Online Trainer Tips from Mark Lindquist, Port Resources, Inc.

Since March 30th, Mark Lindquist has been using Zoom to teach every day, Monday through Friday, for all their workforce-related training curricula (except not the MHSS yet). We thought we would share what he has learned over the past few weeks for folks considering teaching virtually. Here’s Mark:

- Registration Processes: We have learned that it’s important to make it as easy as possible for staff to be part of the training session. Thus, we have had them create a FREE Zoom profile, name and e-mail that is easiest for them to link to from home or work. Most people are using a personal e-mail. Also, we’ve learned that e-mails with underscores are problematic. If the person is using a Smart Phone they need to download the Zoom app.

- The training session link is sent out at 3:00pm the day prior to training, and the day of the session they receive a text message reminder 30-40 minutes prior to the class beginning. Everyone is told to link to the session five minutes before the session to check their microphones and speaker volume.

- I, as the instructor, have done all this work prior to the class, as it’s important for people to participate and not be scheduled last minute for the workplace or have other parental duties.

- Session Length – I have found that a two hour session is great. I’ve also done several four hour sessions with a 20 minute break (pause in the discussions). Each slide show has to be edited to ensure that participants can view the content whether they are on Smart Phones, Tablets, Kindles, laptops, or desktop computers. I’ve adjusted all backgrounds in the presentations to be lighter in tone and have increased Font Size to no less that 24 (Times New Roman). This font choice and size is not typically used in presentations, but for viewing remotely it seems to be helpful.

- Zoom Classroom Management: After participants have checked their volume. I mute all microphones and provide a basic description of how the training will unfold and the topics. Prior to the class, I e-mail all the handouts to participants’ work location, specifically so they can print them at no cost to themselves. Once I have completed this review I turn the microphones back on and take attendance of each present. I indicate that on their control bar they have a CHAT button that they can click should they have questions. I also indicate that I will stop several times during the presentation to “field” questions, or to generate a topic discussion.

- **Special Notes:**

    - With time precious during the presentation I only open the microphones addressing participants by name asking if they have anything to add to the topic such as relevant example, or a specific question. This takes a bit of management for a couple of training sessions but quickly becomes quite easy for the instructor.
    - Another trick before ever unmuting microphones is to click off the slide show presentation (I usually minimize it) to keep the technology from locking the slide you are on. If I have handouts of materials they will be looking at together with

me, I have these all loaded and minimized on the desktop so I can easily open them.
    - I have done classes with four to ten participants, and I don't advise more than 10.

- Attendance: We have made it Mandatory that each person registered attend unless they have become ill. Each course we are teaching can be completed in no more than four sessions and over a two week period. For the MHSS, I would think that it would take a minimum of 2.5 hours per module (approximately 30 hours).
- Testing: We do not test electronically as yet. Our plan is to have each course at the end of the health crisis be a three-hour classroom review experience with testing to finalize the certification process. So we are saying that folks are trained with pending certification in our data management system. I do have the capability to do electronic testing, but as yet have not worked out all the policies we will need to ensure testing integrity.
- Finally, at the end of each session I link with each student 1:1 for a couple of minutes before the class is dismissed. This is mostly a check in and final opportunity to bring questions to light and to ensure they have been present for the full class.
- Evaluations: I mail these out to each student and include a stamped self-addressed envelope for them to be returned within.

Port Resources reports that attendance has actually been better than the regular classroom. Participation has been awesome and Mark has received many e-mails from people expressing thanks and even a few questions that arose from a previous session, which he's then able to address in the next session. They have trained over 60 participants this month.