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Blended Learning Module for Cleveland State University Campus Tour Guides

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BLENDED LEARNING MODULE FOR CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

TOUR GUIDES

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A Major Project

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State University in partial fulfillment of

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MASTER OF EDUCATION

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Committee:

Dr. Fei Gao, Chair/Advisor

Dr. Gary Benjamin , Co-chair/Advisor

ABSTRACT

Dr. Fei Gao & Dr. Gary Benjamin-- Advisors

The purpose of this project was to research and create a blended learning program for the Cleveland State University Campus Tour Guide program. Combining in person training elements, as well as a newly developed 4 module online training program to give more flexibility and increase the interest of the students in the Tour Guide program. The training modules, which were created in Blackboard, allowed students to use their own pace as they navigated through each of the lessons that corresponded with vital information they should know in order to be successful in their jobs.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Fei Gao & Dr. Gary Benjamin for all of their help, encouragement and understanding and for being incredible instructors and keeping me engaged in the learning process throughout my degree program. Working full-time and doing a degree program part-time was made so much easier because I was able to look forward to the courses I was taking with each of them. I would also like to thank my employers, at BGSU and Cleveland State for supporting and encouraging me to pursue my degree. Most importantly I'd like to thank my husband Ian, who has been so very patient as we have gone through multiple moves, planning a wedding, buying and renovating a home, all while I am ducking out of those commitments to study and work on research. Without this support team, reaching my goal would have never been possible.

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Section I: Background and Goals

Cleveland State University is a four year public University, which was founded in 1964 and is located in the heart of downtown Cleveland Ohio. The University has traditionally been viewed as merely a commuter college and many have the perception that it functions in the same way as a community college. However, Cleveland State is a moderately selective four year institution that works to serve a diverse student population of students. According to the University website, the 17,730 students are made up of 27 percent minorities, of which two-thirds are African American and more than 1,400 international students. Of these students the average age is 27 and about one-third of its student population are in graduate school or law school. Cleveland State's student population is not the typical make-up of a public four year institution in Ohio, and the University prides itself on the fact that it is an institution working to educate a variety of learners. In order to accommodate the needs of the student population, Cleveland State University offers over 250 e-learning courses each semester.

As Cleveland State University enters its 50 year anniversary as a state institution, the University is looking to recruit and enroll more students than ever and enhance the student profile of those incoming students. In order to recruit the most academically prepared class, recruitment efforts through the Office of Admissions at Cleveland State University were ramped up and an important aspect of recruiting students is the campus visit and campus tour. Many college students cite their visit to a college campus as their deciding factor in ultimately choosing that institution; which puts pressure on campuses to really shine during their visit programs.

As the Manager of the Visit Experience at Cleveland State University, I manage a staff of 20 campus tour guides and 30 Orientation Leaders that provide campus support for incoming visitors to Cleveland State University. Because the campus tour is one of the most important

factors in the college decision process, it is important that the campus tour guides are not only knowledgeable about the University, but also know how to make a great first impression. More than 6,000 students visit Cleveland State University's campus over the course of the admissions recruiting cycle year and each of these visits include a campus tour. On these tours students also bring along parents, guardians and family members that serve as influencers on their decisions. These campus tours serve as a vital selling point for many students and it is important for each and every tour and tour guide to be as impactful as possible. Campus tour guides need to be able to appeal to a wide variety of visitors and also know all of the ins and outs of the institution.

With the former training program at Cleveland State University (CSU), tour guides were given a manual and asked to shadow two campus tours before giving their own tour to the graduate assistant. After this small training program, the tour guides were allowed to give tours to the incoming visitors and serve as a representative of the entire Office of Admissions. When I began as the tour guide supervisor in January 2014, I quickly noticed the major flaw in this minimalistic approach to a training program. The tour guides were given no evaluations to ensure they have opened the manual they are provided and there were no tests of knowledge to gauge what they have learned from shadowing the tours of their fellow tour guides. Once they had completed the training, they were trusted to interact with the prospective students and their families with no formal examination of what they have learned. There was also no inquiry as to whether their conversations were in line with the messaging, vision and overall goals of the entire Office of Admissions. The error of this training is:

1. The tour guides did not interact with one another very much because they only shadow two tours.
2. The tour guides were not evaluated properly.

3. There was no real training in place to ensure they know the expectations of the office or the information the Office of Admissions seeks to pass along to its guests.

For my final project, I created a blended learning training program that teaches the Cleveland State University tour guides the following:

-   Expectations of their position

-   History of the University

-   The Tour Guide Uniform

-   Virtual Tour Route

-   Tour Guide Discipline Policy

-   Tour Etiquette

-   Conflict Management

-   CSU Admissions Standards and Policies

-   CSU Mission Statement

-   How to handle difficult questions

The need for this training stemmed from the fact that the University as a whole has adapted to the unique needs of our current students by providing a large amount of online courses to fit the schedules and time constraints on a commuter campus, but the former training program for the Cleveland State University tour guides had not adapted and the program needed some updating. The new training program has an online module that covers each of the topics, followed by a quiz to test the knowledge of the student tour guide. The module also includes discussion boards for the tour guides to connect with other new tour guides from their hiring cohort.

The main objective of this project was to develop and implement a new training program for CSU tour guides that would accomplish the following:

1. Increase the knowledge of Cleveland State University amongst the campus tour guides

2. Enhance the CSU campus tour experience for visitors

3. Create an evaluation of learning outcomes for tour guides

4. Introduce a blended learning program that fits the needs of the students at Cleveland State University.

In order to reach the proposed learning outcomes, the researcher planned to use either GoToTraining or another online classroom module creation tool such as Blackboard that is either free to use or has the cost covered by the Cleveland State University Office of Admissions. In addition to the creation of the training module, the researcher created evaluation tools based on the information taught during the online training course, virtual training manual and the shadow tours that each tour guide must complete. The evaluation tools will be given not only to the new tour guides going through the online training program, but also to the veteran tour guides who have also completed the new online module. Administering the assessments to the veteran tour guides helped to gauge if new information is presented in this training program.

Literature review

Blended learning was chosen for this training program and for the literature review. Blending learning will be defined, as well as its components of asynchronous and synchronous learning. In addition to showing the research backing the benefits of blended learning, the motivation factors for learners will be examined through John Keller's ARCS model of instructional design.

