



WPI

THE CASA PROJECT: A Critical Assessment of Training Program Options

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report

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Abstract

The CASA Project wants to translate their in-person training to an e-Learning platform. Our goal was to assess their current training program and recommend e-Learning platforms. To reach this goal, we observed the in-person training, provided questionnaires and evaluations, and conducted interviews. Due to sponsor fiscal limitations, we recommend the use of a free platform, WordPress, until obtaining more funding. At that point, we recommend further assistance from another project team to design and implement an e-Learning platform.

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Executive Summary

Introduction/Background

The goal of this project was to assess the current CASA training program and recommend e-Learning platforms to The CASA Project. The project's primary objectives were:

1. To Analyze Current CASA Organization Training Programs.
2. To Analyze e-Learning platforms.

In this chapter the group discusses the methods used to gain data to provide the sponsor with the following deliverables:

- An assessment report including an analysis of the current CASA training program
- Recommendation of e-Learning platforms

The CASA Project is an organization looking to help abused and neglected children in foster care. The CASA Project has grown over the years but needs more volunteers to ultimately provide every child in foster care with an advocate. e-Learning platforms are a possible way to make the training more accessible to potential volunteers. These platforms have features and specifications that can benefit The CASA Project but at the cost of the social interaction that the current in-person training provides. In the past, The CASA Project attempted to recruit more volunteers by implementing the National CASA's Flex Training. In a second attempt, they offered weekend sessions to their training program. Both of these attempts were unsuccessful in recruiting more volunteers.

Methodology

The team conducted observations by attending part of the training session. Afterward, we gave questionnaires to the trainees. The questionnaires were analyzed alongside the evaluations

that The CASA Project presents to trainees at the conclusion of the training. Finally, we interviewed members of The CASA Project, as well as experts at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in the field of online training.

Results & Analysis

From our observations of the current in-person training program, we identified three key invaluable components of the training program: mediated class discussions, guest speakers, and role-playing. Instructor feedback furthered the value of the training contents by enabling trainees to openly discuss difficult scenarios in a group setting, while instructors maintained the focus of the conversation. Open-ended discussion periods reinforced The CASA Project training course contents by tying the previously learned materials to real life experiences. The team discovered that this supplemental information provided by guest speakers increased the overall value of the training experience.

We noted from our interviews, questionnaire, and analysis of evaluations six components of the training program that can be improved upon: instructional information, program accessibility, guest speakers, in-class technology and multimedia, program assessments, and role-playing. Results from the class evaluations presented the need for additional information on the following topics: report writing, interview strategies, and full case walkthroughs. While the majority of trainees were pleased with the training program, the evaluation results revealed that the program needs to be more accessible. The results from the questionnaires, class evaluations and interviews presented a demand for the integration of more technology and interactive multimedia (videos, powerpoints, etc.). The team found the necessity to incorporate trainee assessments into the training program, which the current program does not include. The questionnaire, course evaluation, and interview results indicated the role-playing interactions were

what the trainees found to be the most valuable portion of the program. Data results from the questionnaire exemplified that role-playing and face-to-face interactions would be unsuccessful if taught online. The case supervisors believed that a management system could benefit the volunteer training, but some were skeptical of what portions of the course material being effectively taught online.

Experts noted obstacles to anticipate during the implementation process and how to avoid or better manage the outcome. Important gaps to consider are implementation misconception, synchronous vs. asynchronous instructional delivery methods, e-Learning software training, online feasibility, and training module content design. Experts provided critical information to produce a decision matrix in order to effectively compare the various e-Learning platforms. Important e-Learning platform features include: discussion boards, assessments & grading, user interface, whitewashing, live streaming, SCORM compliance, scalability, et cetera. Free e-Learning platforms could be implemented to fulfill The CASA Project's short-term and potentially long-term needs. These include: Google Classroom, Wordpress, Prosperity Free, and Canvas Free For Teachers.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on this project, the team makes recommendations in the following areas: Current training program, moving the training program online and future works.

We recommend for the current training program that: the role playing component of the training remains in-person; in-class technology and multimedia be upgraded to provide trainees with a better experience; the training program be more accessible to prospective volunteers by increasing the number of available sessions and having the sessions more frequently; more time be allocated to report writing, interview strategies, and full case walkthroughs; more guest

speakers be integrated into the program because they provide invaluable experience and knowledge to trainees; The CASA Project implement assessments as a way to evaluate if volunteers are field ready.

For moving the training online we recommend that: The CASA Project hires an instructional designer to translate the material online; supplemental materials on role-playing, group discussions/interactions and question and answer sessions be implemented online; The CASA Project use WordPress, a free management system to host their online training.

For future works, we recommend that: The CASA Project request grant money and funding to allow for a more advanced e-Learning platform to be implemented; the implementation of the e-Learning platform is done slowly over time; The CASA Project request another project team to assist in designing and implementing the online course materials.

