

15. Study on Internet-Based Remote Social Education Training

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1. Purpose and background of the study

As is clearly stated in the report on the Social Education Survey in FY2008 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, people's learning opportunities have been increasing in recent years.

However, although people's appetite for learning has become stronger and more diversified, social education-related personnel now have fewer opportunities for training. Therefore, there is an urgent need to clarify effective training methods so as to enhance their quality and capacity.

Under such circumstances, the Practical Social Education Research Center has made efforts to develop a remote training method using the Internet to enhance the quality and capacity of social education-related personnel. In FY2008, through the training targeting librarians, we conducted research on the roles of tutors and the utilization of learning content. The study revealed the significance of considering the roles of tutors as study assistants and the methods for preparing and utilizing materials for individual learning.

Based on the results and problems found through last year's study, we fully utilized newly prepared learning content and carried out demonstrations at training sessions held at the Center and in Hokkaido. The training sessions mainly focused on the clarification of the roles of tutors and ideal learning content, as well as other materials for individual learning, enabling effective training for social education directors.

2. Results and outline of the study

(1) Definition of Internet-based remote social education training

Based on the results of the FY2008 research study, "remote social education training" in this study refers to "training in a form combining Internet-based remote pre-and post-training (individual learning) with group training in which trainees face each other (blended learning)."

(2) Roles of tutors who effectively lead remote social education training

We carried out demonstrations at training sessions held at the Center and in Hokkaido, making a hypothesis that the roles of tutors who effectively lead remote social education training are (i) to alleviate participants' worries about learning, (ii) to encourage their voluntary participation, and (iii) to smoothly promote group learning. The demonstration showed that what trainees most expect from tutors is "guidance and advice that help them understand the content of the training" (94%) and "guidance and advice that arouse their awareness" (86%). There were also free comments seeking assistance not only for learning but also for forming

good human relationships, such as “I want tutors to act as an intermediary between trainees and lecturers” and “I want tutors to facilitate good relationships between trainees and tutors, as well as among trainees.”

We examined how trainees’ worries about learning changed depending on whether they had received any encouragement from tutors in the process of remote pre- and post-training. The results showed that the worries of trainees who had received encouragement were relieved significantly, compared with those of trainees who had not. This was also the case with trainees’ worries concerning equipment operation procedures and their worries about the delay in their individual learning. This indicates that tutors have a large impact on the alleviation of trainees’ worries about learning.

Consequently, the roles of tutors who effectively lead remote social education training cannot be limited to the above three that we had supposed beforehand. In particular, it is noteworthy that trainees expect tutors to link the content of pre-training with that of group training, and promote human relationships between tutors and trainees, as well as among trainees. These comments suggest the direction that tutors should work toward. In the future, we need to systematize how tutors get involved at each stage of pre-training, group training, post-training, and daily duties, and further clarify the roles of tutors for enhancing effectiveness of training.

(3) Development of effective materials for individual learning

(i) Preparation and utilization of learning content for remote social education training

We fully utilized learning content for remote social education training planned and prepared in FY2008 and concretely verified its usefulness on site. Learning content prepared and utilized is shown in the table below.

Characteristics of the content are as follows:

- a. Each unit is around 20 minutes-long.
- b. All of the content is modularized so that a viewer can start wherever he/she likes.
- c. Anyone can download and print out materials in Power Point.

According to the trainee survey, 80% replied that they were satisfied with the image quality, length, sound quality, content of the learning material, and operability (total of the responses “very much” and “to some extent”), which proved that the learning content was fully useful.

This was also confirmed by the fact that there were favorable free comments on the convenience of Internet-based training, such as “I can repeatedly watch the learning materials whenever I like,” “I can take specialized training anywhere,” and “training cost can be reduced.” There were also positive remarks on the effectiveness of training, such as “I was able to deepen

my understanding of the contents” and “I was able to participate in the group training with high motivation.”

As shown above, it was proved that watching learning content in the remote pre-training stage is effective in enhancing learning outcomes in the group training stage.

On the other hand, there were also negative comments, such as “I could not spare enough time for watching the learning content” and “The content of the remote pre-training did not link clearly to that of the group training.” Further efforts should be made to devise means to watch learning content and clarify its link to other training content.

<p style="text-align: center;">Learning Content for Remote Social Education Training “Training for Social Education Directors – Revision of the Social Education Act and Future Social Education –”</p> <p>Chapter 1 Promotion of Lifelong Learning and Social Education Administration – With Consideration on New Trends Concerning Social Education – Tsuneo Yamamoto, President, Yashima Gakuen University</p> <p>Chapter 2 Roles Expected of Social Education Directors Kazuhito Yamamoto, Professor, Tokyo Kasei University</p> <p>Chapter 3 Ideal Social Education Plans and Evaluation in New Era Kyoko Asai, Professor, Yashima Gakuen University</p> <p>Chapter 4 Various Social Problems and Social Education Measures</p> <p>Subject 1 Utilization of Achievement from Lifelong Learning Akira Sakuma, Associate Professor, Sapporo International University</p> <p>Subject 2 Enhancement of the Educational Function of Families Mana Oshima, Associate Professor, Kyushu Women’s University</p> <p>Subject 3 Cooperation among Schools, Families, and Communities Yoichi Akashi, Professor, Chiba University</p>

(ii) Learning sheets

At the stages of remote pre-training and post-training, we gave trainees an assignment to

submit reports. For the pre-training, trainees were required to submit reports concerning the training theme and the content of the learning materials they watched, and for the post-training, their reports were to contain details that might deepen their understanding of the pre-training and group training, and details that may enable them to utilize the training content in their daily duties.

At the training session in Hokkaido, learning content “viewer cards” were delivered on a trial basis: trainees were supposed to record their questions and requests after watching the learning content so as to later utilize such entries in lectures and practices during the group training.

Based on the survey after the training, learning content “viewer cards” proved to be especially effective in enriching the content of the pre-training and the group training, and enhancing the awareness of the trainees prior to the group training.

3. Connection with the mid-term goals

“Ideal provision of information on lifelong learning” and “desirable forms of new social education projects in response to social changes” were cited as priority issues for achieving the mid-term goals. We have obtained various knowledge concerning methods for effectively carrying out Internet-based remote social education training.

Furthermore, we were able to propose a new direction for possible lifelong learning information content and training methods by using new media.

4. Dissemination of research results

The report on this research study will be delivered to prefectural boards of education and the whole text will be available on the website of the Practical Social Education Research Center, National Institute for Educational Policy Research.

5. Future plans

This study is being conducted for a period of three years. For FY2010, we plan to prepare draft materials with the aim of putting the research results into practical use for prefectural training sessions targeting social education-related personnel.

6. Reports on this study

“Report on the Study on Internet-Based Seminars”

Practical Social Education Research Center, National Institute for Educational Policy Research
(March 2008 and March 2009)

“Report on the Study on Internet-Based Remote Social Education Training”

Practical Social Education Research Center, National Institute for Educational Policy Research
(March 2010)

<http://www.nier.go.jp/jissen/chosa/houkokusyo0-0.htm>