

## BEST PRACTICES FOR TECHNOLOGY TRAINERS

The ways in which we work, play and communicate are changing so quickly that it can be difficult to keep up! It may seem like as soon as you are comfortable with something, it changes, becomes obsolete or a new version comes out. This is especially true with respect to technology and its myriad of uses. The rapidly evolving nature of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century demands that we continuously learn, unlearn and relearn.

Incorporate these best practices into your trainings to ensure a pleasant learning process for both you (the trainer!) and your students:

- ✓ **Encourage life-long learning!** As a trainer, you must work to keep your skills sharp because technology is always changing. Encourage your students to do the same!
- ✓ Training is fun! And learning should be fun too! Incorporate **interactive games and activities** into classes to keep everyone engaged.
- ✓ Active minds learn better. Learning should be as **hands on** as possible.
- ✓ People are most excited to learn when they understand the **relevancy** of the content to their daily lives. Find out more about your students' interests, occupations and backgrounds and build in examples and activities that will appeal and have meaning to them.
- ✓ **Smaller class sizes** mean fewer distractions and more one-on-one attention for students. You may find it helpful to limit classes to twelve students, especially if you are training alone.
- ✓ **Encourage questions** and let students **“play”** with new skills on their own.
- ✓ **Bite size pieces** are easier to digest. Breaking up material into smaller units can make content less intimidating for new or weary computer users.
- ✓ **Admit when you don't know something.** It is ok! You may even consider asking the class if someone else knows the answer. This encourages cooperative learning and participation.
- ✓ **Be flexible!** Students' needs are more important than lesson plans & time constraints.
- ✓ **Partner up with another trainer whenever possible.** Having a second trainer can help you field questions and provide people with the one-on-one help that they want.

- 📖 Encourage students to **ask stupid questions, cheat and make mistakes!** You can even explicitly state these guidelines as “rules” at the beginning of class. This can help students feel comfortable and lighten the mood!
- 📖 **Bring in volunteers and subject matter experts.** You cannot be everything for everyone so rely on outside help when you lack expertise or are uncomfortable teaching a certain topic.

An empty class does not benefit anyone! Low class attendance can also seriously drain your morale and enthusiasm for training. As you plan and promote technology trainings to your local community, consider these best practices:

- 📖 **Asses your community’s needs and wants** to determine class offerings.
- 📖 **Engage community leaders** (religious leaders, activists, politicians, small business owners, school administrators etc...) throughout the planning and promotion phases. If people feel involved in the development of a program, they are more likely to be supportive of your efforts in the future!
- 📖 In low-income areas, technology is not the #1 priority. Food, shelter, jobs and education are most critical so remember that **technology really is the means to a greater end for your students!** Again- consider and emphasize **RELEVANCY** as you plan!
- 📖 **Partner with local non-profits, schools and agencies** that share your mission and target audience. Avoid competition and replication of services.
- 📖 **Do NOT assume “If you build it, they will come!”** Reaching out into the community, identifying partners outside the library and sharing your vision with others are critical to success!
- 📖 **Successful promotion is more than posting flyers!** Utilize partnerships and get creative!
- 📖 **Personally remind students** that they have signed up for or expressed interest in a certain class. Everyone is busy, and a personal invitation can work wonders!
- 📖 **Create a policy re. absenteeism** to encourage attendance at classes.

GOOD LUCK!