

OLL TPD INTERVIEW PROTOCOL—2007-2008
ONLINE APPLICATION DEVELOPER

This protocol is for use with TPD developers. Ideally, you will have sixty minutes for this interview.

Introduction

The following is a suggested introduction. When you begin the interview, make these points, but use your own words for a more personal introduction.

You may know that we are working on a project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education to look at characteristics associated with prevalent types of online learning and identify promising practices that are associated with improved participant outcomes. One of our priorities in this project is to learn more from you about *the features and capabilities of your online TPD offering, as well as how the application is implemented.*

Before we start, I need to have you review and sign this consent form. [AFTER THE RESPONDENT REVIEWS CONSENT FORM] Do you have any questions before we get started?

Curriculum Design

Features of curriculum (subject matter / grade level, synch / asynch, pedagogical approach, strategies for maximizing student access, technologies used, hardware / bandwidth)

1. What is the goal of this TPD (Curriculum goals, etc.)?
2. Please describe the curriculum design features of this online TPD (e.g., synchronous vs asynchronous; technologies used).
3. What assumptions were made in the design of this online TPD program? What did reality show in this regard?
4. What features of the curriculum are unique in this TPD program, as compared with programs with similar educational intention? Why?
5. What success factors were considered in the design of this online TPD program? Why?
6. If you were to redesign this online TPD program, what features of the curriculum would you change? Why?
7. What means (e.g., forum, email, chat, voice chat, video conferences) are used to support online interaction between facilitators, participants, and / or facilitators and participants? What are the facilitator and student responses to these forms of communication (do participants like chatting, video, etc.)? What do you think is the right combination of these tools?

Type / frequency of interaction between facilitators, facilitators and students, among students

8. Please describe the type / frequency of interaction between facilitators, facilitators and participants, and among participants in this online TPD program.
9. Does the program promote face-to-face interaction between facilitators, participants, and/or facilitators and participants? When? Why? Does it add value to the program? If there is no face-to-face interaction, why not? Is there any advantage or disadvantage to a purely online model?
10. If there is some kind of blending (online / onsite) from the interaction perspective, how is that mix? Does it add value to the program?

Curriculum Development Process

11. What is the structure of a typical curriculum module, or unit, of this online TPD program? How many weeks does it take a participant to study a typical module?
12. Please describe the main steps in the curriculum development process of a typical curriculum module. For each step, explain what roles are assumed by staff members, by consultants, and by outsourcers. Also, provide a typical timeline for the curriculum development process.
13. Does technology play an important role in the curriculum development process? Please explain which steps are technology mediated and the kind of tools used.
14. If you had the opportunity to change the curriculum development process, what would you change and why?
15. Do you consider the curriculum development process followed in the creation of the online TPD program to be cost-effective? Why?

Financing Model

16. How is new development of the following financed: Program areas, courses or content, tools / technologies, training materials?
17. What are the up front and ongoing costs of implementation for the developer (tech installation and maintenance, training and support, etc.) and the customer (stipends, release time, substitutes, instructor training, program coordination, matriculation fees)?
18. Is the implementation usually paid for by the customer (district, school or individual), a grant, or by a third party? If paid by LEA, from what budget(s)?
19. Can / does this program scale to reach all who need it? What are the challenges or barriers to sustainability and scalability?

Quality Assurances

20. Do you have a QA process or metric for assessing the quality of your curriculum? Pedagogy? Assessments? Please describe.
21. Do participants and / or instructors fill out course evaluations? Please describe.
22. Is there a review process in place for rethinking course design based on performance and evaluation results? Please describe.
23. Do you have criteria and/or ways to assess the quality of instruction? Please describe.
24. How does your program evaluate participants in terms of: participation, completion & retention rates, formative and / or final assessments, learning outcomes, transfer of learning to classroom instruction?

Instructor Recruitment and Pay

25. Please describe how instructors are selected.
26. Are instructors paid or otherwise compensated?
27. Are there specific knowledge, skills, and competencies that candidate instructors must have to be selected?
28. Please describe the content, length, and structure of the training instructors receive.
29. How many instructors, facilitators, moderators, and other staff conduct a typical course? What kind of interaction is promoted between instructors (formal / informal, periodic every x days)? Please describe.

Enrollment Process and Policies

30. Who is eligible for this online TPD program? Why were these criteria defined? Please describe any eligibility requirements associated with participation.
31. What dissemination strategies were considered in the design of the program?
32. How do participants enroll in the online TPD program? Do participants decide to enroll themselves or are they selected or nominated? Do participants enroll as individuals, in teams, or either?
33. What type of participant was the online TPD program designed for? Which design or implementation principles, if any, take into consideration the demographic users of the program?
34. What is the maximum number of participants per section in this online program? What is the recommended instructor: student ratio? What is the minimum number of students required for running the TPD successfully?

User Services and Support

35. What academic support services were designed specially for this TPD program? (e.g., program orientation, time management, online technology support, on the Web FAQ, virtual study groups, online facilitation, peer mentoring, peer coaching, etc.).
36. What types of technical support were designed for this TPD program? How were these services to be provided? If you had to redesign these services, what would you change?
37. Are there support services for online facilitators and / or for program administrators?

Facilitators/Barriers

38. What barriers / facilitators of teachers' participation were considered in the design of the online TPD program?
39. Is access to technology and/or technology fluency by participating teachers considered a facilitator or a barrier in the implementation of this online TPD program? Why?
40. Are there time requirements (e.g., X number of hours per week), interaction requirements (e.g., online / onsite synchronous activities), technology requirements (e.g., the use of X browser or software) for effective participation in the online TPD program? Which requirements facilitate the process and which become barriers for participation?
41. What is the most significant barrier for teacher participation in this program? What could be done in order to overcome it?
42. Does the program promote / give support to virtual study groups, online learning communities or other networking strategies for overcoming participation barriers from the part of participating teachers?
43. What role do online tutors play concerning barriers for participation from the part of teachers?
44. What barriers may have online tutors in their facilitation role? Comment on situational, technological, pedagogical or other types of barriers for facilitating online learning by the part of participating teachers.

Strengths and Weaknesses

45. What are the expected gains, if any, of taking this online TPD program for participants? Of facilitating in this program for instructors? Of offering the TPD for the site? What kind of changes / gains in participant learning, and/or in their teaching performance, do you expect to see with this online TPD program?
46. When this program was designed, what challenges were foreseen implementing this online TPD program for the site(s), the instructor(s), and the participants? Why?
47. Besides the use of online technologies, what are major differences between this online program and similar face-to-face courses? Major similarities?

Instructor Background and Characteristics

48. Was this online TDP designed for participants and facilitators with another day job? Does this matter in this program? Why?
49. What is the ideal expertise / knowledge an instructor should have to teach this online TPD program? What are the minimal requirements for an instructor?
50. How much preparation / time should an instructor spend preparing for this online TPD program? How much time does an instructor spend weekly on TPD program delivery / interaction with participants?
51. What do you think are the characteristics of a good online instructor?

Closing

52. Is there anything else you would like to add about your applications design and / or implementation?

Before you leave, be sure to ask for information to identify one typical site and one exemplary site where the offering has been implemented. Also be sure to ask for any available data on participant outcomes / achievement.