Tips for Successful Online Facilitation

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Facilitating in the online environment is quite different from in-person facilitation. The following ideas are designed to help you before, during and after an online event.

1. **Before The Online Meeting Starts**
   - Familiarize yourself with the delivery structure and the site/platform
   - Develop an online delivery plan/schedule
   - Check that all resources, activities and links work (i.e. they open in a new window), are current and relevant to the meeting purpose
   - Update your contact information
   - Contact learners, welcome them to the event, provide clear log-in instructions, and give them a contact person for any technology problems

2. **At The Beginning Of The Online Meeting**
   - Check that learners can log-in and provide support and troubleshoot as needed
   - Make sure participants know why you are meeting, the specific deliverables to be produced, and how much authority they have been delegated.
   - Facilitate introductions and community-building activities at beginning of the course e.g. have everyone introduce themselves in a café style forum
   - Set clear expectations
   - Emphasize the importance of interactions and that online communication between participants is key to building community and contributes to the meeting outcomes, profiles, forums, chats etc.
   - Encourage sharing of experiences

3. **During The Online Meeting**
   - Be a positive online role model
   - Challenge participants but don’t overwhelm them
   - Respond to concerns as they come up, don’t ignore them
• Provide guidance and direction to participants when needed
• Encourage online communication between participants
• Ask thought provoking questions; especially knowing when to ask open-ended and closed-ended questions
• Provide technical and other support as required
• Provide positive encouragement and feedback
• Monitor progress, participation in activities, and completion of tasks
• Create follow-up commitments and accountability as required

4. After The Online Course Finishes
• Wrap-up the meeting and thank participants
• Create evaluations of the meeting process for developmental feedback
• Review participant feedback and make recommendations for improvement
• Engage in your own self-reflection for improvement in your online facilitation skills

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