Program Development and Evaluation

Program Development and Evaluation
University of Wisconsin-Extension
432 North Lake Street
Madison, WI 53706
www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande.html

Guidelines for Facilitators of Satellite Videoconferences

Transcript* of the video/audio clips

Before the Video Conference

1. Assess your community (organization) needs and identify audiences that could benefit from the satellite videoconference. Reserve local downlink room and plan for creating an environment for optimal learning. Identify partners or co-sponsors.

Joe Moskol, Community Development Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Rock County:
The audience is defined by the purposes of the educational program. I need to know what the program is about and what it proposes to accomplish. In order to promote the program, I have to understand what a potential audience cares about. What is their self-interest in learning? This is very important. If you don't know what you're trying to achieve and what really matters to the audience, you have no target to promote the program to. That would be a big mistake.

In Rock County, I've worked with the United Way, a local community foundation and a volunteer placement center. This has created an important discussion among non-profit leaders, especially about the value of distance education for their organizations or organizations they work with. The program at the Learning Institute has received more visibility and we were able to establish a scholarship fund.

Most communities have several non-profit groups. If you want us to get them involved, you have to give them the opportunity to understand your interests while you're trying to understand their interests. If you have some common interests, you can then talk about what you could accomplish by working together. If you choose to work together, be sure you agree upon how much you hope to accomplish and by when. Then you have a common goal to focus on. It is extremely important here is for people to be clear about their expectations when working together. One thing that's extremely valuable is to establish a few simple measures of effectiveness that people sign on to. If they know the benchmarks for a good job and all agree to them, then they know that's how you hold your feet to the fire.

Claudette Green, Director, Volunteer Baton Rouge!, Nonprofit Resource Center, Louisiana:
We partner with the Cooperative Extension at Louisiana State University (LSU) and the Louisiana Regional Technical College. In our partnership with them, they provide the facilities for hosting the downlink and have the correct coordinates that we offer. That partnership has worked very well. The technical college and LSU have an opportunity to have their names printed on our materials. They don't go much beyond providing their facility at no charge. When you're looking at facilities In Baton Rouge, the cost to rent places is high, so it's a big help to us to keep our costs at a minimum to our customer.

2. Schedule videoconference viewing facilities and introduce yourself to videoconference technicians. Check for availability and location of fax machine and phone(s) (for Q&A session) plus any additional equipment listed in the site-facilitator's manual.

3. Register your site and yourself as the site coordinator and pay the registration fee for the satellite videoconference (if required). Determine if a local registration fee will need to be collected to cover local costs.

Dr. Joseph A. Lessard, County Extension Director, MSU-Extension, Ingraham County, Michigan:
We were able to attain a local grant from a bank here in the community. That helped us sponsor fifty percent scholarships for all participants who were willing to come as a team and participate in the series. I think that was just an excellent carrot to get folks interested in a program that obviously has a high value. We could significantly support the cost for each individual team that participated.

4. Identify roles and responsibilities that need to be handled by others and delegate those responsibilities.

5. Decide (with proper officials) if CEU credits will be given (if offered as part of the videoconference).

6. Promote the videoconference to appropriate audiences (i.e. radio, newspaper, newsletter, brochure, TV bulletin boards, computer site, etc.).

Susan J. Ellis, President, Energize, Inc., Pennsylvania:
I would try to get a mailing list of fifty really great societies and then let them reach several thousand people, rather than trying to get one-by-one-by-one. The other thing is to really think about using the World Wide Web.

Joe Moskol, Community Development Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Rock County:
Regular press releases to local media and direct mailings have not captured the attention of our non-profit sector here in Rock County. It's just not enough. We need a well-developed promotional campaign to get our story told in a way that people really understand. This ought to include some testimonies from local learners. They can explain the value of the program perhaps more effectively than I can. It also needs to include promotion by nonprofit leaders who value organizational effectiveness.

Claudette Green, Director, Volunteer Baton Rouge!, Nonprofit Resource Center, Louisiana:
What has worked for us in promoting our trainings is to send out a brochure and follow up with a fax that we call "in your face," which means it's very intrusive. If the registrations aren't coming in, then you get this fax that says, "Do you remember this downlink?" and "Please call the resource center." We've found the faxes very helpful to us. What have not worked well are public service announcements. We think that doesn't work because of radio and TV. TV is a visual and radio just depends on the interest. When you talk about training, there's not a lot of interest to the overall broader community.

