



Creating an online learning alternative

Teaching and learning in an online environment shift the traditional teacher-student relationship. From a teacher's perspective, their ability to deliver against learning outcomes will not only depend on their ability to deliver content but also on the learner and their own capacity to work with available technological resources. This skill will in turn be determined by levels of experience and comfort with the use of these resources. This underlines the importance of tutor training, learner inductions, orientations as well as, tech support in any e-learning provision.

Providers success in employing e-learning resources will be determined by how successful they are, in creating an online community of learners who feel safe, connected, supported and active in this community. Truly effective e-learning needs to encourage interaction and a collaborative approach. Learners should not only be recipients of instruction but should actively participate in the learning experience. They should have opportunities to contribute, share and discuss content with both their tutors and their fellow students. Such a collaborative approach will enhance the e-learning experience, and encourage self-directed learning where students genuinely want to learn and feel successful in that learning.

Under current unprecedented conditions, training providers will perhaps need to apply some quick fixes online to keep their learners in the educational process but should always give due consideration to online course design and support. Variety is the key to sustaining learner interest. Online learning should not just be about slick, interactive presentations with professional voice overs but should also provide opportunities for discussion with tutors and fellow students alike, as well as face-to-face interactions with tutors for content sharing.

In creating online learning environments, we would make some of the following recommendations:

- simply providing recommended reading lists without additional support is not conducive to effective learning
- take the opportunity to improve the digital capabilities of your staff and learners alike
- give initial induction, orientation, digital awareness sessions to learners - making a consumer feel happy and comfortable is as important as the learning



- encourage people to turn on their camera and get used to sharing themselves online, encourage people to speak in a group by asking specific people questions
- provide an appropriate level of accessible tech support to ensure the continuity of learning
- consider separating tech support and user support, have a tech guide available for those who know there is not a technical problem but who can't understand how the tech works
- ensure regular real time interactions. Learners should have access to their tutor to discuss learning planning and progress through virtual conferencing
- provide alternative ways of interaction, learner contribution and collaboration using platforms such as Skype, Zoom, Facebook groups, WhatsApp cohort groups, Facebook Messenger, Microsoft Teams
- provide variety through a combination of live webinars, interactive bite size learning and one-to-one live tutor support
- shorten courses to offer bite size options to bigger subjects, remember instant gratification is the norm now so think how you manage that into your learning methods
- restricting people to specific live times can put barriers in place, consider always having recorded sessions so that people can catch up as they fit learning into their lives
- set clear performance expectations to aid the development of learning plans
- have a combination of both formative and summative assessment throughout programme, with regular feedback given on progress
- for obvious reasons (e.g. social distancing, closure of gyms) practical assessment will be difficult and we would recommend the postponement of these assessments
- for theory-based assessments it would be preferable if an online invigilation tool is used although this may not be possible in the short term (these are widely used and check the identity of the person sitting the assessment)



EuropeActive recognise the necessity of a collaborative and flexible approach to carry us through this most difficult of times. As human beings we all value physical human interaction and, in a learning context we would all recognise that face-to-face teaching has great value in instilling the practical skills required of fitness professionals. However, well designed and directed online learning also has great value and, whatever your position, we should all take a proactive and positive approach to this learning medium.

If you wish to talk further regarding short term adaptations to your training programmes, please contact us at accreditation@europeactive.eu

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