According to Garrison (2003), blended learning will have a transformative impact on higher education, but how exactly is blended learning defined? "At its simplest, blended learning is the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences. There is considerable intuitive appeal to the concept of integrating the strengths of synchronous (face-to-face) and asynchronous (text-based Internet) learning activities. At the same time, there is considerable complexity in its implementation with the challenge of virtually limitless design possibilities and applicability to so many contexts" (Garrison 2003, p.96). Instead of simply moving towards a training program that is completely online or just adding in irrelevant online components to the training that do not add to the learning process, Garrison states that blended learning must be the correct mixture of learning face to face and enhancing the overall learning experience by allowing some of the learning to be done asynchronously. The need for blending learning programs comes from the change that the web 2.0 tools that are being used every day due to the increasing changes in technology. "The changes in technologies are driving changes in human behavior, interactions, and knowledge acquisition. The paradigms for learning have already evolved beyond traditional classroom models to synchronous and asynchronous, interactive, and collaborative learning, which is further extended by Web 2.0 tools and social networking approaches" (Gunawardena 2008, p.3). As educators and instructors for

students, whether in a traditional classroom setting or training for job responsibilities, it is important to be able to meet students where they are. In fact, it is the responsibility of those in higher education to introduce "learning strategies which cater to different client groups using forms of delivery that increase access to learning opportunities. In particular, there are demands for the university sector to provide for a larger and more diverse cross-section of the population, to cater for emerging patterns of educational involvement which facilitate lifelong learning and to include technology-based practices in the curriculum" (Hicks, Reid, George 2001)." Providing those opportunities to the student population at Cleveland State University means giving them opportunities to cater learning to their own busy schedules. Thus far, the challenges in blended learning and online courses is the need of "online learners to be both together and apart—and to be connected to a community of learners anytime and anywhere, without being time, place, or situation bound" (Garrison 2004, p 96).

Asynchronous learning is at the heart of blended learning programs because it is a concept that allows for more flexibility for the learners than that of just a synchronous learning environment. "As opposed to traditional instructor-led training or even distance learning that centers on teleconferencing and online presentations, asynchronous e-learning occurs in an environment where a single learner interacts directly with content via a technology system, maximizing flexibility in timing and access for the learner by allowing learner control of pace, schedule, and location" (Edwards 2008, p.84). Asynchronous learning is when online learners are able to go through a lesson at their own pace and utilize discussion boards and posts to interact with other students who may not be online at the same time. "Students may spend more time refining their contributions, which are generally considered more thoughtful compared to synchronous communication" (Hrastinski 2008). In contrast, synchronous learning happens

when students or users are in the learning environment at the same time. This is less flexible for users and more closely related to the experience of face to face or in person lesson because it requires for the students to all coordinate schedules in order to interact with one another in real time. Synchronous learning must be used in some instances such as the shadowing of the actual campus tour, which is where blending learning comes from because it combines both styles of learning to best suit the learners and provides more than one type of learning environment.

While asynchronous learning can be a major benefit to students, a major challenge of asynchronous learning environments is that of designing a module that will get the learner motivated to engage and participate in the learning experience "Motivation in traditional learning environments does not come from design, but rather from unpredictable dynamic characteristics of the learning environment- the wit and personality of the instructor, social contact and the expectations of peers, and real time adjustments by students and instructors to the immediacy of the teaching moment. Unfortunately, these motivation factors are absent from asynchronous e-learning" (Edwards 2008, p. 84) In the online setting of an asynchronous lesson, the tone, instant feedback, and real time collaborations are not able to be present. Knowing the experience of in person courses will not be easy to mimic, it is important for asynchronous lessons to find ways to motivate learners by presenting similar opportunities to that of an in person lesson. There are several ways that online courses can introduce a more collaborative setting, such as creating discussion topics and boards and making the lessons relevant to the student's personal lives and experiences.

In order to better understand motivation and how to motivate learners, it is important to examine the ARCS Model of Motivational Design that was developed by John Keller. Keller's Model of Motivational Design incorporates a number of theories related to motivation and

education and outlines four components to keep learners engaged. Those four strategies are attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. In addition to the four strategies, Keller broke down each strategy into 3 subcategories. Attention strategies are "strategies for arousing and sustaining curiosity and interest" (Fitzgerald, Branch, 1999, p. 89) and can be seen as the exciting elements in the training program that would peak the interest of a/the learner. It will be easier for the learner to want to complete the training module if the module is able to capture their interest and intrigue at some level. Within attention, there are varying ways to capture the attention of the learner, which include perpetual arousal, inquiry arousal and variability. Perpetual arousal refers to "providing a novelty, surprise, incongruity or uncertainty" for the learners (Fitzgerald, Branch, 1999, p. 90) This can be any type of out of the ordinary surprise that goes away from the norm of what they would expect to see can gain leaner's interest of our pure curiosity and intrigue. Inquiry arousal differs from perpetual arousal because inquiry arousal gives the student or learner an opportunity to solve a problem and apply things they have learned. This can be a test of knowledge or assessment in the middle of learning, but requires the learner apply information gained in the lesson. The last subset of attention is variability. Variability refers to utilizing a "range of methods and media to meet students varying needs" (Fitzgerald, Branch, 1999, p. 90). This can be accomplished by switching up the assessment measures and ways the information is presented, such as moving from a PowerPoint lecture to incorporating videos and other multimedia in order to keep the lesson interesting.

The next approach in the ARCS Model is relevance, which refers to strategies that "link to the learner's needs, interests and motives" (Fitzgerald, Branch, 1999, p. 90). Relevance strategies help answer for the learner why what they are learning matters to them and how they can use it in their lives. Within relevance, three ways to show relevance to learners, according to

Keller is goal orientation, motive matching and familiarity. Goal orientation "presents the objectives and useful purpose of the instruction and specific methods for successful achievement" (Fitzgerald, Branch, 1999, p. 90). This can be done by outlining expectations for the course and explaining what the learners should expect from completing the module, similar to a syllabus. Motive matching helps to keep the learning relevant to the students because it allows for students to state the way they prefer to work and has the instructor work to make those accommodations, such as a student who would prefer to do assessments in person instead of on the online module. The last subcategory within relevance is familiarity, which allows for the learners to see the lesson through the lens of their own experiences and share their own experiences with the class. In the case of the tour guides, this would be a great opportunity for students to share their own experiences with various offices and services on campus with the other tour guides to help them learn about them and understand them better.