Bill Rizzo, Community Resource Development Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Dane County:
We know that we need to be much more aggressive in marketing our programs. We feel that we have a really good opportunity for a large program to grow quite a bit larger. We're going to look for strategic partners who fund non-profits and have a stake in the success of the series. We're going to be more aggressive in identifying scholarship dollars for those organizations that would like to attend, but who can't because of funding. We're simply going to do more in terms of developing our own marketing plan and looking for scholarships to help other organizations attend.

7. Familiarize yourself with the site-facilitator materials sent from the videoconference producers (mailed or web accessible). Participate in the site facilitator training opportunities (i.e. telephone conferences, WWW chat groups, list serves, bulletin boards, etc.) In addition, know how to view & download streaming video visuals, or print material.

8. Decide how you can build on the videoconference at your local level. Make plans to use the videoconference to launch your own program and/or application.

9. Check registration figures regularly and anticipate on-site-walk-ins. Send confirmation letters along with any print materials to those who pre-register, along with maps, parking arrangements, etc.

10. Make accommodations for special needs. Provide a telephone number in your promotional materials to a site contact who will arrange for special needs.

11. Prepare materials needed for the on-site videoconference activities (pre-and post-videoconference activities included). Also, develop a back-up plan should weather-related factors interfere with the videoconference connection. (Check the site facilitator materials or other materials designed for your specific program from the sponsoring organization for suggestions).

The Day of the Videoconference

12. Post welcome signs directing participants to the building and/or the room.

13. Create a comfortable room setting, conducive to learning. Set up a registration table near the entrance with nametags, sign-in sheets, print materials. Have a place to store coats/umbrellas, etc. Informally introduce yourself and direct participants to refreshments or vending machines/ bathrooms/telephones, etc.

Joe Moskol, Community Development Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Rock County:
The site provides an environment where people learn. I don't want the site to interfere with people's desire to learn, so it's up to me to do my best to create a learning environment free of distractions. It's important to pay attention to things like directional signs, room temperature, sound quality, lighting, seating, refreshments and telling people where the toilets are at, for that matter. I want to make certain that my learners are comfortable so they can focus on the subject matter. If you're serious about helping people learn by way of videoconferences, then it's up to you to make sure that the site doesn't get in their way.

Susan J. Ellis, President, Energize, Inc., Pennsylvania:
It is the local learning site that makes this different from sitting at home and watching television. People are still not totally comfortable with video learning and the fact that it's a live broadcast doesn't really change the fact that people are sitting there looking at a TV screen. It is the whole learning site environment that transforms the experience and gives people that sense that they're really engaging in learning, and they're not just being a viewer.

It is very critical for the distance learning experience for the learners to be able to come to a site and interact with folks who have similar challenges. They share their learning experiences or they share experiences that may be happening within their organization and get feedback about how other organizations handle similar situations. You have a very engaged audience in learning not only what's going on with the downlink, but during the break time, they continue to interface with each other and share their common experience.

Joan Cybela, Distance Education/Instructional Design Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Extension:
Will they enter a room that is a pleasant and functional place to learn? Neat, clean, bright and welcoming, colorful and stimulating? Consider adding live plants and fresh flowers to provide the room with brain-stimulating oxygen, negative ions, cleaner air and a delightful ambiance. Hang motivational or inspirational posters or visuals relevant to the topic on walls. Bring in a portable boom box and play relaxing instrumental music while people arrive and during active relaxation exercises. Do the furniture and the layout comfortably accommodate sitting, reading, writing, thinking, interacting, viewing and hearing? Are lighting and ventilation conducive to learning? Does the room have a pleasant smell? Consider using a non-aerosol, chemical-free, biodegradable air freshener such as citrus aromatherapy to pleasantly stimulate the senses. Provide refreshments. Even simple things, like coffee, herbal tea, cookies, fresh fruit or a small mint at each learner's place, have a powerful positive impact on participants. Have plenty of fresh

drinking water available at learner tables. A well-hydrated brain pays great dividends. Add some colorful cocktail napkins for fun, and you've created a party. Research tells us that 25 percent of our learning is impacted by our physical environment. That's significant. Make the necessary adjustments to create a good learning environment.

14. Before the videoconference begins, direct participants to their seats and have formal introductions. Orient them to the building facilities and the material in their participant packets. Point out the objectives, the agenda and describe the process for submitting questions, via fax or telephone to the broadcast.

Joan Cybela, Distance Education/Instructional Design Specialist
University of Wisconsin-Extension:
Several significant things need to happen. Each impacts the educational value of this learning experience for the learners.

First: Get Acquainted

First, participants need the opportunity to get acquainted with you, with other facilitators or resources persons, with each other and with the learning environment, such as locations of restrooms, telephones, refreshments and the exhibits, etc. It's a nesting-in of sorts and the brain's way of confirming that this is a good place to be.

