Training of Trainers (ToT)
Developing Effective Laboratory Training Toolkit

Increasing Laboratory Learner Engagement

Learner engagement is important to increase the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our laboratory learners, especially in a virtual training environment. Within this resource, we will discuss what learning engagement is, the benefits that come from it, and the practices that you, as a laboratory trainer, can take to increase learner engagement.

What is learner engagement?

Learner engagement refers to the quality of learner participation before, during, and after training. This participation should align with the learning objectives, be inclusive, and motivate learners to interact further in laboratory training. Engagement provides interaction between the learner and the trainer, between the learner and the content, and between learner and learner.

Benefits of Learner Engagement

- **Motivation to learn:** Learner engagement motivates learners to actively participate in the laboratory training and encourage others to do so also.
- **Increase of completions:** Engaged learners are more likely to complete training assignments and provide valuable evaluation feedback.
- **Application of skill:** Learner engagement can increase learners' likelihood of applying a learned skill within their laboratory role.
- **Foster community:** Engaged learners often share experiences and learn from others' experiences, which can foster a community of practice.

Skills needed to promote learner engagement

Effective laboratory trainers should possess the following skills to promote learner engagement. These skills can build relationships and trust between you and the learners.

- **Open communication:** Ask open-ended questions to gain learners' understanding and encourage the sharing of real-world examples to keep learners engaged in the conversation.
- **Active listening:** Listen to what learners are sharing and acknowledge their point of view.
- **Adaptability:** Adjust content and delivery methods as needed to meet learners' needs.

How to engage learners before training

- **Conduct** a needs assessment, which can be performed through environmental scans, informational interviews, or surveys. This will help you determine the learner's needs and whether the activities are inclusive and accessible.
- **Set and communicate** clear laboratory training expectations for both you and the learner.
- **Provide** training materials such as resources, instructional videos, and job aids to prepare learners.
- **Encourage** learners to interact with the content and one another before the training through discussion boards.
- **Communicate** other training or assignments that must be completed prior to participating in the laboratory training.

How to engage learners during training

- **Open** with an attention-getter, such as a thought-provoking question, fact, or activity to capture curiosity and motivate learners to engage.
- **Create** interactivity by incorporating real-world examples, hands-on exercises, knowledge checks, case studies, videos, and question-and-answer sessions.
- **Break up** content into digestible pieces to avoid cognitive overload. This will also promote more opportunities for learners to ask questions.
- **Provide** specific feedback to learners throughout the training to help maintain active engagement and improve performance.
- **Ensure** the text and graphics effectively support your content rather than distract from it. Keep each slide focused on one key idea.

How to engage learners after training

- **Provide** opportunities for continuous learning that reinforce and strengthen new concepts or skills learned.
- **Allow** learners to give feedback about the training. This information can increase engagement and improve training materials for future laboratory training.
- **Encourage** learners to connect with one another by email or other training platform. Learners can share their experiences and learn from others.
- **Share** upcoming training opportunities with learners. This allows learners to stay connected with the products and services that you offer.

Please note: These engagement practices are not exhaustive. We encourage you to research and implement engagement practices based on your learner's needs.