The CASA Project is a growing nonprofit organization and is in the process of overhauling their training program. Over the next 3-5 years, they plan to double their volunteer base. With our recommendations, The CASA Project has the potential to reach their goal. This increase will bring them closer to achieving their mission of being a voice to every abused and neglected child in the Worcester County area.

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1.0 Introduction

Childhood is often seen as a time of play, nurturing, and learning, but for many children, this dream is far from their reality. “In 2015, more than 670,000 children spent time in out-of-home placement” (New Jersey Department of Children and Families, 2017). The extensive amount of time that a child remains in foster care is often a result of judges lacking the necessary, unbiased information. This information would be used determine if the child’s current situation is safe and what the safest environment is for the child to reside. Volunteers, otherwise known as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), are designated to provide unbiased research and insight to the court system, especially judges, on behalf of the child. While there is a high demand for CASA volunteers, there is always a gap between demand and supply. Potential volunteers are not always readily available, and children remain in the limbo of foster care and the justice system as a result.

Massachusetts is an example of a state where neglected and abused children are lost in the foster care system. “In 2000, the Massachusetts system served 18,011 children” (Johnson, 2005), “with the “Worcester county accounting for around 1,600 abused, neglected or exploited children” (“About CASA,” n.d.). CASA is a national association that provides support for these mistreated, neglected, and abused children. The goal of the CASA Project is to provide these children with the voice they need in court to allow them to grow up in a safe home, with a sense of hope, and a promising future.

CASA collaborates with the Massachusetts Child Welfare System, including the Worcester County Juvenile Courts, and four offices of the Department of Children and Families. In 2013, 180 CASA advocates served over 560 children among the five sessions of the Worcester County

Juvenile Court: Leominster, Fitchburg, Worcester, Milford, and Dudley. In order to assist the Juvenile Court, the volunteers perform three essential functions (“About CASA,” n.d.). First, they investigate the children’s families and environmental conditions and present factual data based on their research and observations. Volunteers then help obtain medical, mental health, and educational services for the child, as needed. Lastly, they assist in advocating for the well-being of the children in court. Advocating for the well-being of the children is done by attending court and speaking for the child’s best interest. The volunteer also presents the judge with a written report of the child’s situation, as well as recommendations for permanent residency (“About Us” n.d.).

CASA partners with the five Juvenile Courts in Worcester to provide trained volunteers to as many children in need as possible. Efforts have been made to get more volunteers to speak up for these children, but it is difficult for many potential volunteers to attend the 30-hour, in-person training sessions. Currently, there are about 300 active volunteers and 1600 children in need of an advocate; that is just over a 1:5 gap ratio of advocates to children in need (L. Tesconi, personal communication, January 16, 2018). In an effort to increase its pool of trained volunteers, CASA is currently assessing and investigating whether and how to move their classroom-based training course to an online training format. Online training has the potential to be more manageable and accessible to volunteers, enabling volunteers to train in the comfort of their homes, and ideally, increase the volunteer population. The goal of was to assess the current CASA training program and recommend e-Learning platforms to The CASA Project. This IQP will provide the following deliverables to the client:

- An assessment report including an analysis of the current CASA training program
- An assessment report including e-Learning platforms recommendation

2.0 Project Background

2.0.1 Background Introduction.

The National CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Association substantially influences the situational and environmental outcomes for children navigating the juvenile court system across the United States. Despite the important services it offers, The CASA Project Organization of Worcester County (“The CASA Project,” 2017) currently lacks the volunteers needed to support the growing number of children in Massachusetts’ overcrowded foster system. In this chapter, we provide background to our assessment of whether and how The CASA Project might move their classroom-based training course to an online training format. More specifically, in this chapter we will discuss:

1. The National CASA Association and the local branch - The CASA Project
2. e-Learning platforms
3. The CASA Project’s previously implemented solutions

2.1 The CASA Organization

In this section, we give a brief overview of the history and demographics of the CASA organization. Then, we discuss the steps involved in becoming a CASA volunteer, the roles of a volunteer and the current training process. Next, we present knowledge on e-Learning platforms. Finally, we discuss The CASA Project’s past attempts to increase volunteer recruitment.

2.1.1 History & Demographics

The CASA organization is a nationally recognized, non-profit organization that works for the best interests of children working alongside its state and local member branches. The organization's goal is to provide every abused and neglected child in the United States with a CASA volunteer. The volunteer will promote the child's health and safety, advocate for a permanent home, and provide them with the opportunity to thrive ("About CASA," n.d.). Advocates seek to prevent children from being lost in the foster care system by giving the judge unbiased insight into the child's best interests.