Second: Prepare Participants for Learning

Second, you'll help to prepare participants for learning, by reviewing with them the materials, specifically program goals, learning objectives, biographies of presenters, overview of content, note-taking guide, learning activities, supplementary resources or readings, protocol for interacting via phone or fax with videoconference presenters and completing the evaluation form.

15. Lead them in an exercise to focus mentally and physically on learning.

Joan Cybela, Distance Education/Instructional Design Specialist
University of Wisconsin-Extension:
Research on brain compatible learning tells us that we learn much more effectively when our bodies are relaxed and our minds are alert, open and receptive to new ideas. How can we achieve that for our learners and ourselves?

You might want to shift yourself into a more comfortable position in your chair. Arms, legs and ankles uncrossed, hands rested in your lap. If you'd like to close your eyes, feel free to do that as well. As you listen to the music, feel the steady rhythm of your breath going in and out of your body. Notice that your breathing is becoming more relaxed and your mind is opening to new learning.
As you approach this state of active relaxation, you might think about what you already know about coordinating and facilitating local learning experiences for satellite videoconferences. What elements are essential for success? Allow yourself some time to reflect on what you already know about this topic. When you're ready, you might think about what you'd like to learn about successfully facilitating and coordinating satellite videoconferences in local learning experiences. Perhaps you want to become more familiar with the various tasks involved, and who might help in creating a dynamic local learning experience for your participants.

Allow yourself some time right now to reflect on what you'd like to learn about this topic. With this awareness of what you already know about site facilitation and coordination, and what you'd like to learn, know that you can revisit your thoughts at any time to help make this training experience especially meaningful to you. When you're ready, open your eyes, stretch if you like, alert your senses to what's around you and record a few of your thoughts regarding what you already know and what you'd like to learn about site coordination and facilitation. This process of writing down any thoughts that emerge is essentially alerting your mind to watch for that which you are interested in learning.

Are you feeling refreshed and more focused? That exercise only took two and a half minutes, and yet it physically and mentally helped to prepare you for quality learning. Adults lead incredibly busy lives and, with few exceptions, they arrive at our programs feeling physically and mentally stressed and unfocused. Quality learning quite simply cannot happen under those conditions, it's physiologically impossible. One very important role that you play is to assist your learners and yourself in reaching a mental and physical state of active relaxation so that quality learning can indeed occur.

16. Enhance the educational impact of the session by facilitating any activities described in the site-facilitator packet. Encourage your participants to submit questions during the videoconference's live interactive question/answer session(s).

Dr. Carter McNamara, Leaders Circle Program Director, MAP for Nonprofits, St. Paul, Minnesota:
We learned the most important ingredient in a local learning community is that each learner participates fully and honestly. That sounds superfluous, I know, but how many learners truly participate fully in a program or a course? We've learned that if the learner gets the time and the support to participate fully, the necessary outcomes will follow for that learner. So we strive first to provide a trusting environment where peers support other peers to participate fully.

One very useful approach we've found in developing a local learning community is what we call leader circles. In the Leaders Circles, there are five to seven members who have similar needs, for example to learn a certain topic or solve a complex problem. The members help each other by exchanging practical materials, giving advice, giving supportive challenges or posing meaningful questions. The outcomes for each member in a Circle depend very much on what the member wanted from their Circle in the first place, for example ongoing support, problem solving or continuous learning.

Universal benefits from the Circles include a great deal of useful resources: cost savings, problem resolution, renewal and ultimately, knowledge and wisdom. A real value of Leader Circles is that it helps each of the members take new information from a course or feedback offered in the meeting and then apply it in their workplace. Because circle meetings continue to meet each month, they continue to apply that information and take it well beyond the course into their lives or their workplaces where the learning becomes deep learning for each of the members.

Leaders Circles: *Leaders Circles are a proven, practical and collaborative model that sustains commitments among participants as they help each other resolve major issues in their workplace. Dr. Carter McNamara (MAP, St. Paul MN) has developed a guidebook*

that orients participants to the circle process. For more information see: http://www.mapnp.org/library/circles/theory.htm

Bill Rizzo, Community Resource Development Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Dane County:
We did a brown bag series with some success, identifying people who might want to come before the program and discuss specific issues relative to the program that's going to be broadcast, and just talk generally about issues that they're dealing with. We also are part of a conference that will be held this September on non-profit organizations, not so much on the issues or the curriculum that the Learning Institute has developed, but more generally about where non-profits are going. We want to be able to encourage the development of leadership circles on a local basis. Hopefully, that kind of structure will encourage people to participate more generally in education for non-profits and the Learning Institute program.

