Best Practices Guide

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The assignment this week contains the scenario where a training manager is making plans to convert all of the training modules that he is currently using to a blended learning format. By moving to this type of training format he hopes to increase the opportunities for the trainees in terms of communication. By putting his training materials online the trainees will have access to the resources and assignments at any time. This format will provide both individual opportunities for learning as well as the face-to-face sessions to solidify the information learned and ensure that all trainees are understanding the information.

Best Practices Guide for Converting Programs

- The course will convert from a complete face-to-face class to a blended class.
- Information to be included:
  - Pre-planning strategies
  - How to enhance aspects of the original training format.
  - Trainer role change due to environment change.
  - Facilitation of communication between students.

1. <u>What pre-planning strategies should be considered during the change of programs?</u>
   - For face-to face planning and blended learning planning both use the following:
     - Establish and define the objectives and goals to be reached.
     - Prepare a syllabus and calendar for the activities that will take place.
     - Prepare all documents that will be shared during the training.
       - For face-to-face trainings prepare copies to distribute.
       - For blended learning trainings create a space for document sharing during the training time period.

2. <u>What aspects from the original training program could be enhanced in distance learning?</u>
   - Define the objectives and goals can be enhanced by:
     - Create assessments, discussion boards, assignments &/or projects that will provide the learners with opportunities to apply the information.
   - Create a syllabus and calendar for the activities can be enhanced by:
     - Provide a document sharing opportunity for the information.
     - Use Web 2.0 tools to provide the information in a user friendly way.
       - Wiki's, Blogs, Prezi Presentation

3. <u>How to facilitate communication between students in an online program.</u>
   - Provide well thought out prompts, questions or scenarios for engagement that require more thought and answers than just rhetorical yes or no answers.
   - Participate to stimulate conversation, but be careful to not overly participate to the point that the students are not communicating with each other.

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- Provide positive encouragement and resources to explain perspectives without causing the students to feel that they are wrong.
- Make sure to understand how to use the information and software so that the glitches are minor and the technology is not a distraction to the student.
- Give specific requirements (rubric) for what you would like the student to present in their discussion posts to eliminate confusion on what is required. This allows the learner to focus on the material and not worry about format.

4. <u>How will my role change as the learning environment changes?</u>
- Be open-minded and flexible when working with a new CMS as things change constantly in technology.
- Pre-planning will involve preparing without instant trainee feedback so be prepared to listen to the trainees if something isn't working. This is not permanent; adapting to their needs is key.
- Reach out to others who are accustomed to working in this environment and get ideas.

Important things to have prepared before training starts.
Check List

1. CMS is decided on that will work for this format.   _____
2. I have trained and am comfortable with the CMS.   _____
3. I understand how to use the tools of the CMS.   _____
4. I have pre-planned the learning objectives/goals.   _____
5. I have prepared activities for each objective/goals.   _____
6. I have prepared a way for students to offer feedback.   _____

References:

Simonson, Michael., Smaldino, S., Zvacek, S., (2015). *Teaching and learning at a distance: Foundations of distance education (*6th ed). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.