

Contract (Customized) Training – a Growing Opportunity for Lifelong Learning

In the following article, Greg Marsello introduces the reader to important concepts in contract training management, with a particular focus on business management software applications geared towards contract training. Marsello asserts that the needs of contract training programs differ greatly from those of open enrollment programs due to the complications introduced into the processing of transactions and registrations. The author finds that contract training requires advanced financial tracking features, such as accounts receivable functions, in addition to fully functional grades and attendance modules. Marsello recommends getting a full featured contract management module within a learning management system to manage these advanced financial and reporting functions.

Abstract

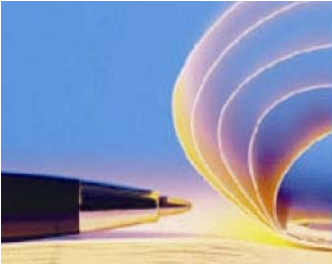
Contract training is fast becoming a prominent feature in the lifelong learning business model as companies look for ways to train their staff more effectively, and keep their workforce current with knowledge trends. The knowledge-based economy is making partnerships between education and business commonplace, and increasingly essential. As such, it is important that your program have a way to support contract training. Supporting contract training goes beyond merely offering businesses the ability to train their employees through your program; your program also needs smart business tools to manage all facets of contract training. Contract training programs can use the advanced features of a learning management system to help facilitate these business learning partnerships.

Greg Marsello,
*Vice President of
Development, Learning
Resources Network*

Many continuing and community education programs provide contract training to businesses, government, and non-profit organizations. Programs that offer contract programs sign an agreement with a business or organization to provide a service at a set fee. Contract training is quickly becoming an essential financial component for these programs.

In order to meet the needs of contract training programs, learning management systems must contain several unique features, as the management needs of staff in programs that provide contract training are different from the needs of staff developing open enrollment classes.

Learning management systems that facilitate contract training need to be able to track various activities and discussions with businesses and organizations. A good contract training module lets you create and maintain business and organizational profiles separate from student profiles. A contract training program should also let you associate individual student profiles with their



employers. The contract training module should also be able to track rudimentary details of the contract – how contract payment is processed, what kind of classes are offered, and how many classes or registrations are covered by the contract.

Contract training often involves complicated registration and transaction processes. Your learning management system needs to be flexible enough to let businesses or organizations use these processes to purchase classes for their employees. The software must offer flexible pricing and payment options such as “bulk” registrations or discounts or charging classes to an employer account. Companies need to pay for their employees’ registrations, while still having the registration be under the employee’s name. To keep track of these registrations, learning management systems need to have a fully configured accounts receivable program.

Businesses, non-profits, and governments need to ensure that their employees are getting the proper training for the job. Therefore, any contract training module should include, or seamlessly interface with, a grades and attendance module within your learning management system. If an employee needs to complete a certain set of classes to complete training for his company, then your system should be able to track credits and CEUs, and report on the employee’s progress towards training goals.

Your contract training management system also needs to generate key client reports that provide different analyses than standard open enrollment reports. These reports include full accounts receivable reporting, and grades and attendance reporting. Each report should be customizable to include only a single organization’s data – your staff shouldn’t have to work to create organization specific reports. This data should also be useful to your program, and be fully exportable into your offline accounting software.

Contract training helps generate valuable partnerships between business, non-profits, government and learning organizations. It also can lead to a very complicated registration and accounting process. You should make sure that your learning management system helps to simplify this process by hosting contract training registration, accounting, and management functions in one central location.