

## Evaluation Results

The overall evaluation shows success based on reviews with department administrator, session observations, participant surveys, and instructor interviews. The evaluation shows high ratings in social presence techniques, participant collaboration and access to program materials. The program showed stability in meeting audience needs with some improvements in structure and pacing. Continued efforts in these areas will promote even higher degrees of satisfaction.

Key Questions	Rating
To what extent are social presence techniques successfully engaging participants?	High
To what extent is the online program meeting the audience learning needs?	Medium High
To what extent do participants collaborate to build and share knowledge with peers?	High
To what extent are sessions' structure and pacing within a manageable timeframe?	Medium High
To what extent are participants effectively locating program materials?	High

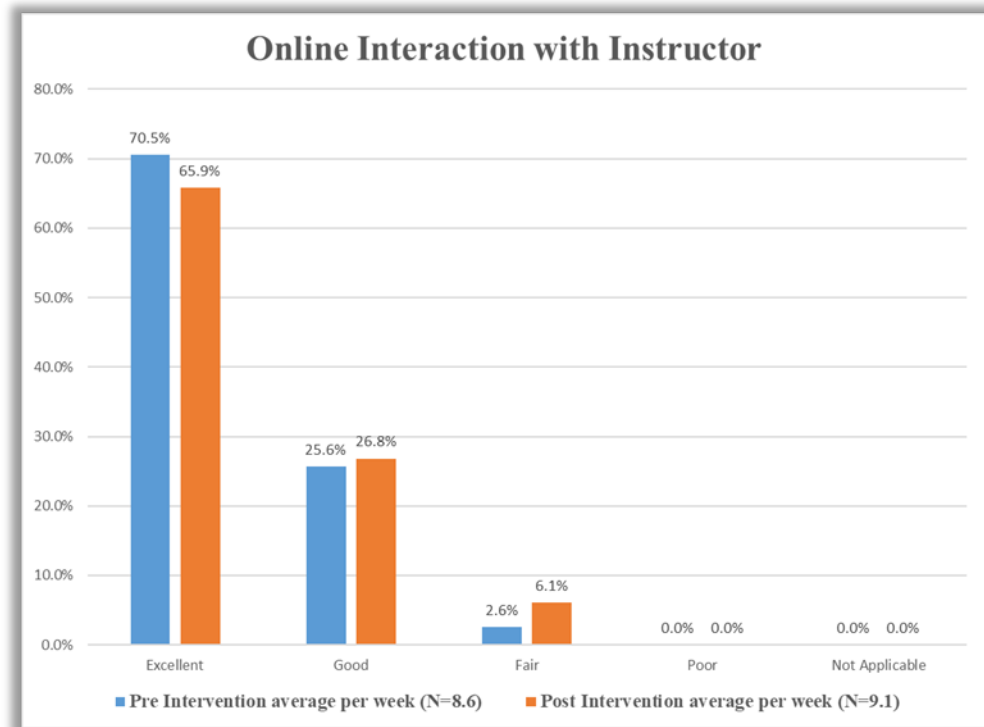
### 1. To what extent are social presence techniques successfully engaging participants?

Social presence techniques successfully engaged participants through the intervention with a combination of online tools and interpersonal communication techniques. The online tools included microphones, video camera, synchronous chat, and polling questions. These tools enabled real-time connectivity in the online learning environment for verbal, nonverbal, text interactions, and knowledge testing. These tools promoted large group discussions and breakout sessions for team activities. Participants developed collaborative skills by actively engaging with instructors and peers, asking questions, providing answers, sharing points-of-view, and supporting agreement on topics of discussion. These interactions promoted humanized interconnections through applied social learning to build trust and team cohesiveness, yielding participant satisfaction in the online learning environment.

Instructors engaged participants through social presence, using interpersonal communication and inquiry techniques. Interaction intensity was achieved by acknowledging, encouraging, and complimenting participants' input and interpretations through interpersonal cues, like laughter, body language, facial expressions, and fluctuations in speech. These positive expressions, engaged participants, stimulating social intensity, eliciting replies through chat, verbal, and nonverbal expressions, to solidify human interconnection. Session observations reveal an instructor turning on their camera, acknowledging participants by waving their hands and expressing "how nice it is to see everyone", asking for "eye contact through cameras" and if participants "prefer small groups or the large group for an activity" (4/27/21). These humanizing interpersonal actions, visually and audibly interconnect the instructor to the participants. Instructor's use of camera, and microphone connect nonverbal expressions, while verbal inquiry, seeks and validates participants' input and preferences.

