
Capacity Building and Online Teaching

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Some Key Questions

- What's different about teaching online?
- What kind of training do online instructors need?
- How are virtual instructors changing teaching?

Background: EdTech Leaders Online

- Capacity Building Training for Online Professional Development and Virtual Schools (since 2000)
- Key components
 - Online instructor training (over 2000 trained)
 - Online course developer training
 - Online workshops: K–12 content areas and virtual school implementation (over 50) – for traditional AND virtual school instructors
 - National support forum

Example: E-Learning for Educators

- Capacity-building 8-state project to build state-level online programs
- Funded by USED Ready to Teach grant
- Partnership between State Dept of Ed & PTV in each state
- Online instructor training for each state
- Local workshop delivery, focused on high need areas
- Online developer training for each state
- Model course development to meet state needs
- Experimental research impact on teachers and students

Virtual School Instructor Training

- Online Instructor Course (7 sessions)
 - Building a learning community
 - Facilitating discussions
 - Assessment
 - Course content
 - Groups and online collaboration
 - Technical issues
- Building a Community in a VS course (3 sessions)
- Ongoing support and national forum
- Trained 100s of virtual school instructors from state/district virtual schools

What's Different About Teaching Online

- Online curriculum is structured differently
- Expectation: make use of new interactive tools
- Social dynamic: different in an online classroom
- Online discussion facilitation: different from f2f
- Important to use multiple methods to communicate, combining whole group and individual strategies
- Assessment strategies different in an online classroom
- Technical challenges may occur

What's the Same

- Need to establish clear expectations
- Need to understand the content and have good curriculum
- Need to provide regular feedback
- Important to listen to and learn from your students
- Need to meet the individual learning needs of your students
- Need to think about how/where to do these things online

What training do online instructors need?

- Training in content, pedagogy, online teaching skills and (basic) technical skills
- Ongoing prof dev: online skills AND content
- Online training enables scale-up
- Need experience in the online environment and good models (and must be models for their students!)
- Learn to pay attention to online voice: be positive, personal, professional, approachable, mindful of tone
- Benefit from ongoing communities of practice

How are online instructors changing teaching?

Virtual School Instructors

- understand how to teach with technology
- support individualized instruction and collaborative activities
- increase student engagement and/or facilitate deeper discussions with effective questioning
- are more accessible to their students
- used to innovative approaches to assessment

Virtual schools are “labs of educational reform” and virtual teachers are in the forefront!

Thank you!

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EdTech Leaders Online

<http://www.edtechleaders.org>

Education Development Center

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