

Appendix 4 Course purpose

The purpose of this course is to:

- develop knowledge, skills and attitudes of online facilitation with application in online components of formal courses and online collaboration projects;
- provide an awareness of and develop skills in the toolsets available to support online facilitation (e.g. online discussions, blogs, podcasts and synchronous communication software); and
- develop knowledge and skills in designing online activities using an appropriate combination of technologies in online components of formal courses and online collaboration projects.

Appendix 5 Course principles

This online facilitation course adopts an active and experiential approach to learning. The course is based on the following principles.

Fostering online learning communities

This course fosters the capacity to build online learning communities and communities of practice within the context of courses and conferences. This course is also designed to provide participants with an experience at engagement in an online learning community. Online learning communities are encouraged through developing online interaction and learning conversations amongst participants. Acknowledging, valuing, respecting and accommodating diversity as a combination of similarities and differences plays a central role in fostering and maintaining online learning communities. The course creates awareness of the benefits of online facilitation as a step towards becoming leaders of online learning communities.

While the Facilitating Online course mostly uses online discussion chat and e-mail, it also introduces the opportunities afforded by Web 2.0 technologies for developing and maintaining online learning communities.

Playful learning

The course uses play as a bridge to learning by attempting to make learning fun. Playful learning involves participants taking small risks, playing with ideas, keeping an open mind and making connections where they are not obvious. Participants are encouraged to express their creativity through developing their ability to challenge, question and explore.

Reflective learning

A key principle underpinning this course is the emphasis on reflection as a learning process. Reflection on your own learning helps you to take ownership of your learning process. Articulating your reflections makes your thinking available for comment and feedback.

Reflection is an important facet in the development of online facilitation skills and strategies required for the establishment and maintenance of online learning communities. Reflection enables participants to become aware of themselves both as learners and as facilitators.