Instructors succeeded in applying social presence techniques to engage participants through use of the online polling. This tool and process seeks participant input on topics, allowing for knowledge checks and providing feedback. Instructor generated a poll, based on module content overview, with ten multiple choice questions. Participants engaged with the content, providing answers. Instructor shared the results and reviewed with the whole class for reflection and clarification (4/29/21). The polling tool also allows instructors to reassess their content delivery and teaching methods, to promote ongoing improvement in the online learning environment.

Participant survey rating the Online Interaction with Instructor (Figure 1) showed consistency in satisfaction between the preintervention observations and the intervention evaluation. This area shows the highest overall survey response ratings for ‘excellent’ at 70.5% in the preintervention observation, and 65.9% for the intervention evaluation. High degrees of engagement between instructors and participants, correlates with participant satisfaction in online learning environments.



*Figure 1*

Instructor Interviews confirm social presence techniques successfully engaged participants in the online environment. “I think it has improved, some of the tools and techniques have actually made it more effective. It gives me different approaches, so I can connect with people in different ways” (4/7/21). Social presence provides instructors with enhanced and varied approaches to meet participants’ diverse learning needs and encourage their participation. “It definitely existed more this time than it did the previous time...so it was a way for me to engage with them” (4/29/21). Humanizing the online learning experience with social presence with varied online tools and

interpersonal techniques promotes participant satisfaction through engaging reflective social learning.

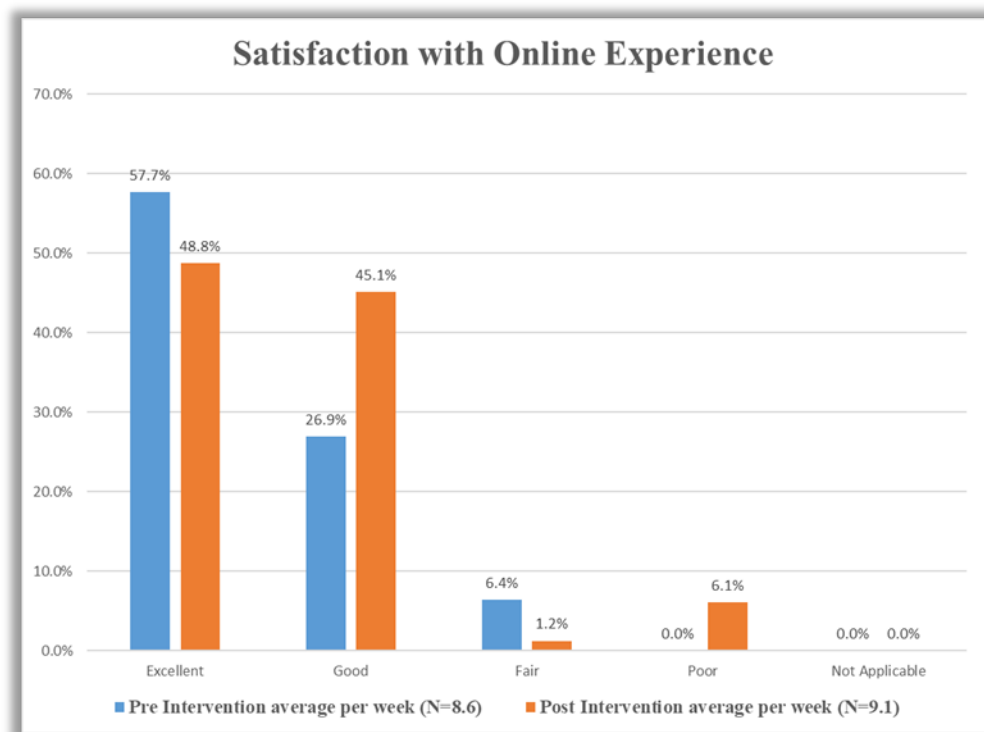
## **2. To what extent is the online program meeting the audience learning needs?**

The PPM online program meets audience learning needs by applying course concepts and materials in collaborative activities that correspond with professional, agile, team-based collaborative negotiations and by expanding accessibility to a broader geographic audience. The online format promotes participant inclusivity through the intervention's use of social presence to encourage social learning and knowledge sharing, yielding marketable collaborative skill development. This online format promotes productivity in participants' learning environment and current professional settings. Session observations of the intervention showed participants seeking deeper degrees of collaborative inquiry through questions, dialogue, and shared experiences, compared to the preintervention observations. Varied audience learning needs were met through, lectures, shared stories, and structured team activities, yielding exchanges and reflective interpretations of content. Instructors encouraged participants' unique approaches and creative concept development, while emphasizing the value of shared experiences.

