Best Practices for Designing and Teaching a P&ED Program

I.   Designing a P&ED Program

Clearly State Goals

Think about what your key learning objectives for the program are and clearly state them in your program description.

Identify Key Take-Aways

Align all learning activities with your program goals, giving consideration to what participants will be able to apply to their professional and personal lives after they complete the program. When designing activities, use a holistic approach that not only focuses on content, but user experience.

Pre-work

Ensure that the amount of pre-work is appropriate for a P&ED program.

   - Programs with 8 hours of content, pre-work < 2 hours to complete.

   - Programs spanning 10-14 hours of content, pre-work < 1-3 hours to complete. -

   Programs lasting 17 hours or more, pre-work < 4 hours.

Include a succinct welcome email explaining the benefit of completing the pre-work and giving a brief background about the readings.

Program Cadence/Module Formation

Chunking content into easily digestible modules is a highly effective strategy for enhancing comprehension, retention, and participant attention. Include regular check-ins after each segment to ensure that there are no pending questions. Ensure that personal time for reflection is included as part of the sessions.

Asynchronous Materials

Consider creating videos for sections of your program that are heavy on theory, so that active learning and discussion, based on those materials, can be maximized during class time. Assigned as pre-work, an asynchronous video can also be used to level-set participants to reduce review time in more advanced programs. Contact Dean Marchildon at dean_marchildon@fas.harvard.edu for more information if interested.

Ice Breakers

Opening the program with an engaging activity that gets participants to quickly know each other is essential. However, be mindful that in a program with 25+ participants, having everyone state their name, where they're from, what they do, and a fun fact, one-by-one, can lose people's attention and be time-consuming, so be creative and consider an activity with small groups to keep things moving. Some examples include:

- Elevator pitch practice—Pair up and take turns giving a brief elevator pitch about your company/product/service. Provide feedback to each other.
- Storytelling: Have participants share a brief personal or work-related story, focusing on a particular theme or topic.
- Speed networking - Set a timer for 2-3 minutes for pairs to chat then rotate partners. Keep it fast-paced so people meet more people.

Active Learning

Active learning is a cornerstone of P&ED sessions. Participants have the opportunity to learn by thinking, discussing, practicing, struggling with challenges, making decisions, and offering solutions in simulated and real-world situations. Participants can think individually and then discuss in pairs or group problem solve, and engage in case study discussions, simulations, debates, and classroom response systems with voting questions. The instructor seamlessly shifts from lecture to facilitation of activities and discussions.

Post-Program Resources

Share post-program resources for participants to reference after the program. Examples are slide decks or summary documents with key frameworks and recommended readings.

Welcome Video

A "Welcome Video" can introduce you to your participants and your program goals ahead of the session and be assigned as pre-work. Contact Dean Marchildon at dean_marchildon@fas.harvard.edu for more information if interested.

Know Your Audience

You will have access to a list of participants and their occupations, titles, etc., close to the start of the program (the enrollment period ends a week prior to the start of the program). This could help you to meet your participants where they are and make minor adjustments, tailoring the learning to their needs. Our programs attract diverse, global audiences. Refrain from colloquial language and sarcasm when teaching as some participants may not understand your intended meaning. Likewise, speak slowly and clearly as there will be non-native speakers in your sessions.

During the Session/Teaching your Program

Share your goals (again!) with participants at the start of the class. <u>You also must reference any assigned pre-reading or pre-work during the program</u>. If participants are spending time reviewing materials or preparing for an exercise, they expect to discuss and apply it during the program. If you do not expect to reference pre-work material during the session, then don't assign it. It may be better as a post-program resource or not included at all.

On the other hand, It is likely that several participants will not have completed their pre-work. It is good practice to give a 5-minute overview of an assigned reading, case, or video, as a review to those who have read it and ensure those who have not read or seen the material will still be able to contribute to the discussion. Do not take away valuable time during the session for reading materials that were assigned as pre-work. You *may* suggest that participants take time during breaks or lunch to prepare for upcoming pre-work discussions, although this cuts into valuable networking time.

Create a Safe and Inclusive Environment

Establish clear ground rules and expectations around respectful discussion and participation. Address issues like confidentiality, avoiding personal attacks, being mindful of different perspectives, etc. Establish expectations at the beginning of the session. Use mediation techniques and give feedback in response to discriminatory remarks.

Foster A Sense of Community

Encourage networking that is relevant to the program format. Engage in the networking and introductions discussion board on Canvas—share your introduction and respond to participants' comments. This can encourage broader participation on Canvas.

II. Teaching an Online P&ED Program

Working Closely with the P&ED Technology Services Team

Our Technology Services Team works closely with instructors to deliver a seamless online experience for participants. They will meet with you prior to sessions to understand the cadence of your session and will either assist or train you in use of relevant technology. They will be available to troubleshoot and fix issues, facilitate if your instruction pivots, and assist with any unforeseen issues with participants.

Consultation Sessions with Teaching and Learning

Luis Poza-Garcia, Director of Course Design for Non-Credit Learning, is available for consultations and can assist you in leading up to a program to discuss best practices for developing program activities and teaching in the online environment.

Program Cadence

Online participants need more breaks than those on-campus. To ensure optimal engagement and well being for online participants, we recommend incorporating at least two 15-minute breaks for every 3.5 or 4-hour session. This practice promotes attentiveness, minimizes fatigue, and fosters a conducive learning environment for all attendees.

Zoom Background

A branded Zoom background will be provided for instructors, TAs, and the program team. This background must be used in order to clearly identify the teaching team and staff, as well as our brand both during the session, and in social media after the session as many participants post the class photo on their various platforms.

Breakout Sessions

Breakout groups can be created, for example, based on the participants' professional experience, organization, or country of origin. Always post chat instructions for each breakout activity or broadcast an instruction slide, and create group norms for breakout room discussions and share. Breakouts should have at least 3 participants if possible.

Establish the Right Mindset for Participation in an Online Program

Participants should be informed that active participation is essential for maximizing the benefits of an online program. This entails fully engaging in class sessions without distractions (such as multitasking), actively contributing to discussions, and offering thoughtful feedback to peers. Encouraging an attentive and engaged approach ensures a richer learning experience for all involved.

Hot Moments & Psychological Safety

Participants have signed and must abide by P&ED's Community Agreement. If there are any tense moments during a session, provide a break for students to rest and recharge or use Zoom tools to end an online session or mute a student (in extreme situations such as when a student is continuously yelling or screen sharing inappropriate imagery). The Technology Services Team will assist.