spanish.

Many indigenous people are not proficient in reading and writing. The project combines the use of Information Technology with targeted bilingual reading and writing programmes for indigenous peoples. This programme includes reading and writing courses in native languages both to ensure more efficient learning of the skills, and to contribute to the promotion and preservation of indigenous languages and cultures.

Source: <http://www.unuma.org> and http://www.challenge.stockholm.se/search_view.asp?IdNr=5105

Gender and cultural differences



Cultural issues in learning arise from specific beliefs towards and behaviours in a learning environment.

These beliefs and behaviours are instilled through experiences in classroom learning and **through learning from family and community.**

Different cultures have different learning beliefs that predominate.

In order for training to be effective, it is necessary to accommodate these cultural perspectives.

Different ways of learning

These are some different ways learners will be used to learning. The ways they are used to learning will affect their view on the authority of the trainer.

By asking questions and discovering the topic through curiosity

By being presented with specific details and being quizzed on those details (rote learning)

By observing and then imitating actions or tasks

By learning a topic through successful completion of directed small actions or tasks

By doing the actions or tasks and learning as they go from mistakes (hands on)

Available training resources

You don't have to develop all your materials and curricula from scratch. There are many excellent sites that have links to curricula already created for technology training and appropriate for developing countries. Many sites allow their materials to be used for no charge, pending permission and citation.

Two useful Web sites for developing a curriculum for technology training that have many links to other technology training related resources. You can find other resources on the Technology Training Resources List of the Summit Collaborative <http://www.summitcollaborative.com/trainres.htm>.



Itrainonline
(<http://www.itrainonline.org>)



TechSoup
(<http://www.techsoup.org/howto/articles.cfm?topicid=9&topic=Training>)

Click on the screenshots to learn more about these Web sites

Available training resources



Itrainonline
(<http://www.itrainonline.org>)

Itrainonline

The ItrainOnline initiative aims to assist civil society organizations (CSOs) and other development actors in developing countries to confront the challenges posed by new information and communications technologies (ICTs). In seeking to overcome skills gaps in development, it connects people and know-how with the needs of ICT learners and trainers. ItrainOnline aims:

- to provide a selection of the best and most relevant computer and Internet training resources for development and social change,
- to provide access to high quality and appropriate information that is suited to the ways development organizations and civil society groups in the South learn about and use ICTs, and
- to concentrate on training and "how-to" guides for development organizations and civil society groups.

ItrainOnline provides materials and annotated links to high-quality resources in English, Spanish, French and other languages, on topics ranging from computer and Internet basics to highly technical areas and the ways that civil society and development organizations can increase their impact using these tools.



TechSoup
(<http://www.techsoup.org/howto/articles.cfm?topicid=9&topic=Training>)

TechSoup

TechSoup.org offers nonprofits a one-stop resource for technology needs by providing free information, resources, and support. In addition to online information and resources, they offer a product philanthropy service called TechSoup Stock. Here, nonprofits can access donated and discounted technology products, generously provided by corporate and nonprofit technology partners. There is a section devoted to training topics which includes a bulletin board, extensive articles, and resource links.

Evaluation of training

I suggest you have a look at these resources on the Web. Probably you will find something appropriate for your needs.

Finally, remember the importance of **evaluation** of training. This has a great value for the project and should be always included.



In your opinion, what is the main purpose of training evaluation?

- To measure the success of the training initiative.
- To evaluate the progress of the learner.

Please click on the answer of your choice

Evaluation of training

You should collect information in order to evaluate the training initiative.

For example, you can use...

- Simple evaluation surveys immediately after training and six months later.
- Verbal evaluation after the training (What worked? What didn't?).
- A trainer's journal.
- Systems-based evaluation to see what the measurable results were.

Using these methods you can judge the success of training.
Keep in mind: you can always make improvements!



Job aids (1 of 2)

From here you can download and print documents that can help to assess training needs and present your training initiative in a formal way.



Technology Core Competency Self-Assessment

This form is designed to help you identify people who need training as well as people who can train others. The person completing the form rates their core computer skills using a simple three-point scale as follows:

- 1 = I would like help learning how to do this
- 2 = I can do this without help
- 3 = I could teach others how to do this



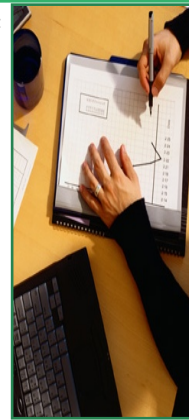
Digital Literacy Self-Assessment Form

This form will help you determine what level of instruction the person requires. The person completing the form rates their skill level in core areas based on four different levels. Each level describes the specific use and skills.