The PPM instructors connect course material and concepts, to the complexity of professional settings, through lectures, discussions, and activities. Participants expressed satisfaction with the online program's effectiveness. "I enjoy the lecture/theory since that's what I need most" and "I enjoy the lectures" (3/23/21). Through instructor interconnections and shared experiences, participants envision contextualized application of content. "You've done a great job of painting a broad picture of PM work, while getting detailed enough to illustrate how complex every aspect of project management can be" (4/20/21). The PPM online course, and materials effectively contribute to participants' project development and planning. "The course is helpful, and Project Management templates are effective for conceptual development and organization" (4/27/21).

The online PPM's audience learning needs are met, as content is applied in current professional settings. "I put together a report, shared it with leadership and other stakeholders" (4/29/21). Aspects of social presence in the online environment, enable participants to express the importance of interpersonal and collaborative skills in work settings, like: "effective teamwork, stressing the importance of communication skills, active listening, organization, analytical skills, asking questions to gain clarity on project expectations, requirements and identifying needs through discussion" (4/29/21). Participant comments and reflections, support the online program's effectiveness in meeting audience learning needs through lectures, collaborative discussions, and application of content in professional settings.

Participant Survey in Satisfaction with Online Experience (Figure 2) shows an increase in the intervention's 'good' rating by 18.2% to 45.1%, while the 'excellent' rating decreased by 8.9% to 48.8%. The intervention's combined 'excellent' and 'good' ratings show an average increase by 9.3% in participant satisfaction over the preintervention observation.



*Figure 2*

Participant's survey responses to Overall Satisfaction with the Program (Figure 3) showed stability with contrasting increases in the intervention's 'Good' rating by 6.5% to 48.8%, while the 'Excellent' rating showed a decrease by 7.5% to 45.1% compared to preintervention observations. The combined 'Excellent' and 'Good' ratings for preintervention averaged 47.4%, while the intervention yielded a 46.9%. The poor rating in the intervention may be associated with participants having differing expectations of the course, and or unmet needs, based on unique learning preferences.

