

Role of Online Trainers as Social Promoters

Hosting a Party

When you're giving a party, you want to make sure everyone is having fun. In the same way hosting online learning is like giving a party. But how do you know that your guests are having fun when you don't see them face-to-face?

In online training, there are behaviors among participants that trainers must promote or discourage. Promoting desirable participant behavior will improve the effectiveness of the learning and the positive experience of the learners ... they need to have fun!

Here are few of the essential behaviors that online trainers must watch for.

Be Accepting of Lurkers

Recognize that there will be "lurkers" in the online training process and they may never participate with comments.

Some people learn by listen-

ing to others so do not assume learning is not taking place. Both lurkers (or any latecomers to the session) must be acknowledged and welcomed.

Hosting online learning is like hosting a party.



Guard Against Fear in Your Conference

Fear of public ridicule often stifles participation in online training.

Be gentle accepting of participants' comments and deal with exceptions on a one-on-one basis.

Watch the Use of Humor or Sarcasm

It may be wise not to use humor or sarcasm due to different cultural and ethnic backgrounds that may be

represented on the online training.

Using text-based communications, it is especially difficult to construe intent and tone from on-screen text, unless you know the participants very well.

Use Introductions

The facilitator should encourage the participants to introduce themselves, to help build the sense of community.

Facilitate Interactivity

A sense of interactive participation is often promoted by using special introductory techniques, dyadic partnering, and some assignments that facilitate informal discussion among learners.

Praise and Model the Discussant Behavior You Seek

Reinforcing and modeling good discussant behaviors, such as saying, "Thank You" to participants who respond effectively online, can be helpful to encourage courtesy and interaction.

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Do Not Ignore Bad Discussant Behavior

Request change (privately) in poor discussant behaviors and have a written "netiquette" statement to refer to.

Expect That Flames May Occur

Participants may breach etiquette and respond with harsh or vulgar language.

If this problem should occur, the trainer needs to react and remind people (privately) about computer etiquette.

Here are the key points:

- Be accepting of lurkers
- Guard against fear
- Avoid humor and sarcasm
- Use introductions
- Facilitate Interactivity
- Model the behavior you seek
- Do not ignore bad behavior
- Expect that flames may occur