Confidence strategies come next in the ARCS model and are the strategies that "help students develop a positive expectation for successful achievement" (Fitzgerald, Branch, 1999, p. 90). In order for the learning environment to be effective, learners must have a clear understanding of how they can succeed. Some approaches for confidence in learners include knowing learning requirements, success opportunities, and having personal responsibility. Learning requirements serve to "inform students about learning and performance requirements and assessment criteria" (Fitzgerald, Branch, 1999, p. 90). In addition to providing a syllabus for the learning experience that outlines the learning outcomes and anticipated assessments, giving the learner some examples of what would make a great tour guide and providing them examples of those students helps to outline the learning requirements. Success opportunities are another way that the instructor can allow for the learner, by allowing them to get and present information

from other sources. This could be done by allowing the campus tour guides to gather information from informal interactions with other staff members in the Office of Admissions and presenting what they have learned. The last subset in confidence according to Keller is personal responsibility, which shows the learner exactly how much time and dedication they are putting into the learning module and having the instructor acknowledge the efforts. This could be done by showing the number of hours the learner is logged into the module and showing a correlation between the times spent learning and the outcomes on the assessment evaluations.

The last strategy in Keller's ARCS Model of Motivational Design is Satisfaction, which highlights the strategies that "provide extrinsic and intrinsic reinforcement for effort" (Fitzgerald, Branch, 1999, p. 90). Three ways to provide satisfaction for learners include intrinsic reinforcement, extrinsic rewards and equity. Intrinsic reinforcement is defined as the effort to "encourage and support intrinsic enjoyment of the learning experience" (Fitzgerald, Branch, 1999, p. 90). While training and learning modules might not be always viewed as a positive or exciting thing, having an outside source serve to show how important the training is, this could help the learner to view it in a positive way. Conversely, another way to encourage the positivity among the tour guides would be to provide actual awards or public recognition for those doing well in the training, which would classify as an extrinsic reward. The final way to instill satisfaction would be to allow the students to evaluate their learning experience and to be able to provide feedback that could shape future lessons. This method is equity; showing the learner that they have stake in the outcome of the program.

The motivation module is extremely important to follow in this setting because while it is a mandatory training program, keeping the learner happy and giving them a positive experience will in turn, work to the benefit of the employer because a satisfied employee is more likely to

have a positive impact in the workplace. Now that the motivating strategies have been outlined, to create a successful program, there are other important elements to successful blended learning as well.

According to Jared Carman (2005), there are five key elements that make for a successful blended learning program. The five elements that give way for successful blended learning programs are live events, online content, collaboration, assessment and reference materials. Live events, according to Cardman, are the synchronous experiences that all learners are able to have at the same time. These live events are what make the blended programs more content rich than simply having the program completely online. Online content refers to the asynchronous experiences that the learner has online and that are completed by each individual at their own pace. Collaboration is the next of the five elements and this is the ability for those participating in the blended learning program is communicate with one another during the program. This element as discussed before, is important in the motivation factor of the learners. Assessment is the need to gauge or measure the learning gained from the lesion. "Pre-assessments can come before live or self-paced events to determine prior knowledge, and post-assessments can occur following scheduled or online learning events to measure learning transfer" (Cardman 2005, p.2). The last of the elements would be reference materials, which consist of pieces of information for the learner to have to look back upon in order to improve the retention of information learned. For a program like the tour guide training this would be the hard copy of the tour guide manual for quick referencing back to important information.

Section II- Procedures

Investigation (Development) procedure

 The new blended learning training program for the Cleveland State University Office of Admissions tour guides was created with motivation factors and the keys to successful blended learning programs in mind. This online training program caters to the needs of the students in this urban college atmosphere by allowing them to complete portions of the training at home or on their own schedules, as many of the students commute and hold multiple part-time jobs. The end of the online module has one final assessment to gauge all of the learning from the course of the entire training program. Following the completion of the online module, each tour guide needed to complete:

- 2 tours where they shadowed an admissions presentation and campus tour.

- Giving the Graduate Assistant and the Manager of the Visit Experience the campus tour and be evaluated on their knowledge of:

  o Campus information

  o Public speaking ability

  o Accuracy of the tour route.

 Following this final tour, the tour guides would have successfully completed the blending learning program. The training consists of the following components:

<u>Asynchronous Learning</u>

- **Pre-Training Knowledge Assessment-** This assessment was given to gauge the level of knowledge the tour guides have prior to entering the online module. It covered a variety of questions from the tour guide position itself to history of the University and the campus tour route.

- **Learning/ Training Module with the following Sections. Tour Guides needed to complete at least 3 of the following modules each week which were grouped together in 4 sections, finishing all 12 modules within 4 weeks of their hire date.**
  - **Tour Guide Position Expectations-** This section covers the Cleveland State University Student Employment rules and general expectations set for the Cleveland State Tour Guides, such as how they should conduct themselves, information on what to do in the case they cannot make a shift and getting someone else to cover their set shifts.
  - **Tour Guide Uniform -** This section shows examples of what is appropriate and not appropriate outfits for the tour guides to wear during their shifts, with photos of current tour guides showing the "dos and don'ts." It also includes the specific tour guide uniform policy as outlined by the tour guide manual.
  - **Tour Guide Discipline Policy-** This section outlines the tour guide discipline policy, which states reasons that tour guides could possibly get points that would lead to their dismissal from the program.
  - **Tour Etiquette-** Tour etiquette covers the proper customer service that tour guides should be providing on their tour groups such as being good listeners, being polite, being loud, being genuine and other good behaviors to exhibit.
  - **History Of Cleveland State University-** This section goes over the history of How Cleveland State University became the University it is today, major awards and accomplishments of the University and its physical space in downtown Cleveland, Ohio.

- **Cleveland State Campus Tour Route-** This interactive section includes a step by step explanation of the Cleveland State Campus Tour Route with clickable stops that will outline talking points for each building and stop.

- **Conflict Management-** A how to guide on the proper way for Tour Guides to deal with conflicts that may arise within their tour groups or from outside parties interfering with their tours.