Observation checklist

This is used when you are using trainer observations to determine skill level. If you feel a need to verify someone's skill level, ask them to complete tasks. Based on your observations, indicate 'yes' if they can complete the task, 'no' if they cannot. Have them also show you other skills they might know in each area and indicate if they are willing to provide training to others (if you feel they are able).



Job aids (2 of 2)

From here you can download and print documents that can help to carry out a training needs assessment and to describe your training initiative in a formal way.



Online Facilitator core competency assessment and



Project coordinator core competency assessment tools

They can be used to assess and determine the training needs for non-technical skills using the same method as the technology core competency assessments.



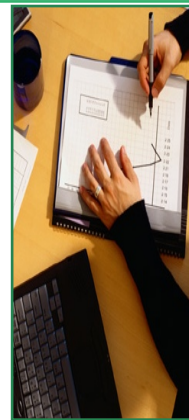
Getting an overview of who needs to be trained on what

Use this form to summarize your findings from interviewing, observing, and/or surveying online community users in performing these core competency technical skills.



Technology training plan logical model

This will help you organize your thinking and serves as a bridge between individual training plans and your online community results. The plan may be very specific and narrowly focused on one initiative or it may be broader and focus on several core competency technical skill areas. You will need to create a logical model for each technology training initiative that you identify. Together, these constitute your online community training plan.



Summary

Training can help online community participants to improve their communication and technological skills.

Different roles (general participants, facilitators, coordinator, support staff) have different skills and training needs.

Training needs assessment helps you decide what to include in the course and how to deliver it (self-paced training, small groups, train the trainer model, etc.).

Gender and cultural differences have to be taken into account when you plan a training initiative.

Evaluation of training is important for improving future initiatives.

If you want to learn more...(1)

Summit Collaborative: Technology Training Resources List

<http://www.summitcollaborative.com/trainres.htm>

Summit Collaborative - Technology training fact sheets and tools

<http://www.summitcollaborative.com/cwpm.html#techtraining>

IKONOS New Media.com

Resources and other materials related to training and interactive and distance learning

http://www.ikonosnewmedia.com/wbi/itq-4/phase2/phase2_resource_materials.htm

ITrain Online

Resources and other materials on training

<http://www.itrainonline.org/itrainonline/english/trainers.shtml>

Business Training Works

Paper highlighting the benefits of training

<http://www.businesstrainingworks.com/Onsite%20Training%20Web/The%20Benefits%20of%20Employee%20Training.doc>

ICT in the Hands of the Poor: Tamilnadu

<http://www.ictpr.nic.in/tamilnadu/welcome.html>

Computers and Internet for Indigenous Peoples of Venezuela

http://www.stockholmchallenge.se/search_view.asp?idNr=5105

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in the Information Society

UNESCO WSIS Publication Series

<http://www.unesco.org/wsisis/events/publications/>

Fonts in Cyberspace

<http://www.sil.org/computing/fonts/>

Cultural differences in learning - Erin Ingram

<http://ic.unl.edu/emingram/point1.html>

If you want to learn more...(2)

Rudick, Marilynne and Leslie O'Flahavan for Learning Circuits

How to write so that learners around the world or from different cultures can easily read and understand instructional materials

<http://www.learningcircuits.org/2003/mar2003/elearn.html>

Master Facilitator Journal

Overview of facilitating online communities

<http://www.masterfacilitatorjournal.com/competencies.html>

Wearing Four Pairs of Shoes: The Roles of E-Learning Facilitators

Hootstein, Ed for Learning Circuits - How to write so that learners around the world or from different cultures can easily read and understand instructional materials

<http://www.learningcircuits.org/2002/oct2002/elearn.html>

Train The Trainer for Technology Support Professionals Computing at Cornell University

Overview of the Train the Trainers approach

<http://www.cit.cornell.edu/training/materials/facstaff/ttt4tsp/ttt4tsp.html>

Adult Multiple Intelligences Harvard University

Materials on the theory of adult multiple intelligences

<http://pzweb.harvard.edu/ami/>