Joe Moskol, Community Development Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Rock County:
I hope to involve more local experts who can work with our learners. Peers teaching peers is an effective technique. Also, I need more local media involved with the program. Feature articles on upcoming videoconferences and local support networks would be a step in the right direction here. Something else that needs to be experimented with is follow-up with participants who attend the videoconference. They may need help planning and designing new organizational systems. Organizations need to have a plan of action if they expect anything to change. Keep in mind that videoconferences are simply a way to help people raise their awareness. Planning is about change in their organizations in the way they work day-to-day.

Susan J. Ellis, President, Energize, Inc., Pennsylvania:
I recommend a number of things, some of them obvious. One is, be prepared. People are very aware when someone is just going through the motions of hosting, but not really facilitating. I think that means reading the leaders' packets, possibly looking at some videos that were done the past and generally being knowledgeable or having somebody there who is knowledgeable.

The second is the importance of setting climate. That means opening it up to people who are going to be asked to share, where there is going to be an opportunity to talk, that it's nonjudgmental, there's some fun, and that kind of thing. A lot has to do with room arrangement, having coffee and tea available, etc. I also think it's very important for the facilitator to deal with latecomers. There are always people who wander in at odd times. I think they should be met at the door and brought up to speed on what's going on.

The final thing is, this may sound funny, but act interested. It's clear that some facilitators are really not involved in non-profit management and they're doing this as part of many, many, many programs. Do not sit in the back of the room doing paperwork or other things or leave the room. If you want to demonstrate to learners that this is a total package of learning experience, you really need to be involved and engaged. They need to see it because you're modeling the behavior.

Claudette Green, Director, Volunteer Baton Rouge!, Nonprofit Resource Center, Louisiana:
We've found that with a facilitated discussion thirty minutes prior to the actual start of the broadcast as well as when there's a break in the middle, most people pick up a cookie and

continue the facilitated discussion. We also provide additional handouts that complement the participant's information packet. Some of the materials we hand out are from the Learning Institute, from their website or from *Non-Profit World*, as well as from resources that we have here.

Dr. Joseph A. Lessard, County Extension Director, MSU-Extension, Ingraham County, Michigan:
I prepared about a twenty-five item check-off list that had to do with just about every detail you could think off in terms of being prepared for the event. The mention of enhancing the educational impact is to have a well-organized program that has a very user-friendly, learner-oriented environment. I think we worked hard to provide that kind of environment for our participants. During the program, it was important that our facilitator was organized and knowledgeable, not only in the content of the meeting, but the flow of the meeting. She was prepared to use the time that was provided at the end to bring closure to the participants and to ask the questions that would help them reflect on next steps for their own organizations.

Bill Rizzo, Community Resource Development Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Dane County:
We tried the brown bags and they worked pretty well. I think for participants it was a good way to load up before the sessions and get their minds moving on the topic. We also download copies of the articles that they were asked to read in advance. We found that people simply didn't download them, or if they did, didn't read them. We made them available during every program.

We feel that's it's very important to have a comfortable, informal kind of atmosphere, so we always provide refreshments, give people a good orientation to the program and the facility and encourage people to simply be comfortable in what they're doing that day and to speak with each other. We definitely encouraged people to network and get to know each other.

After the Vidoeconference

17. After the videoconference, conduct any additional site-based activities described in the site facilitator packet… or any local follow-up activities that you have developed (i.e. panel of experts, focus groups, leaders circles, action plans, etc.).

18. Thank participants for their attendance and give them time to complete the participant evaluation form. Collect the evaluations as they leave and submit them, along with a final participant registration list, to the host organization.

> **Joan Cybela, Distance Education/Instructional Design Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Extension:**
> It is equally important to attend to follow-up details after the learning experience is over. Make sure that evaluations are completed and submitted, monies and bills attended to and summaries that document what went well, what didn't and what to do different next time. Most important of all, send thank-yous to all whom supported the program. It is vital to program success.
>
> > **FOLLOW-UP DETAILS**
> > **Handling evaluations/Feedback**
> > **Reconciling monies/Bills**
> > **Summarizing the good and the not-so-good**
> > **Thank yous**

19. Complete the site facilitator evaluation form, if one is included in the site facilitator materials, and submit it (along with the documents above) to the national videoconference host organization.

20. Send thank you notes to people who locally expended resources, special talents and/or time to help take the videoconference a local success. Publicize their contributions (and the videoconference success) to the local news media in which you can mention any upcoming follow-up activities or events.

*Transcript edited for continuity and clarity.

For additional information, contact: Program Development and Evaluation, University of Wisconsin-Extension, 432 North Lake Street, Madison, WI 53706
Telephone: (608) 262-9940
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