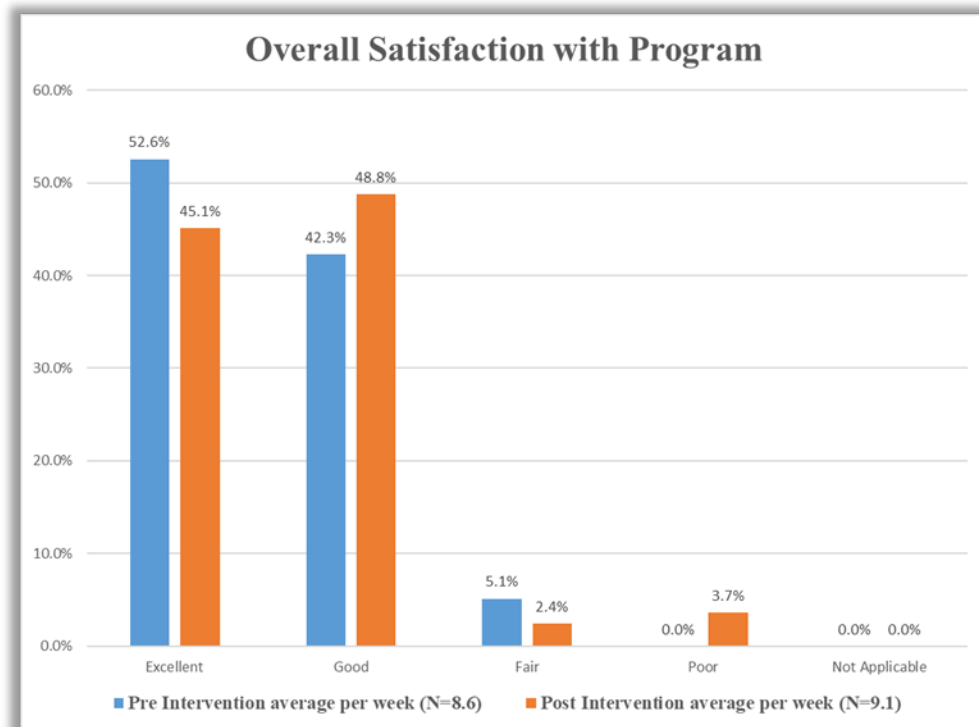


Figure 3

Instructor interviews suggest the online program is effective in meeting audience learning needs. “I give this a rating of medium to medium high. The majority of the class is getting what they are looking for” (4/7/21). Intervention observations showed high degrees of participant interaction in discussions with reflective application of content. The program’s transition from face-to-face to online instruction, meets audience learning needs by expanding the program’s availability to a broader geographic audience. “It allows them to participate where they may not have been able to before” (4/29/21). The online sessions were consistently attended by participants locally and other parts of the southwest, with an increase in collaborative participation during the intervention, compared to the preintervention observations. Participants’ interaction, shared reflections, reports of effective application of program content in professional settings, and expanded geographic audience, indicate the online program is successfully meeting learner needs.

### 3. To what extent do participants collaborate to build and share knowledge with peers?

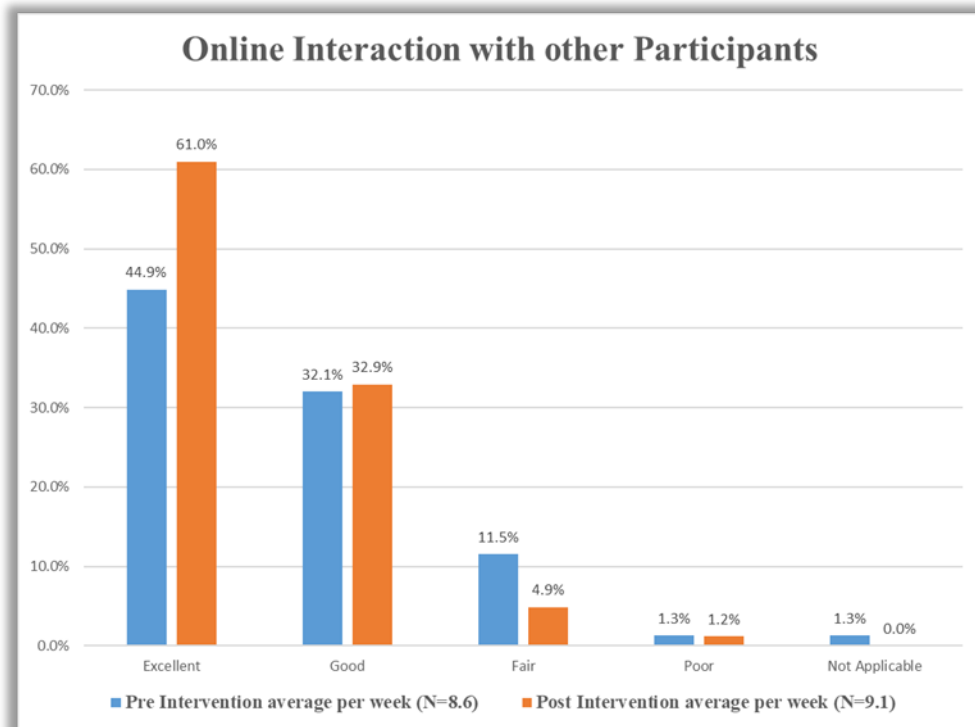
Participants collaborated with peers to build and share knowledge in team settings through humanized social presence techniques, in agile team-based project management activities. The intervention, with teams’ design, based on diversity, and assigned rotation of roles, for facilitator and notetaker/presenter, ensured all participants provided consistent input in collaborative activities, and presented their team’s work in larger group reflections. The enhanced team structure humanized participant’s learning experience through social presence, promoting inclusivity, with increased degrees of collaborations to build and share knowledge, compared to the preintervention observations. Participants made interpersonal connections, establishing their social presence with their peers through varied online tools. These tools included microphones, video cameras, screen-sharing, and whiteboard annotate feature within activity breakout sessions. The tools enabled

collaborative document development in activities, yielding trust as shown in affective interpersonal connections in the online learning environment.

