

Up Your Virtual FEE* - A Tool for Distance Learning

*A Tool for Military Family Service Providers and
Family Life Educators for Applying Distance
Education Learning Theories*



What is FEE?

Family Engagement & Education (FEE*) includes digital learning experiences, synchronous or asynchronous, such as webinars, podcasts, blogs, and social media. FEE events can be live or available online for use at any time.

Why FEE?

Virtual technology offers many options for FEE when in-person programming isn't possible or desired.



Community of Inquiry Framework

Effective virtual FEEs begin by considering three kinds of presence in planning and implementation. All FEEs include these presences from the Community of Inquiry framework.

CONTENT PRESENCE

*Exchanging information
Applying new ideas
Connecting ideas*

SOCIAL PRESENCE

*Engagement with participants
Risk-free expression
Encouraging collaboration*

TEACHING PRESENCE

*Selecting goals, subject matter & activities
Focusing on interaction & discussion
Sharing personal meaning*

SUPPORTING DISCOURSE

SELECTING CONTENT

FEE EXPERIENCE

SETTING CLIMATE

Learning Theories (LTs) for FEE

Benefits of Learning Theories (LTs)



Improve planning, implementation, & assessment to reach intended goals



Help save time & energy in designing FEE programs



Enhance participants' experiences in virtual events

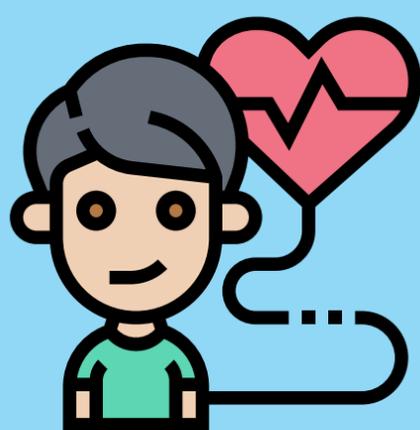
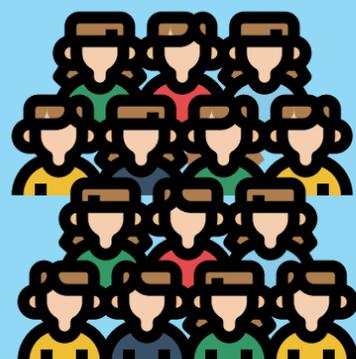
Implementing LTs to Execute FEE



LTs can help us become more mindful of how we engage with learners and what we communicate and teach.

Behavioral-Cognitive Theories

The FEE's goal is to transfer information quickly and efficiently to a large group of learners in many locations. In these theories, learning new information leads to change.



Social Cognitive & Constructivist Theories

The FEE's goal is to go deeper into content and engage learners in understanding and applying new information to their lives. In these theories, social interaction and knowledge together lead to change.

Connectivism Theories

The FEE's goal is to coach learners in identifying and solving an individual problem and to provide them with the network literacy skills to do so. Connectivism is similar to active learning and adult education principles with the addition of network literacy skills. These theories assume the learner can identify and find information to solve a practical problem.



FEE BEST PRACTICES

LTs inform best practices for virtual FEEs. Best practices are techniques that research or experience have shown that lead to the results desired. Here are a few things to keep in mind when using best practices...

#1 Consider the role of each of the three presences (Content, Social & Teaching)



Depending on the FEE's goal, the presences will vary in how they are used.



Teaching presence plays a critical role in each of the LTs.

#2

The nature of the teaching presence is the only thing that changes.

#3 Social presence is essential for all three LTs.

Even a video lecture needs to include interaction with the learners.



All content in the FEE needs to be credible & reliable

#4

It is important to use research-based information to avoid spreading misinformation. Be prepared to respond to questions that may arise during the FEE.

Best Practices for Using LTs in Virtual FEE

Helpful practices for using LTs before, during and after FEE programs and events.

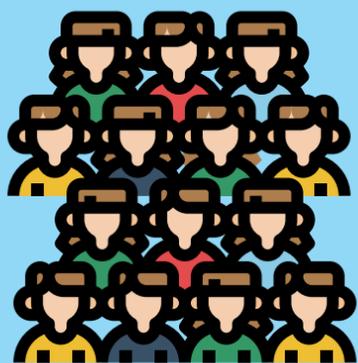


1

Behavioral-Cognitive

Use this LT if you are:

- New to virtual FEE;
- Showing a simple skill or giving factual information;
- Testing interest in a new program or idea;
- Reaching a large and diverse audience; and
- Offering one session as an event (i.e., webinar, Facebook Live, etc.).



Before the FEE event...

- Learn about your audience's access to technology & their learning needs.
- Focus on creating well-designed, engaging & organized learning experiences.
- Practice the event & technology before the event.
- Work within your technology capabilities & skills; seek help when needed.
- Find a co-facilitator to answer participants' logistic and technological questions during the event.

