PLI – Effectiveness Checklist for Online Learning

This checklist will help you achieve your goals as an instructor. It is based on the scientific research on learning.

Preparing for Your Online Learning Session	Check Off
1. **Decide What to Teach:** First, answer these questions, "What real-world situations am I preparing my participants for, and what specifically do I want them to be able to do in those situations? What decisions am I preparing them to make?"	☐
2. **Focus on High-Priority Content:** Your goal is NOT to cover tons of material. Instead, choose high-priority content and cover it well. Discuss relevant realistic situations, examples, and counterexamples. Provide decision-making practice and make time for discussions or interactions that enable learners to understand the content.	☐
3. **Use Slides to Clarify and Highlight:** Use slides to present clarifying visuals, to help learners track the conceptual organization of your session, and to highlight key points. Avoid traditional bullet points, but instead present one concept per slide or disguise your bullet points as objects. Show slide elements one at a time.	☐
4. **Prepare Hypotheticals:** Develop hypothetical scenarios that highlight key points and require learners to make realistic, challenging decisions. Provide plausible choices and include common mistakes.	☐
5. **Develop Reinforcing Questions:** For each of your key points, develop a set of scenario questions to help you determine how well learners have understood what you wanted them to understand. Deliver these toward the end of your session.	☐
6. **Develop Engaging Activities:** To keep your audience engaged you will need to vary interactions. In addition to hypotheticals and reinforcing questions, build poll questions, chat discussions, whiteboard activities, group activities, & short tasks.	☐
7. **Set Up Your "Broadcast Studio":** Think of your desk, computer, webcam, lighting, and microphone as your broadcast studio. Ensure you look and sound good.	☐
8. **Practice, Practice, Practice:** Practice with your equipment and your presentation slides—also practice with your co-presenters. Practice is important in your face-to-face teaching, but it is even more critical online.	☐
Ensuring Your Credibility and Connection	Check Off
9. **Be Visible, Professionally and Periodically:** Your audience wants to connect with you. Show your face on video from time-to-time during your session, but avoid showing your video when you are presenting learning content on your slides. Ensure your image is not backlit. Light your face and look into the camera.	☐
10. **Sound Good:** Use a good quality microphone. Consider a lavaliere or headset that makes you look like a professional (not a gamer). Mute participants as appropriate. Broadcast from a quiet space, free of distractions. Shut down your browser, email, and other programs that utilize internet bandwidth. Speak with enthusiasm.	☐
11. **Demonstrate Credibility:** Don't brag or "tell" your experience, instead demonstrate your experience and wisdom through your stories and examples. Be authentic about what you know and don't know. It's okay not to know everything.	☐
12. **Motivate Interest:** Early on, make a case for why your topic is relevant, important, and interesting. Highlight how it is relevant in real-world situations.	☐
13. **Practice and Support:** It is hard enough in a classroom to look fluent and comfortable and knowledgeable all at the same time. Online, it is exponentially harder. You must practice until you feel comfortable and fluent. When you present, use a "producer" to handle non-instructional tasks.	☐