Is eLearning Right for Your Organization?

By Mary Secor, Executive Director of Workplace Learning

More and more organizations are using eLearning technologies to deliver training. A recent survey of CPI Certified Instructors indicated that the reasons they chose to use CPI's *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention*® hybrid training (an eLearning delivery option) varied by organization, but often related to factors such as cost effectiveness, scheduling flexibility, ability to disseminate training to geographically dispersed audiences, reduction in classroom time, and participant convenience.

Evaluations from participants who recently completed a *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention*® hybrid training included much valuable feedback. Generally, participants appreciated the web-based portion of the course because it allows them to take more time to learn the concepts and think about how to use the concepts in their jobs. Some participants also like the fact that the training is organized into modules, and feel that the videos included in the training provide excellent examples of situational scenarios.

Over 86 percent of the Certified Instructors who completed the survey indicated that they would recommend *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention*® hybrid training to other Instructors. However, we also learned that there are challenges associated with using eLearning as a delivery option.

Based on our Instructors' comments and experiences, we offer the following recommendations for implementing eLearning as a training option.

Consider Whether Your Organization Has the Capabilities to Deliver eLearning.

- Does your organization have enough computers for all participants?

- Are the computers accessible to participants when they need them?

- Can your organization's computer network support multiple users at one time, or does the system slow down to a crawl?

Many of these issues can be addressed with effective planning and help from your IT department and CPI's technology staff. Just remember that it will take extra time to plan and implement your first hybrid training.

Consider the "Technology Literacy" of Your Participants.

- Do your participants have experience taking courses online?

- Do they take online learning seriously?

- Are they comfortable using technology?

Individuals new to online learning often underestimate the time and effort it takes to complete online assignments. They also wait until the last minute. Be aware of "weekend warriors," and prepare all participants ahead of time. Help them organize their learning by suggesting that they complete modules by certain dates, and offer support to learners who aren't comfortable using technology.

Consider Your Own Capabilities and Expectations Regarding eLearning.

- Are you comfortable using technology?

- Can you adjust your training style to focus more on facilitating application exercises and hands-on activities, and less on teaching terms and definitions and providing examples?

- Do you have the time to set up your class and monitor your class online?

- Can you problem solve the user errors and technology problems that often occur with eLearning technologies?

Delivering training using eLearning technology requires changes to what trainers do and how they train in a traditional classroom. This is why CPI created an Instructor training module specifically for hybrid Instructors. Class preparation includes setting up the class online and assisting participants with questions and problems as they complete the web-based portion of the training.

Classroom training involves more facilitated discussions and application exercises. The most common complaints we hear from participants is that their Certified Instructor spent too much time repeating the concepts that were included in the web-based training and did not provide enough hands-on, application-based practice.

Hybrid training offers Certified Instructors another option for delivering training. As with any training option, it's important to conduct an initial assessment to determine whether the training option fits the needs of the organization, the learners, and the Instructors who conduct the training. If you're interested in learning more about whether eLearning is right for your organization, call CPI's Workplace Learning Team at **877.877.5930**.