- **CSU Admissions Standards and Policies-** This section provides an overview of the CSU Admissions Standards, what is needed for a completed application, how long students should wait to hear on an admissions decision, and how business is conducted in the Undergraduate Admissions Office.

- **CSU Mission Statement-** An explanation of the University's mission statement and how that is reflected in the University's actions.

- **How to Handle Difficult Questions-** This section contains a list of scenarios where Tour Guides will get difficult questions that are often asked on tours and a number of responses they can choose. These responses will then explain why they are right or wrong ways to answer inquiries from visiting families and guests.

- **Emergency Procedures-** An overview of how to handle an emergency situation that may come up with a fellow tour guide or visiting family to prepare for situations that may arise.

- **Campus TG Website Introduction-** This is a virtual tour of the internal tour guide website will be given to show where the students can find various resources such as the tour guide directory, the tour guide manual, and the available tour shifts to pick up.

- **Assessments following each above section-** Small assessments are given to test the knowledge the tour guides learned in each section before they can proceed to the next to ensure the students are actually learning the information. Learners need to pass the small assessments with a score of 100% before moving to the next module.

- **Discussion boards for collaboration-** Discussion board topics are listed below on various discussion points for the tour guides to connect on.

Synchronous Learning

- **Shadowing 2 current campus tour guides tours-** The tour guides had to shadow at least 2 current tour guides on their normal shifts in order to get the feel for how the tours are conducted and walk the physical route.

- **Giving the campus tour to the Admissions Graduate Assistant and Manager of Visitor Experience-** To ensure the quality of the tours, the new tour guides also had to give the campus tour to the Graduate Assistants or the Manager of the Visitor Experience so that they could be approved to give tours for incoming guests.

- **Taking the "in person" final assessment-** The same assessment that they were given prior to starting the training was given following the online module so that they could compare if the tour guides learned more than they previously knew from the module. Tour Guides needed to pass the final assessment with a score of 100% before they were allowed to give tours to visitors. Guides were allowed to take the assessment at least 3 times before they needed to set up a meeting with the Manager of the Visit Experience to discuss steps to take to relearn the information, including shadowing an additional 2 campus tours.

- **Attending the Tour Guide Monthly Meetings-** Tour guide monthly meetings are required for all tour guides and they happen once a month in person. Guides are all expected to attend this informational meetings to keep up to date on current information.

All incoming and newly hired campus tour guides into the Cleveland State University Office of Admissions will be trained using the new blended learning program. In order to gauge the amount of learning and value from the new blended learning program, all veteran campus tour guides who have previously gone through the prior training program were also asked to do the pre-training assessment, new online training module and then given the post training exam as well. Giving both audiences the training program and evaluation was done in order to help gauge the effectiveness of the new training program.

All of the assessments for the program were created in order to gauge if the learner gained information, and also if they felt they were being motivated and challenged throughout the learning experience. Instead of simply stating back the facts that were given throughout the learning modules, which consisted of PowerPoint and video modules, the learners were asked to actually apply what they have learned in the various lessons. "The learner should shift away from simple recall of information and move toward application of the information to achieve some valuable outcome. (Edwards 2008, p. 84)" This will be achieved by switching from information recall to an application of knowledge assessment.

The discussion boards were created to connect the tour guides to one another in a community sense that did not previously exist. The following topics were used to create conversation and tour guides were instructed to add their own discussion threads as well. These topics also allowed for the tour guides to have stories and information to share with guests on things they

may have not experienced yet, but know about from other students.

Online Discussion Topics:

- What is your favorite CSU tradition that you like to share with others?

- Best places to study/ hangout on campus.

- What is your reason for choosing Cleveland State University?

- What am I expecting to gain from this student employment position?

- Best co-op or internship experiences you have heard of or experienced.

- Questions on the Admissions Policies or Standards?

- Favorite Cleveland State memory.

- On or Off Campus living; where have you lived and which do you prefer?

Additional discussion topics can be added throughout the training module based on the interactions of the tour guides or the trends the University is seeing. Tour Guides were asked to post a minimum of 3 times in each discussion thread, posting their own feedback and replying to at least 2 other students.

Budget

The initial budget for the training program included only the cost of the GoToTraining Software, which would be approximately $1,428 per year for a maximum of 25 enrolled participants. This initial budget cost was not approved and the researcher used instead Blackboard through Cleveland State University at no cost. The cost of the time of the researcher on development is approximately $14,500 for the sixteen week time frame, but as this project was approved by the employer to be completed during work hours, no actual costs were incurred.

Anticipated timeline or schedule of activities

The completion of the online module will not be ready until March/April of 2015. The evaluations were given prior to the start of releasing the online module to the students and the evaluation examination was given again at the end of the programs completion. The final evaluation timing was based on when the tour guides finish the self-paced online training module. Each guide was asked to complete all of the modules within a month's time after their date of hire.

Method to be used for evaluating whether or not the objectives have been attained

In order to gauge the knowledge learned in the program, the new incoming tour guides that are hired into the program were given a pre and post training evaluation exam. It contained the same questions on both examinations. They also had their tour to the graduate assistant or the Manager of the Visit Experience evaluated with a shadow tour rubric, rating their knowledge of information, tour route and public speaking ability.

