

♀	Expertise in course planning and organization.
♀	Ability to construct questions that include a variety of intellectual levels and learning styles, varied in their instructional purposes, and are open-ended.
♀	Ability to set the agenda and provide leadership and direction without controlling the class. Find a balance between leading the group and creating an environment where students themselves meet the learning objectives. The leadership model becomes one of dynamic facilitation , which is a shift away from an authoritarian style toward a more democratic style.
♀	Develop methods for learner feedback and reinforcement.
♀	Sequence the presentation of content and pace the material so as to avoid content overload.
♀	Personalize instruction to be relevant to the needs of individual participants and individual businesses.

The Technology

Technology is the final component of a successful eLearning environment. Selection of appropriate technologies becomes especially challenging due to the fast changing pace and growth of new Internet-based tools that can be used in online courses. Course Management Systems (CMSs) offer chat rooms, email, electronic forums that organize discussion responses in varied ways (by subject, time of day and person responding), and quick access to the Internet for research all in one program. Often it is worthwhile to outsource the choice of technology to those who are familiar with a variety of CMS tools.

Companies that worry about return-on-investment can rest easy because most offices are computer-friendly. These days even small set-ups have personal computers to help them conduct daily businesses. Access to the Internet is also widely available in most parts of the world today. Wider access also means that employers have a gamut of programs from which to choose from. Plus, most of the new hires are computer literate. Another factor that weighs well for e-training is the standardization of content presented. This guarantees that each employee gets the necessary input intended, thus catering to the specific needs of each employee. Another benefit of e-training lies in the

flexibility that technology offers. Compared to traditional forms of training, this innovative method allows employees to learn on their own time and at their own pace. e live in a world where what we know supersedes experience. Online training provides a good avenue to close the knowledge gap. E-training also boasts quick updates on materials and modules. This will help employees stay abreast with rapid changes in the corporate world. E-training augurs well for companies that need to train and re-train their employees. Continuous training helps employees remain productive as they move up the corporate ladder and take on greater responsibilities.

Finally, technical support is vital to the success of online training. The facilitator can be well trained, the curriculum in place and the students willing, but when the system malfunctions, both the student and instructor need to know where to turn for help. Technical issues should not interfere with the training process. NMA associates are technology experts.

Nelson Management Associates' KEY ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL E-TRAINING PROGRAM

focusing on the components of e-learning ...



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**Employees
.. Students**



Curriculum



Facilitator



Technology

The Benefits of E-Training

MOST employers provide training to their employees to ensure they stay abreast with the ongoing developments in their respective industries. Typically, corporations hold in-house training classes while other companies employ training consultants to conduct courses for them. Some of these methods may, however, incur costs such as training fee, travel expenditure, accommodation charges, food expenditures, plus scheduling headaches.

In some cases managers and senior executives may have to set aside their work in order to conduct such courses. This also means loss of valuable work time and a decline in productivity. In such cases it may be useful to consider an innovative method of training available today. NMA can provide computer-based training, Web-based training and virtual training – each of these has been proven to be convenient methods of training employees.

Advocates say it is an easy, standard, cost-effective path to upgrading human resources. According to recent surveys, electronic learning has produced training budget savings of 40 to 60 per cent for large organizations such as Ernst & Young, IBM, and Rockwell Collins. There is little dispute that e-corporate training is necessary for today's business to gain and maintain competitive advantage.

International Data Corp's estimates show that online training is expected to grow to an US\$14.3 billion business by the year 2006. If you are running a business with a global network and employ personnel worldwide, this may be a training option that you may want to consider.

The Curriculum

It is important for online courses to remain part of the academic curriculum of the firm, with facilitators and administration determining the appropriateness and the validity of the subject matter and the delivery methodology. It is imperative the integrity of online courses be ensured in order to maintain their transferability and consistency within the organization. Development of new online training courses must meet the same standards and go through a similar approval. The curriculum of an eLearning program must be

designed especially for the short-term, collaborative nature of online learning. Face-to-face curriculum can be used if it is substantially converted to fit the online environment. Course content should be organized in modules with clear deadlines for the assigned work in each part. Facilitators should give simple and clear assignments, and not assign over-complicated tasks. Learning points should be reduced and compensated with open-ended remarks that elicit comments and a display of varying viewpoints. Online curriculum should focus on application of knowledge to the real world and foster critical thinking skills with opportunities for an interchange of ideas among students and with the facilitator.

E-training can be built around any function area of the business: Human Resources, Finance, Operations, Management, just to name a few.

Online curriculum has two important factors: process and outcomes. The process must integrate life, work, and educational experiences, generate continuous dialog, draw a connection between the learned concepts and work experience, include ample time for the completion of the assigned work, utilize a minimal amount of memorization, maintain a balance between the technology, facilitator, and the students, and incorporate group and team activities. The learning outcomes must be achievable and offer the opportunity for students to use them in practical, everyday situations. Online curriculum should have clear achievable learning objectives using appropriate technologies, and the choice of technologies (facilitative tools) should be driven by the curriculum. The training objectives must be relevant to the training needs of the students and the business. The curriculum should be designed to promote maximum dialog among the participants and must match the organization's mission. The synergy generated through eLearning dialog is the most important learning tool in the online environment and has an impact on defining the learning outcomes. In order for this to happen, the climate in an eLearning environment must be open, honest, sincere, and conducive to learning. Ultimately, the facilitator is responsible for creating this welcome environment in an eLearning environment.

The Facilitator

A trained facilitator is an important component of an online program. Often, the facilitator is also the designer and monitor of the online course, and thus has a powerful influence on the success or failure of the

program. The facilitator's training, personality, and attitude all impact the online environment. A successful facilitator must know how to integrate life experience, communication, professionalism, and content into the learning environment. The personality of the facilitator is an important component as well, and sets the tone of the eLearning environment. If the facilitator is encouraging and positive, students will quickly develop a level of comfort in the online environment.

NMA facilitators have experience, education, and hands-on expertise in multiple function areas of the business including, but not limited to: Human Resources, Finance, Operations, Management, and Production.

E-training facilitators have two responsibilities to their virtual learners: appropriate curriculum design and facilitation. Online training is not "on ground gone digital, audio or video." Interaction among students, between facilitator and students, and between the students and the learning materials as managed by the instructor makes or breaks the class. When a facilitator makes the transition from on ground to online, he/she does not retain the role of "distributor of information" in a teacher-centered classroom. Rather a facilitator's energy should be channeled to become the medium whereby the discovery of learning is facilitated in a student-centered environment. The online facilitator becomes a **"guide on the side,"** no longer a **"sage on the stage,"** helping others to discover and synthesize the learning material. To this end, the facilitator must believe in the effectiveness of the online paradigm and the value of critical thinking. This brings new pressures on facilitators to deal with a different way of training as well as interacting and managing the business classroom populated by students who demand relevance.

Responsibilities of Facilitator Include:



Ability to create an atmosphere of collaborative teamwork. Group work is more important in an eLearning environment. Students depend on one another for much of their learning. The facilitator needs to help students work with each other in a peer-to-peer learning paradigm.



Function area expertise with relevance to real-world business scenarios.