Session observations revealed participants developing personal connections with team members in breakout activities. These activities showed humanized interactions among participants while imparting personal aspects of their lives. In one case, all participants showed their pets and shared stories about them, and getting the COVID vaccine, as the group completed their activity requirements (3/11/21). Participants collaborated on a drawing of a giraffe for a client, using the whiteboard annotate feature through the application's view options. Participants clarified project aspects with peers through emotional connections, like laughter and nonverbal expressions to confirm cohesive agreement. All team members took turns, sharing their concepts, stories, and used humor to stimulate affective social connections. Group inclusivity and cohesiveness were attained as participants provided encouragement to their peers, by complementing their talents and contributions. Silence was held, while observing the drawing's evolution, as a team member rendered parts of the subject (4/29/21). These humanized elements of affective self-disclosure and emotional expressions of enjoyment, support the interventions' effectiveness in engaging participants, by promoting camaraderie in the online learning environment to build and share knowledge through social presence.

Participant collaborations became personalized, fluid, well managed and detail oriented, through the intervention evaluation. Participants engaging with peers through affective expressions, sharing experiences, while making humanized connections. They expressed satisfaction with the team collaborations, while providing feedback on the program's methods. "I love the group sessions", "Same, I love the breakouts" and "I enjoy the group sessions" (3/30/21). Expressing appreciation and satisfaction with emotions to describe the collaborative process, correlates with affective interconnections supported by social presence, resulting from cultural inclusivity. The humanizing elements of social presence from the use of diversified teams and varied online tools, encouraged participants to share and build knowledge with peers through social learning, promoted trust, and team cohesion.

Participant Survey rating Online Interaction with other Participants (Figure 4) shows a 16.1% increase to 61.0% in the intervention's 'Excellent' rating, compared to the preintervention observation. This data shows the largest increase in the survey's 'Excellent' rating, suggesting the intervention with online collaborative structure for sharing and building knowledge in group activities, successfully promoted participant satisfaction.



*Figure 4*

Instructor interviews suggest the intervention improved participants' ability to collaborate, to build and share knowledge with peers. "I would rate this area a borderline between medium high and high. I base it on not just the in-class exercises that we do, where they are working on something, but the stories I hear them sharing, both with the entire class and sometimes when I'm jumping from room to room"(4/7/21). Sharing stories and seeing consistency in collaborations in exercises, indicates group trust and cohesiveness are established through social presence in the online environment. The team activities showed steady collaborative interaction through the intervention. "They seem like they were doing great. They were trying to help each other out, especially with the whiteboard" (4/29/21). Participants showed willingness to help their peers with the online tools and share knowledge. They took ownership and pride in sharing their collaborative documents with the instructor and larger group in reflections. The intervention succeeded in promoting participant engagement through culturally inclusive collaborations and reflections, making the online experience interpersonally stimulating, as shown through shared emotions, experiences, and participant expressions of satisfaction.

#### **4. To what extent are sessions' structure and pacing within a manageable timeframe?**

The online sessions' structure and pacing improved, as the intervention promoted timeframe efficiency by establishing teams for the whole program and assigning alternating roles for activities, which yielded trust, spontaneity, and dynamic exchanges. During the preintervention, extended periods of silence were observed as breakout sessions started. One participant would eventually start the discussion, while some would remain silent. The new structure saved time and promoted fluid transitions between lectures, activities, and reflections. As team activities started, participants assumed their assigned roles and began collaborating, fully utilizing allotted time in activities to

collaborate with peers. Team tasks were consistently completed with time for review prior to activities' conclusion. In the large group, the new structure allowed Instructors to call on teams' note taker/presenter for review, which also promoted effective time management. The structure and pacing also promoted consistency in session breaks.

Instructor's inquiry on the session's pacing drew favorable responses from participants in session chat: "I think the pace has been good", "the pace is great" and "The pace is good" (3/23/21). The structure promoted inclusiveness and efficiency. The sessions' pacing, resulting from the intervention improved, allowing time for regular breaks, promoting participants' comfort and satisfaction. In the preintervention observations, breaks occurred at varied times and sometimes for only 5 minutes. During the intervention evaluation, breaks were consistently given halfway through the session for 10 to 15 minutes. Instructors gave participants a choice on the length of the break. Giving participants choices recognizes them as individuals and promotes inclusive aspects of social presence.