SECTION III. DESCRIPTION, METHODOLOGY, AND DEVELOPMENT

Using Cleveland State University's Blackboard system, the researcher developed an asynchronous training module for the Campus Tour Guide program's newest hires. The training course content was developed from various sections of the Tour Guide Manual that includes vital information and helpful tips for the tour guides, but has been rarely used in the past. The online training course contains an overview of how to complete the training, along with 4 separate modules that are to be completed within a week. Each module contains:
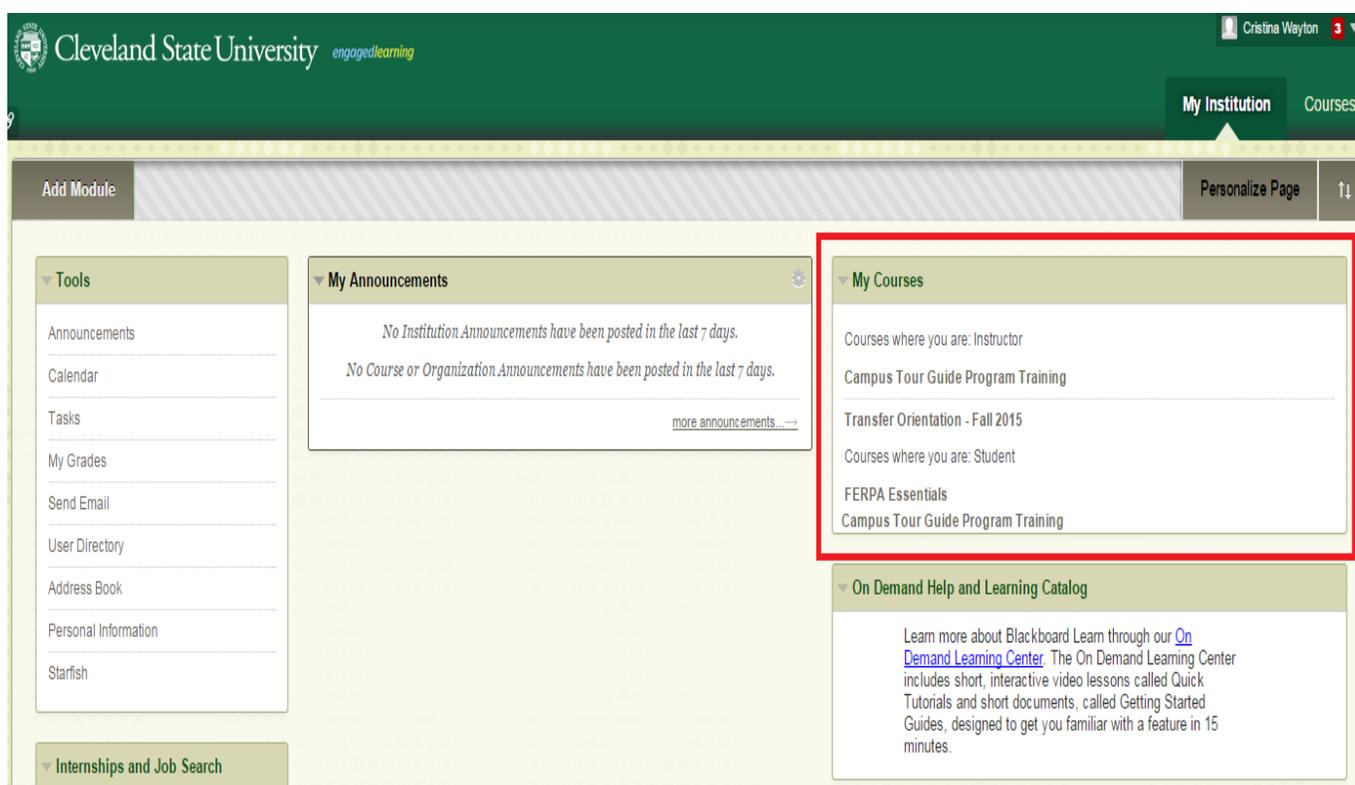
- An overview of the content.

- Three content areas on a related topic.

- A short 5 question quiz to gauges what the learner has learned.

- A discussion board topic for the learner to engage in.

The online training component takes one month for the newest hires to complete before they come into the office to begin the in person training and shadowing.

Blackboard was chosen as the platform to host the learning modules because of the cost and the ease of use for the researcher. There were no additional costs incurred to the Office of Admissions to utilize Blackboard because Cleveland State University already owned the software and utilized it for online coursework. Also, because students are familiar with the system from their coursework for their undergraduate degree programs, it was a seamless process to enroll each student into the course and have it appear on their list of courses to complete. The researcher worked alongside the Instructional Designer for Cleveland State University to get information on how to get the course created in Blackboard and exactly how to use the platform to build and add to the modules.

To log into the secure training module, each learner simply needed to use their CSU ID number and password and the training course would appear as "Campus Tour Guide Training Program" under the "My Courses" table in Blackboard. Figure 1 below shows how the course would appear to the learner once they logged into the Blackboard system using their ID and password.

Figure 1.

Module 1 in the Tour Guide Training Program is titled as "Your New Job!" and includes topics related to one another that are essential things to know when starting a new job. The entire module includes:

- A pre-training assessment

- Tour Guide Expectations

- Tour Guide Uniform

- Tour Guide Discipline Policy

- A discussion board topic.

The pre-training assessment was created in Blackboard under the "test" option for Assessment tools and is a 35 question test that includes multiple choice, true/false and fill in the blank responses with a 1 hour time limit. The test does not count for credit for the student and is used to gauge the level of knowledge the students have about Cleveland State University and the role of a campus tour guide, prior to beginning their job.

For the Tour Guide Expectations, Tour Guide Uniform and the Tour Guide Discipline Policy sessions, each topic is featured on its own module page and the learner progresses through the lesson using the "advance" arrows at the top of the page. Two of the module pages have lessons featuring a flash video, created using Jing screen capture that has slides with the words and information, along with voiceovers so that the learner is able to listen in to the information being presented on the screen.

Each of the four learning modules was created the same way as module one, to include the 3 lessons that were created using PowerPoint and Jing Flash videos to deliver the content information. Each module also has a date range restriction on when it can be completed. Once a new group of tour guides are hired into the position, each student would be enrolled in the

training course. Once enrolled, the training modules will open one week at a time, until all four modules are open. Learners are instructed to complete the sections of that module in one week and move onto the next module when finished. The modules will all remain open so that the learner can return to them at any point to review the content that they may want to look over again. The online training component is completed in one month's time and the learners then report in person to complete the two shadow tours and the final in person assessment. The final assessment was the exact same 35 questions on the pre-training assessment from Module 1, except it was administered in person instead of online and the score counted towards the tour guide in a positive or negative way. Successful completion of the final assessment was a score of 100%. Leaners that did not score a 100% on the final assessment were asked to shadow another tour, re-review the learning materials and try to take the test again before they were allowed to give a tour to visiting guests.

Once the asynchronous and synchronous training and evaluations were complete, each tour guide was asked to complete the evaluation of the training program itself to give feedback to the researcher on its level of effectiveness.

