Tips for running great online workshops

As more of us make the change from in-person to digital delivery, we are having to learn a raft of new skills (or, at least, how to use our existing skills in a different way).

Here are some tips you can use to create great online workshops.

Choose your topic

Choose a topic you love and know a lot about. This interest and knowledge will flow through to your workshop.

Provide clear learning outcomes

Your learning outcomes are the knowledge and skills that participants will gain by doing your workshop. Make a list of what they should be able to do by the end of the session (or the end of each session if you're running a longer course).

Try to use measurable verbs to describe your learning outcomes, such as:

a. KNOWLEDGE OUTCOMES: List/Define/Describe the key components of the topic.

b. COMPREHENSION OUTCOMES: Explain/Discuss/Express how the topic relates to their own work.

c. APPLICATION AND SYNTHESIS OUTCOMES: Use/Demonstrate/Write work based on new knowledge or skills.

d. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OUTCOMES: Review/Examine/Critique what they have learned.

Think about how you can make sure the workshop relevant for all of your participants. Do they need to have a certain level of knowledge or expertise in order for it to make sense? Will it be useful or interesting for anyone to attend?

Structure your workshop

Spend some time organising your thoughts. Structure your workshop into a logical sequence, including which of your learning outcomes will be achieved within each section. Think about:

- **Point** – What point do you want to make? What are participants going to walk away with (skills or knowledge)? What is unique about you, your topic, or the way that you work that you could use to provide a different angle on the point you're making?

- **Examples** – Use examples to illustrate your point. This could be demonstrating a piece of equipment, sharing your screen, or sending through videos or resources for participants to read before or after your workshop.

a. **Application** – Where relevant, use activities so participants can apply what they've learned. For longer courses, vary the number, type and frequency of activities to keep participants interested and engaged.

b. **Feedback** – Allow participants to ask questions. Provide feedback on activities so they know they're on the right track.

Use a range of mediums

Different people learn in different ways. The most successful workshops are those where participants are engaged through the use of different mediums. Think about:

a. Live video presentations/webinars – from informal catch ups to scripted talks, PowerPoint presentations to live demonstrations of techniques or equipment.

b. Written content – guides and resources using simple, easy-to-understand language.

c. Pre-recorded visual, video or audio content – to deliver information, provide context, or illustrate a point.

d. Activities to apply knowledge – quizzes, worksheets, exercises, etc.

e. Interaction – questions, live chats, discussion forums, feedback on activities, etc.

Delivery tips

Choose the delivery platform that works best for you: Google Hangouts, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, GoToMeeting, Skype, Moodle, Mentimeter, WeZone, Adobe Connect, Whereby, Hypersay, Kahoot, Anchor (podcasts).

Make sure you're ready – in terms of both technology and content.

Practice your delivery before you go online. (Awkward, but important).

Set up your space. Make sure you have good seating and good lighting for your face (or anything you're demonstrating). Use headphones with a microphone to reduce background noise. Minimise background distractions (either physically or by using background blur tools).

Manage your time effectively. Start on time. Finish on time.

Start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which you're on.

Where possible, allow participants to introduce themselves and share what they're hoping to get out of the session.

Speak slowly and clearly. Pause often.

Think about your audience or participants. Should you be formal or informal? What sort of language should you use? Try to avoid using humour (it's subjective – and tricky when working remotely).

Give participants opportunities to ask questions or share information as you go. They may have knowledge that could benefit someone else.

Follow up – whether it's to send participants further resources, see if they have any more questions or training needs, or to ask how you went.

Enjoy yourself. Have fun. Good luck.

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