

UK Council for Psychotherapy

Guidelines for the use of online training

These guidelines, created by the Education, Training and Practice Committee are designed to assist UKCP Training Organisations to fulfil the Generic Standards of Education and Training for Adults.

Introduction

In the age of ever-increasing use of technology, it is clear that we need to ensure that an appropriate balance between live and online teaching can be reached for those training OMs who wish to utilise this medium, in order to maximise students' experience and learning.

This document gives a very brief description of the themes to be considered when planning online learning, and recommendations for its implementation. It relates specifically to point 8.9 in the Generic Adult SETs:

“Training organisations should have policies in place which govern the extent and the type of technologies that are to be used in the delivery of training, for example the internet. Normally, distance teaching and learning using these technologies should not exceed 50 per cent of the total contact time. Distance teaching and learning technologies should not be used prior to face-to-face contact and a learning relationship has been established.”

Themes

Inter-personal Relationships

Online learning must not replace live learning (see clause 8.9 in SETs, above) and so, in terms of relationships between students, and between students and tutors can be added to by the use of online learning. However, relationships online are different and this factor needs to be attended to.

Communication Styles

Miscommunication in emails etc is a common phenomenon and in the sphere of online training this is no different. It is also clear that there are significant individual differences on comfort with this medium, just in the same way as some students will always phone with a question, others will email and others will wait until a live course day. Communication needs to be managed.

Measuring Participants

Another issue to be considered is how to measure a student's participation for online training

Autonomy

Research shows that online learning means that many different elements are within student's control including initiative, motivation, selecting resources, evaluation, interaction, cost-benefit ratio of learning. Students need to understand their level of autonomy.

The Tutors Role

It could be easy to presume that the tutor's role in an online environment is simpler than in a live classroom but this is not accurate. The role is different, and in some ways more complex and needs to be thoroughly thought through.

Access

Consideration needs to be given to how and when students may access the online learning environment to ensure compliance with diversity and equality requirements.

Problems

Consideration should be given to address potential problems such as anxiety and fear, technical problems, learner support and motivation.

Recommendations

- a) Programmes should be created based on solid principles, eg five stage model of e-moderation (Salmon, 2003) or Blackmore's etutor collaborative learning process (Blackmore et al, 2006) or Scenario-based learning (Blackiston, 2010)
- b) Consideration should be given to the appropriate blend of live training along with a combination of synchronous and/or asynchronous discussion
- c) Significant attention should be given to the issue of confidentiality given that self-disclosure is likely to increase and this information is stored electronically
- d) Tutor roles should be well defined and include specific roles of moderation and support for students who struggle for any reason (personal process, technology....)

Course designers and tutors should have studied the design and delivery of online courses, formally or informally but to a sufficient degree to inform their practice.

References

Blackiston, R. (2010) Scenario-Based E-Learning: Putting the Student in the Driver's Seat. Conference Proceedings for the 26th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching & Learning, in Madison, Wisconsin.

Blackmore, C., Tantam, D. & Van Deurzen, E. (2006) The role of the eTutor - Evaluating tutor input in a virtual learning community for psychotherapists and psychologists across Europe. *International Journal of Psychotherapy*. Vol 10(2), pp. 35-46

Salmon, G. (2003). *E-Moderating: The Key to Teaching and Learning Online* (3 ed.): Routledge Falmer.