SECTION IV: RESULTS, EVALUATION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>Results</u>

After compiling the feedback and recommendations from the course reviewers, it has been determined that online training course, as part of the blended learning training program, would be a suitable and helpful training program for the Cleveland State University Campus Tour Guide Program. Those who viewed the course and completed the evaluation ranked 8 of the 12 sessions in module with a majority rating of "Extremely Helpful." The remaining 4 modules came in having majority rating of "Helpful". The discussion boards and quizzes proved to be valuable to the learner to help retain information and also to get to know more about the other students in the program, according to respondents and the content of the courses and videos used for learning were cited by the learners as helpful to aiding in the job responsibilities of a campus tour guide position. Ease of use for Cleveland State University students proved Blackboard to be an effective module shell for learners to adapt to as well.

<u>Evaluation</u>

In order to evaluate if the training program for the campus tour guide program would be an appropriate learning tool, the researcher enrolled a few significant members of the Cleveland State University Admissions staff into the course to examine the learning modules. The Coordinator of Recruitment Events at Bowling Green State University was also enrolled into the course for evaluation because of her similar job responsibilities to the researcher and her knowledge of working with and understanding campus tour guides. The evaluation could not be performed by newly hired campus tour guides for the scope of this project because there were not any new tour guides hired in during the time frame.

Seven individuals were chosen and asked to examine the learning modules. These individuals were given a two week time period to go through the modules, watch the videos, and examine the content of the "Campus Tour Guide Training Program" through Blackboard and to complete the applicable sections of the "Training Evaluation" found in Appendix B. Of the seven individuals given the access to evaluate the module, 4 individuals completed the course and returned feedback to the researcher. Those individuals included a Graduate Assistant, an Enrollment Representative, and an Associate Director of Admissions at Cleveland State University, as well as the Coordinator of Recruitment Events from Bowling Green State University. Each of these users have experience in the field of admissions, working alongside campus tour guides, but none of them have been trained to be a campus tour guide in the past which gave them a fresh perspective on the training and information being given to the guides. Current Cleveland State tour guides were invited to participate in the initial group, but none of those students turned in responses to the researcher. The data from the completed training evaluations has been complied into Appendix D.

The first question on the training evaluation, sought to rank the helpfulness of the individual learning modules in relation to the campus tour guide position. Of the 12 individual learning modules, only four modules were ranked as "Extremely Helpful" by all of the responders. Number values were assigned to each ranking, with "Extremely Helpful" being valued at 2 and "Extremely Unhelpful" being valued at -2. The 4 modules with the overall greatest mean of a 2 included:

- Tour Guide Expectations
- Tour Etiquette
- Virtual Campus Tour Route

- Navigating the Tour Guide Website

Because the ranking of "Extremely Helpful" is the highest ranking that any of the modules could receive, the four highly rated modules can be considered the most effective in helping the campus tour guides learn about their new job. Additionally, 4 of the 12 modules were ranked as "Extremely Helpful" by at least three of four the responders and had an overall mean score of 1.75. These 4 modules are also considered as effective in helping the campus tour guides learn the tour guide position. Those 4 modules include:

- Tour Guide Discipline Policy

- Conflict Management

- CSU Admissions Standard and Policies

- How to handle difficult questions

The learning module that received the lowest overall ranking by the responders when asked if the learning modules were helpful was the "CSU Mission Statement" module, with a mean score of 1. This module was not created as a video, but was instead a document simply showing the mission and vision statement of the University. One responder cited that the downfall of the "CSU Missions Statement" module was that "it was not as interactive or engaging as the video modules."

The second question on the "Training Evaluation" asked responders to indicate the degree to which they agreed with a series of statements that revolved around the discussion board posts. For the purpose of this evaluation, the responders were not asked to participate in the discussion boards and the second question became not applicable. One responder stated that even though she was not participating in the discussion boards that she "think[s] they would be a

very helpful tool for both seasoned and novice tour guides who have questions or want to discuss their experiences."

The training evaluation also sought to find out what sections of the training module the respondents found to be most enjoyable and which sections needed the most improvement. Overall the respondents had very positive feedback on the sections that they found to be most enjoyable and cited the quizzes that helped to re-cap the information, the video that teaches you how to use the tour guide website, difficult questions, and conflict resolution as aspects they enjoyed. The respondents also cited the overall layout and consistent formatting as something that made the course easy and pleasant to navigate. The suggested areas for improvement included adding in more images to the content to make it more visually exciting, having tour guides present some of the information, making the "CSU Mission Statement" more exciting and allowing the users to navigate the course more freely instead of the "force completion." One user stated "*One piece of functionality that I found to be limiting was the fact that you couldn't skip to later topics within each section without clicking through all of the other topics first. So if I logged out and came back to the lesson I had to click through all of the topics again to get to my last spot. However, after trying it again, it did let me do it, so it may just be some type of bug with Blackboard that was prohibiting me before.*"

The final question on the "Training Evaluation" asked the users to indicate which aspects of the blended learning program they enjoyed the most. Although the discussion boards were not active, 2 of the 4 users indicated that these would seem to be one of the most enjoyable aspects. All four of the users responded that the "convenient timing" and the "ability to be self-paced" were the aspects that they enjoyed. These results may vary with actual new tour guide hires but are also indicative that they are positive elements for the new training program.

Outside of the formal "Training Evaluation", the users that completed the training module expressed being pleased with the organization of the learning module and also expressed that the content used within the module was very applicable and important for incoming tour guides to know. The positive responses and very small amount of suggestions for improvements reinforce that the learning module that has been created within Blackboard will be not only a viable but a sensible option to use in order train incoming tour guides for the Cleveland State University Campus Tour Guide Program.

Recommendations

After evaluating the training program with professionals from the Admissions field and examining the strengths and weaknesses of the online training program, the blended learning program for the Cleveland State University Campus Tour Guide program should be implemented to train newly hired tour guides. The course as it currently stands, provides an overview of important information that all campus tour guides should be familiar with to perform their job to their best ability. Also, Blackboard through Cleveland State University should continue to host the learning modules for the blended learning program because of the familiarity that Cleveland State Students have with it and the ease of functionality. The instructional designer for Cleveland State University has the ability to add new students to the course as they are hired into the tour guide program and the "instructor" for the course has the ability to change easily from user to user if the original developer were ever to leave the University.