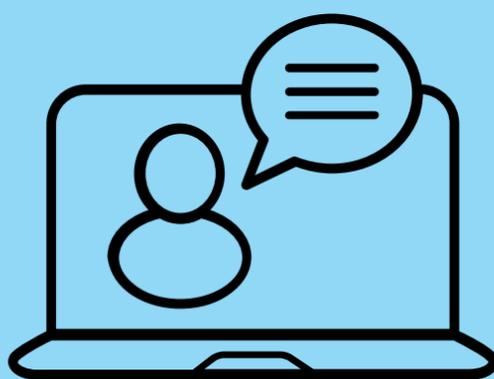
During the FEE event...

- Ask participants to introduce themselves & answer a simple question as they join the event.
- Use simple chat & poll questions to engage learners.
- Direct participants to use the chat to ask questions regarding the content. Be sure to leave time for answering questions.



After the FEE event...

- Reflect on what went well & what can be improved.
- Extend the learning with social media, blog posts, & podcasts.
- Use event products for future programs.

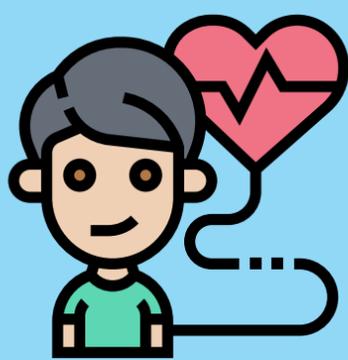




2

Social Cognitive-Constructivism

*Continue to use the best practices from LT 1



Use this LT if you are:

- Applying information & skills to daily life;
- Addressing complex or controversial issues;
- Planning 2 or more sessions in the program; and
- Working with a smaller group of 8 to 20 people.

Note: Including interactive activities takes longer to facilitate as participant numbers grow.

Before the FEE event...

- Scaffold or intentionally build in social interaction throughout the event.
- Plan learning experiences with a balance of content and social interaction activities: a 50-50 ratio.
- Enhance the use of both chat and poll activities to discuss case scenarios & problems.
- Know the interaction capabilities of the learning management systems & technology you may have access to.
- Find a co-facilitator that can assist with activities, tech challenges or other issues.



During the FEE event...

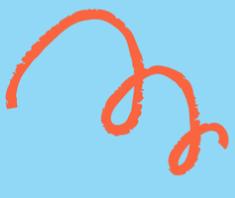


- Use a triggering activity to launch the learning experience.
- Prepare thought-provoking questions, cases or problems to solve.
- Use the chat function if participants' audio is turned off. Be certain to talk about the chat during the experience.
- Avoid the temptation to lecture when learners do not participate.
- Watch for cues that show participants' frustration with the technology.
- Re-visit what was learned in previous sessions after the first one. Do this at the beginning of each future session.

After the FEE event...

- Discuss with co-facilitator what worked well & what didn't.
- Adjust future sessions to address issues or concerns that arose.





3

Connectivism

*Continue to use the best practices from LTs 1 & 2

Use this LT if you are:

- Asking learners to determine & implement their own learning plan;
- Comfortable with & skilled at serving as a mentor or coach for participants;
- Knowledgeable about network literacy & have used it yourself;
- Skilled at online or virtual facilitation of learners;
- Working with a small-group (4-5 people) for individual projects; and
- Devoting a significant length of time for the learning experience (1 month or more).



Before the FEE event...

- Learn all you can about connectivism & how to apply it.
- Acquire high-quality technology; up-to-date hardware, software & apps will be needed.
- Acknowledge the approach doesn't fit everyone's learning style or educational delivery needs.
- Plan a calendar for learners' projects, with deadlines & group meetings.
- Put together the tools & materials needed to guide self-directed learning.



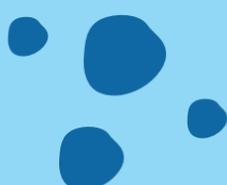
During the FEE event...

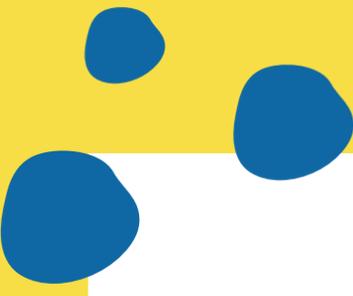
- Provide a digital venue or platform for learners to highlight their work.
- Check in with participants on a regular basis.
- Hold "seminars" with the learners to share progress & results of individual projects.



After the FEE event...

- Hold a focus group with the learners to assess the experience.
- Continue to develop your personal network literacy, coaching/mentoring & facilitation skills.





This infographic resulted from an unpublished paper on a process evaluation for the Family Transitions concentration area of the Military Families Learning Network. The evaluation was designed to identify strategies to improve virtual professional development for Military Family Service Providers (MFSPs).

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, this infographic was created to provide MFSPs with a guide for effectively working with military families in a virtual environment.

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Visit militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org for additional information, resources and support.

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