

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