It is important to keep the content of the learning modules updated because of the amount of changes that happen quickly in the field of Admissions. If the information is not updated, the campus tour guides could misinform prospective students and their families at no fault of their

own. As the scholarships, admissions standards and names of buildings change on campus; so will the changes need to be made to the online training course. In order to ensure the information stays current, the data in the training module should be reviewed bi-monthly throughout the calendar year and a thorough examination should be performed before any new users are added to the course as well to check the content of the video modules as well as the quizzes.

Based on the feedback from the evaluation of this course, making some of the modules more interactive moving forward would benefit the newly hired campus tour guides; specifically the "CSU Mission Statement" and "Emergency Procedures" sections. This can be done not only by bringing in more images that help break up the text heavy visuals, but also by having current campus tour guides presenting some of the topics, as one responder suggested on the training evaluation form. Another way to incorporate the campus tour guides would be to add in webinar sessions at certain points during the lesson, so that the veteran tour guide staff can connect with the new tour guide cohort and get to see one another's faces.

The initial idea for the virtual campus tour route was to have a clickable version of the route with all of the talking points that the tour guides would need to know at that part of the tour. Due to technology and time constraints, the researcher was not able to execute that complex of a virtual tour route. In the future, the Office of Admissions should explore partnering with the University Marketing department to create not only a more comprehensive virtual route for the tour guides to explore, but also for any prospective student that would like to view campus from home. This new route would be more interactive because it would allow the new tour guides to click on certain buildings at their own leisure and find out what important information they should be conveying about that location in particular.

The videos used in each of the modules currently take up a large portion of the screen and some users may have to scroll their page to the right in order to be able to view all of the content. This is another area for improvement that can make the functionality of the online learning course even smoother. Alternative programs the can be used to create screen capture videos should be explored in the future to see if this would help to bring embedded video sizes down to a more reasonable size. It may also be in the benefit of the user to allow them to download the video or open it full screen completely so that each user is able to determine how they want to view the larger formatted videos. In addition to the size of the videos, the navigation buttons should be investigated more in each internet browser, from a variety of computers to ensure that they function properly for each of the campus tour guides and that no users run into bugs or glitches. This will help ensure proper functionality for all users.

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APPENDIX A

Campus Tour Guide Pre and Post Training Assessment

Name:_____   **Date:**_____

Date of Hire:_____   **Date of Module Completion**_____

Complete the following assessment based on your current knowledge of CSU and the Campus Tour Guide Program. This assessment is to be completed prior to using the Tour Guide Training Module.

1. The Middough Building Houses what academic program?
    A. Art Department
    B. CLASS
    C. Nursing
    D. Math

2. The Monte Ahuja College of Business has its own Career Services.
    True
    False

3. The Chester Building houses what academic Advising office?
    A. Education and Human Services
    B. Engineering
    C. College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS)
    D. College of Graduate Studies

4. Julka Hall houses what programs?
    A. Education
    B. Nursing
    C. Communications
    D. A and B

5. Euclid Commons offers what options for rooms?
    A. Singles (one person rooms)
    B. Doubles (two person rooms)
    C. Triples (three person rooms) with single and double occupancy space options
    D. Quads(four person rooms) with single and double occupancy space options

E. C and D

6. As a student, to pass the Fenn Tower security desk, what do you need?
    A. Your CSU id number
    B. A Cleveland State t-shirt
    C. Your Viking Id card
    D. The security code

7. The law library is the ___ largest Law library in Ohio.
    A. 1st
    B. 2nd
    C. 3rd
    D. 4th

8. The Main classroom building houses the TASC office. What does TASC stand for?.
    A. Transfer Advising Student Center
    B. Federal outreach and student services program
    C. Tutoring and Academic Success Center
    D. Testing Academic Service Center

9. The Michal Swartz Library covers 4 floors in Rhodes Tower and Offers Silent and Group study.
    True
    False

10. The Music Communication Building has two Concert Halls.
    True
    False

11. How much does it cost to enter the Recreation Center?
    A. Free if you are enrolled in 1 credit hour
    B. Free if you are a full time student
    C. Discounted price of $20 for students
    D. $1 per visit and free on weekends

12. How many students does Cleveland State currently have?
    A. 17,000
    B. 28,000
    C. 23,000
    D. 9,000

13. Rhodes West is home to what important resource for students?
    A. Career Services
    B. Academic Advising
    C. The club sports student offices
    D. The library

14. The Bookstore helps benefit students by offering what?
    A. Rental Books, and used books
    B. Always having required books for every class available or ordered
    C. Online purchasing
    D. All of the Above

15. If you don't know the answer to a question on a tour, what should you do?
    A. Make something up
    B. Tell them you don't know
    C. Tell them you are not sure but you will ask an advisor or look it up after the tour..
    D. Pretend you didn't hear them

16. The All in One Office located in Main Classroom is for…
    A. Admissions
    B. Academic Record
    C. Financial Aid
    D. Registration
    E. All of the Above

17. Freshmen can park on campus.
    True
    False

18. Fenn Hall, the engineering building, has what great feature on the first floor?
    A. A wind tunnel
    B. Geothermal heating
    C. 24 hour workout room
    D. Study Lounge

19. The science building is used primarily for what?
    A. Science Labs
    B. Research
    C. Campus dining locations
    D. Parking office

20. The Student Center has many food locations and houses the student organization offices.
    True
    False

21. The average Classroom size at Cleveland State is?
    A. 27
    B. 42
    C. 55
    D. 110

22. What safety features does the campus have?
    A. 3 systems of police
    B. Scan cards on all buildings
    C. Emergency buttons
    D. A and C

23. The Innerlink is…
    A. A helpful service that connects all Ohio Libraries resource
    B. An online database available to students
    C. A system of bridges that connects our campus
    D. A RTA bus system that CSU students can ride for free

24. The Recreation Center Pool is available for student use.
    True
    False

25. Name three buildings along a tour route
    1.
    2.
    3.

26. How many students live on campus?
    A. 21,000
    B. 16,000
    C. 1,100
    D. 700

27. If you live on campus you are required to get a meal plan. Are there options for meal plans?
    Explain.
    True
    False

28. What year was Cleveland State University Founded?
- A. 1988
- B. 1967
- C. 1964
- D. 1932

29. How many student organizations does Cleveland State offer?
- A. 1,000
- B. over 500
- C. over 200
- D. 64

30. Who is this man?

31. As a tour guide, what do you need to get access to the residence halls while on tour?
- A. Viking card
- B. Tour guide name badge
- C. Cleveland state t-shirt
- D. A and B

32. You should arrive to the Welcome Center for your tour at 10am for a 10-12 tour shift; 12pm for a 12-2 tour shift, 2pm for a 2-4 tour shift.
- A. True
- B. False

33. A green Cleveland State tour guide polo and khakis are to be worn when giving tours.
    A. True
    B. False

34. Plain fleece zip ups, raincoats, or a black CSU tour guide fleece pullover are optional to wear when giving tours.
    A. True
    B. False

35. How can tour guides check for 12pm group tours and special group tours?
    A. CSU tour guides website
    B. E-mail
    C. Tour guides are called if there is no 12pm group tour
    D. All of the above

APPENDIX B
Training Evaluation

1. Please rate the following sections of the training module to indicate how helpful you believe them to be your position as a campus tour guide?

