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Workforce Development
Helping You To Meet Your Workforce Challenges

Training the Next Generation:
How do you Feel about Online Programs?

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Education and training have undergone many changes. What types of changes? How do these changes affect the quality of educational programming? These changes are primarily due to advances in technology, which have transformed the traditional classroom. So what is the new outlook? The traditional method of face-to-face instruction is changing. Programs are integrating technology with materials and resources that address multiple learning styles. When we look at the use of technology, it encompasses the actual tools and equipment used to support training, the skills needed to develop and use the tools and equipment effectively and an understanding of the teaching and learning process.

When talking about technology, it is important to include hardware, software and networks that have become more complex through time, but are easier to navigate. The personnel involved are also included, who provide support and monitoring of technological services. This has become evident in our global society through the accessibility and utility of information. For example, technology can facilitate instruction with the use of audio soundtracks, PowerPoint presentations and videos through the distance-learning platform. Technology has not only improved classroom instruction, but has also expanded the idea of the classroom to enable people to learn from a virtual location. Therefore, distance learning has provided flexibility in allowing individuals to schedule classes that go along with personal and professional schedules and still receive quality instruction.

Some barriers to the use of technology in training concern the equipment and personnel training. The equipment necessary to implement technology has to be appropriate with the scope of the program and the intended use. Along

with this, personnel have to be in a place that can provide support when technical difficulties arise and intervene when there is a question about the content or application of a program. Therefore, it becomes necessary to consider the cost of providing these materials and services. Cost is the first major obstacle to integrating high quality technology in education and training.

Another barrier to the use of technology comes from what happens when there is a lack of support and training. Individuals feel that their workload increases as new technologies are added on top of their normal duties. It takes time for staff to become familiar with new programs and methods for inputting information that, in the end, will make their job easier. This transition directly affects the amount of support, staff and training necessary for success.

Establishing the types of personnel and training needed to integrate technology is critical to ensuring the success of a program. Some key issues to consider involve the ability for individuals to communicate, document and report information in a timely fashion, provide personal encouragement through instructional mentoring and establish roles and positions that may not have been present before. These considerations will have a huge impact

on the professional environment and the quality of instruction.

Solutions to ensuring the successful integration of technology involve the time and effort that individuals are willing to invest in themselves and the organization. Workshops help to educate and inform employees of the policies, procedures and strategies that are necessary to make technology beneficial. Continuous improvement for training programs is dependent upon how we integrate these opportunities in our daily routines. Knowledge of laws and regulations are necessary to protect the rights of both individuals and organizations. Quality cannot be substituted because of the quantity of information that is available due to the ease of access to information that technology provides. A learning management system will store and document all training that has taken place. It also provides the ability to facilitate communication by reporting all completed training, which includes score collection, content and organization of data that provides the ability to measure the program's success. Advances in technology are giving training programs immediate feedback to performers, a flexible learning schedule, virtual location and are customized to meet the needs of our shops.