Instructor interviews addressing the extent to which sessions' pacing and structure are within a manageable timeframe, emphasized the high-volume of course material for the PPM sessions. "It is challenging giving them exercises, out briefs and trying to manage all the content in the other hour of class and manage to accomplish something"(4/7/21). The volume of material is high, with fast pacing, yet based on the intervention observations and feedback from participants, the sessions' structure and pacing improved over the preintervention observations. The structure allowed instructors freedom to focus on participants, encouraging their involvement in reflective learning. The intervention provided instructors with the convenience of calling on a team for reflections, promoting fluidity of content by calling on a team's note taker for an overview on the topic. "From the standpoint of time management, I could call on a team name and say it's your turn. I was trying to keep track of how often I called on a team" (4/29/21). This structure allowed the instructor to engage with the whole group for input on topics. Overall, the intervention promoted timeframe management, allowing quality time for activities, reflections, and improved degrees of interaction in team activities and large group settings.

## **5. To what extent are participants effectively locating program materials?**

Participants effectively located materials in the program's OneDrive, as the intervention introduced labeling content by the week number, date, and topic, clarifying and enabling access in sessions and group activities, while promoting productivity in the online environment. Weekly role assignments for Facilitator and Notetaker/Presenter in activities were also placed in each weeks' folder to promote collaborations. This aspect promoted team interaction as the activities started. Placing role assignments and material in the program's weekly folders enhanced the sessions and stimulated participants' involvement in activities with direction and clarity.

Postintervention observations confirmed participants acknowledging their weekly role assignments and use of course content in activities. In team activities, all participants reviewed and agreed on daily role assignments and tasks (4/20/21). Instructors consistently referred to documents placed in program's weekly folder. In participant activity, a group looked for and shared a set of guidelines for 'Lessons Learned' to guide the discussion. The content was located within moments yielding effective use of time within the activity (4/29/21). Participant access to program's materials improved as no complaints or concerns were expressed during the postintervention evaluation, compared to the uncertainty to content location mentioned in the preintervention observations.



Instructor interviews confirmed the intervention's effectiveness in enabling participants to locate program materials. "I think it's pretty straightforward. I haven't had people complain that they can't find the week, ...I think we put helpful things in addition to the names, we put in the weeks"(4/7/21). Organizing and labeling content within the program's OneDrive with folders by week and subject promoted clarity and effective accessibility for participants in sessions and activities. "I thought it was great, in comparison to the normal confusion they had trying to find their materials, so I'm going to go with a high rating on this one" (4/29/21). Overall, the intervention effectively improved participants' ability to locate program materials while in the sessions. The intervention's structured design, promoted clarity, stimulated interaction, and enhanced the online learning experience for participants.

## **Recommendations and Discussion**

After analyzing all the data from session observations, participant surveys and instructor interviews, the following recommendations have been provided to promote collaborative productivity.

### **Cohesiveness**

- Remind instructors that their comfort is an important factor in promoting the interpersonal connections associated with the productive qualities of social presence.
- Acknowledge the instructors' success in consistently making the online learning interpersonally satisfying for their participants.
- Encourage Instructors' willingness to reflect on their teaching approach with participants.
- Share this evaluation's positive results with instructors related to their online interaction with participants and participant interaction with peers.

### **Assigned Teams**

- Continue the use of teams for the length of the sessions
  - Positive results show cohesiveness and participant satisfaction in survey and session interactions.
- Continue developing teams utilizing:
  - Diversity to promote inclusivity, distributing participants by:
    - Current job title
    - Years of experience in Project Management
    - Gender
    - Personality type as either introvert or extrovert
  - This method showed cohesive collaboration with higher degrees of participant interaction.
- To streamline the team development process, incorporate the two additional questions related to personality type, and years of experience in project management into existing intake questionnaire.
- Consider asking participants for their preferred pronoun. This may streamline the distribution of genders.
- Collaborate with instructors on approaches to distribute genders while respecting participants' privacy.
- Encourage instructors to collaborate on developing the session teams.

### **Assigned Roles**

- Continued use of assigned roles for group activities to promote participants' high degrees of interaction and inclusiveness.
- Have instructors reinforce the purpose of assigned roles to participants, as the session progresses, to make the learning experience more meaningful, and to improve participants' buy-in.
  - As assigned roles were reinforced by instructors, participants responded positively.

#### Course Content

- Continue use of course content labeling in the program's files in the program's OneDrive to enhance participants' access by:
  - Week number, date, and subject.
- Continue placing participants' team listing with assigned roles in each weekly folder.

#### Coordinating Resources

- Gain clarity in managing varied stakeholders' support obligations during the transition to online learning.
- Seek clarity in technical functions and session scheduling.
- Consistently activating tools like screen share for participants and allowing instructors to generate polls to gather information and show results promotes a dynamic learning environment.