	Extremely Helpful (2)	Helpful (1)	Neutral (0)	Unhelpful (-1)	Extremely Unhelpful (-2)
Tour Guides Position Expectations					
Tour Guide Uniform					
Tour Guide Discipline Policy					
Tour Etiquette					
History Of Cleveland State University					
Cleveland State Campus Tour Route					
How to navigate the TG Website					
Conflict Management					
CSU Admissions Standards and Policies					
CSU Missions Statement					
How to Handle Difficult Questions					
Emergency Procedures					

2. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The discussion board posts helped me to meet other tour guides in the program					
I learned interesting facts about CSU's Campus from other guides on the discussion board posts					
The discussion board posts made me feel connected to the other tour guides					
I utilized the discussion boards throughout the module					
I enjoyed having the use of discussion boards during training					

3. During the training process, which section in the training module did you enjoy the most?

4. Which training section do you believe needs the most improvement?

5. Please circle the aspects of the blended learning program you enjoyed the most:

Interactive Learning	Ability to be self-paced	In person training
Convenient timing	Discussion Boards	None of the above

APPENDIX C

Campus Tour Rubric

Name of Tour Guide_____

Date of Tour_____

Public Speaking Ability:
Campus tour guide need to be able to speak loudly and clearly for their campus tour groups. Please rate the level of effectiveness of the campus tour guide to project their voice during the campus tour.

Extremely effective

Very effective

Moderately effective

Slightly effective

Not at all effective

Campus Tour Route Knowledge:
Visiting each stop of the campus tour route is vital to get across the academic message of the Office of Admissions. Please rate the Campus Tour Guide's level of knowledge of the campus tour route.

Extremely knowledgeable

Very knowledgeable

Moderately knowledgeable

Slightly knowledgeable

Not at all knowledgeable

Strengths
List the strengths of the campus tour guide.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Areas for Improvement
List the areas in which the tour guide has room for improvement.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Is this tour guide ready to give tours to visiting families? Please list your reasoning

_____
_____
_____
_____

This form is to be used by the Graduate Assistant or Manager of the Visit Experience to evaluate each campus tour guide once the guide has completed the training module and 2 shadow tours on their training tour.

Tour Guides must receive high marks in order to move forward in the training program.

APPENDIX D
Training Evaluation Results

1. Please rate the following sections of the training module to indicate how helpful you believe them to be your position as a campus tour guide?

	Extremely Helpful (2)	Helpful (1)	Neutral (0)	Unhelpful (-1)	Extremely Unhelpful (-2)	Mean Rating
Tour Guides Position Expectations	4					2
Tour Guide Uniform	2	2				1.5
Tour Guide Discipline Policy	3	1				1.75
Tour Etiquette	4					2
History Of Cleveland State University	2	2				1.5
Cleveland State Campus Tour Route	4					2
How to Navigate the TG Website	4					2
Conflict Management	3	1				1.75
CSU Admissions Standards and Policies	3	1				1.75
CSU Missions Statement	1	2	1			1
How to Handle Difficult Questions	3	1				1.75
Emergency Procedures	3		1			1.5

2. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The discussion board posts helped me to meet other tour guides in the program	N/A				
I learned interesting facts about CSU's Campus from other guides on the discussion board posts	N/A				
The discussion board posts made me feel connected to the other tour guides	N/A				
I utilized the discussion boards throughout the module	N/A				
I enjoyed having the use of discussion boards during training	N/A				

3. During the training process, which section in the training module did you enjoy the most?

Quizzes to re-cap what lessons the module has taught, using the tour guide site since this is so important for the TGs to know
I thought the consistency of the layout was helpful so I knew what to expect with each module. The Home page was helpful to read before starting because I don't use BlackBoard much and it was a little overwhelming at first. The addition of the "people to know" was a great idea! I also liked the idea of the pre-training assessment to gauge my knowledge before doing any training and then again at the end of the training. This seems like it would really show my increased knowledge as a result to the training. The discussion boards were a great addition and seems like a great way to connect with other guides since I may not interact with them all based on work schedules. The videos were well produced and the PowerPoint formats used were visually pleasing. I also appreciated the ability to download the PowerPoint so I could learn at my own pace if I needed or to reference later.
The sections on conflict resolution and difficult questions are very helpful when starting as a new tour guide.
The overview of Tour Guide expectations nicely summarized the role. The conflict resolution and how to deal with difficult questions areas were both very helpful, as well. I would expect these modules will help alleviate any stress or anxiety a new Tour Guide might be feeling.

4. Which training section do you believe needs the most improvement?

The Virtual Campus Tour Route has been under construction a bit
I would have liked to see a few more images within the videos to break up the content. It would have also been nice to actually see Cristina, or even other tour guides, as they shared the content. However, I understand that may not have been feasible for the scope of this project. One piece of functionality that I found to be limiting was the fact that you couldn't skip to later topics within each section without clicking through all of the other topics first. So if I logged out and came back to the lesson I had to click through all of the topics again to get to my last spot. However, I just tried again and it did let me do it, so it may just be some type of bug with BlackBoard that was prohibiting me before
The formatting of the videos, some of them were too big for the screen.
The emergency situation and CSU Missions Statement portions were not as interactive as the video modules

5. Please circle the aspects of the blended learning program you enjoyed the most:

Interactive Learning   Ability to be self-paced   In person training

Convenient timing   Discussion Boards   None of the above