Learning and teaching approach – the "flavour of our courses"

How learners will use these courses

These courses are blended. The online component makes up about 90% of the learning, but contains an optional face to face workshop towards the close of the course to enable participants to consolidate key aspects of the course through problem-solving activities and also gives participants a chance to do some face-to-face networking to allow these course connections to continue past the lifetime of the course.

Learners will have 1-3 hours per week to dedicate to the online courses and will be enrolled in groups based on their regions.

The content will be broken up into 5 courses and accompanied by a badge:

1. Course 1 which…
2. Course 2 which..
3. …

What we believe about learning

We make learning easy – We treat the learner's time as more valuable than our own. Our instructions are clear and simple and we use plain English. Always. Working memory can only store so much, so to help processing we organise or chunk information. Pages should have **one key message** and be no longer than 600 words.

We make learning friendly – We make learners feel safe and supported by write our courses as if the learner was having a conversation with a mentor and including introductions to the facilitator and other learners before diving into the content of the course.

We make learning reciprocal – Ako, in te reo Māori, means both to teach and to learn. Ako shows us that learning requires reciprocity – both learners and tutors learn from one another. This means learners need to be acknowledged as contributors and have safe spaces for them to share what they know. The facilitator is not seen as the "keeper of knowledge".

We value diversity – We have high expectations of all learners. We make space for diverse ways of knowing and being and build on students' experiences and values through activities. Adult learners are not empty vessels to be filled. Participants diversity of experience is used to enrich the course by encouraging learners to share and celebrating when they do.

We make learning real world – The "focus on the real/realistic nature of the entity and the resulting real/realistic requirements is fundamental to the qualification" . As such, assessments need to be authentic. They should present learners with tasks similar to what they will experience in an administrative role.

The "recipe" that content should follow

Each course should follow this pattern.
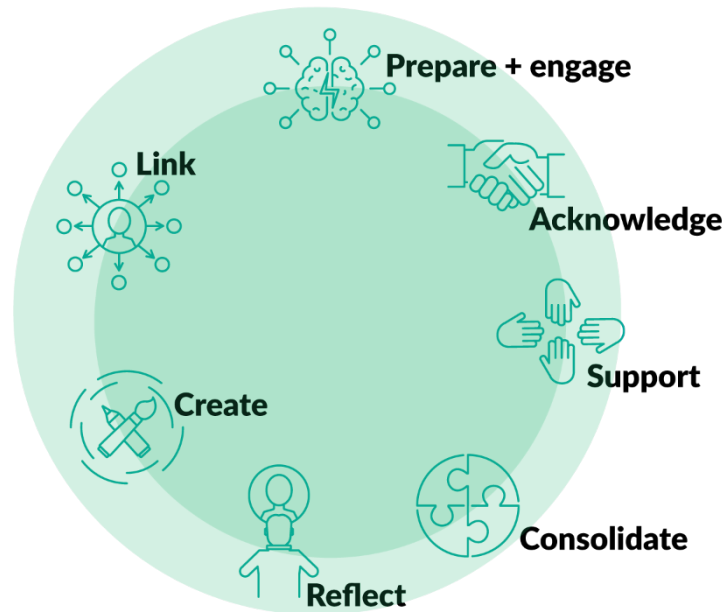
Prepare +engage

At the start of each course, we prepare learners by introducing them to the topic and answering "what's in it for me?" to keep learners engaged. We answer these sorts of questions.

- What is this module about?
- Why are the ideas we explore in it interesting or important?
- What sort of things will they be able to do at the end of the module?
- Where will these skills apply in their lives?

Acknowledge

Our learners are adults who have a valuable contribution to theirs and others' learning (including the facilitator). We acknowledge learners by including an activity that recalls or gets them to share what they already know about a topic.

Support

We support learners by walking with them. We give snippets of information, a chance to explore and try out these new concepts or skills then provide them with feedback and feedforward as they go to keep them on the right track and then guide them to their next steps. This can be summarised with the following ideas.

- Presentation
- Activities
- Feedback and feedforward

Consolidate

We consolidate learning by giving learners a brief summary of the key concepts to wrap up the topic before participants move onto the next module. We remind people of the main take-aways as opposed to just listing the headings. This consolidate section should be the third time learners have seen the key idea – once briefly in **prepare + engage**, then in detail through **support**, and finally when we consolidate ("tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em > tell 'em > tell 'em what you told 'em").

Having a summary is also a source of motivation of learners as it is a reminder of all the things they know now as a result of working through the module.

Reflect

For each course we'll have a reflective task. This may take the form of learners reflecting on what is working/not working in their current practice and creating an action plan. This will help learners to transfer these new concepts or skills outside the context of an online course. Which, in turn, fosters life-long learning. Reflection needs to be supported by careful feedback.

Create

The last task in each course will ask learners to create something. Ideally this is a lasting artefact - something they can take with them and will continue to use. We'll make the tasks as authentic as possible. Having an artefact also motivates learners to put in more effort into completing this course than if they were just completing an assignment they'd never use or refer back to again.

Link

We give learners links by connecting what they've learned in this module and what they're about to learn in the next. One sentence that describes the learning from the current module. One sentence to say how the next module builds on what they've learned.

Linking to the next course allows us to foreshadow the big ideas of a topic and show how interrelated the courses are. It's also a chance to get learners excited about the next course by writing a bit of a sell telling them just how great the upcoming course is.