The CASA organization has evolved and grown tremendously since its movement started in 1977. "Today, a network of more than 940 program offices serve children in 49 states." (Soukup, 2007). Currently, there are more than 76,000 volunteers nationally that have served over 251,000 children by advocating for a safe, permanent home ("About Us," n.d.).

2.1.2 Becoming a CASA Volunteer

Three steps must be completed to become a CASA:

- Complete an online application
- Pass a background check
- Complete the 30-hour training program

("Become a CASA Volunteer," n.d.).

The CASA Project training programs occur quarter-annually, for a total period of five days over two weeks equivalating to a total of 30 hours of interaction. In each training program, morning sessions are offered from 9:00 am - 12:30 pm, and evening sessions run from 4:30 pm - 8:00 pm ("Volunteer Responsibilities," n.d.). All of the training sessions currently occur in-person at the

Worcester CASA offices at 100 Grove Street. The training sessions are conducted by The CASA Project staff. The sessions teach the following topics:

- CASA Roles and Responsibilities
- The Judicial Court System
- The Department of Children and Families Involvement
- Interview Skill Building
- Report Writing Skills
- Mental and Physical Health of Child Analyses
- Education of Child Analyses
- Safety of Child Analyses

An optional swearing-in ceremony at the Worcester County Courthouse is available upon completion of the program for new volunteers (The CASA Project, 2017).

The volunteer's responsibility is to advocate for the child's interests, bringing concerns in regards to physical health, mental health, or education to the appropriate professionals. In order to know the needs of the child, it is important for a volunteer to visit them at least once a month ("Volunteer Responsibilities," n.d.). The volunteers present their findings in written reports to the court, which the judge can use to further assess the child's case.

"A survey of over 500 judges showed that the majority of judges use the input that CASA provides in their decision making, and find that CASA is useful and effective in monitoring cases and considering the best interests of children (ORS, 2005)" (Lawson & Berrick, 2013).

While judges obtain input from various parties, they find CASA useful in presenting information in terms of the juvenile's best interests.

2.2 e-Learning platforms

e-Learning has been promoted as being more cost-effective and convenient, as well as allowing learners a more accessible way to complete their education. For the purposes of the project, our team has chosen to define e-Learning platform to be training that takes place partially or completely over the internet (Means, Toyama, Murphey, Bakia & Jones, 2010). “The main element of e-Learning is to get learning experience by using an internet connection” (“Difference Between e-Learning and Online Learning,” n.d.). Implementing online training requires an understanding of what can be represented online and the various ways it can be implemented to suit the needs of the program. e-Learning platforms “ are invaluable tools for individual and corporate training which streamline the relationship between teachers and learners, and store all useful information in centralized databases from where it can be easily accessed. Delivery of materials is easy due to their social networking properties, and modules are flexible enough to be personalized to meet every need and style.” (“What is Learning Management System - LMS?” n.d.). e-Learning platforms offer options and learning tools to assist in implementing an online course.

2.2.1 e-Learning Overview.

E-Learning involves specific terminology (Table 1) that is critical to understanding the information presented below.

e-Learning Term	Definition
Blended Learning	Method of instruction that comprises of in-person activities in combination with e-Learning materials
E-learning	Using technology to train or deliver education. E-Learning in its most rudimentary form is just a student learning from a computer.
Asynchronous Delivery	When students complete a training course according to their

Method	own schedule.
Synchronous Delivery Method	When students complete a training course that must be completed to according to a specific schedule.
Backwards Design	A model of learning that utilizes instructional tools focused on the outcome rather than the process.

Note: Asynchronous delivery method and synchronous delivery method definitions from "Asynchronous Vs. Synchronous E-Learning," (n.d.), e-Learning definition from "Learning Management System (LMS)," (n.d.), blended learning and backward design other terms from Wiggins & McTighe, (2017).

The ubiquity of technology has transformed education, making e-Learning increasingly popular over the past 20 years. Advances in digital communications have opened up new forms of learning and delivery: for example, e-Learning provides access to readily available electronic media and portable learning makes learning more scalable, flexible and accessible. This more flexible learning has displayed benefits for learners of all age groups and has made equal access to education available to people at all stages of their lives at no extra cost (Arnab et al., 2013). That being said, the delivery of e-Learning has been subject to controversy over the past decade. (Nkuyubwatsi, 2014).

Table 2: e-Learning Platform Model Types	
Models	Descriptions
Learning Management Systems (LMS)	A system used by trainers/teachers to track and train students online. Usually has more advanced features and support, in order to further enhance the learner's experience.
Learning Content Management Systems (LCMS)	A system used to host materials to teach or train a set of students. Usually has minimal features at lower cost.
Software as a Service (SaaS)	A system used to deliver software and is used from a single location on a web browser.
Competency Management System (CMS)	A system used for training skill and knowledge requirements needed for a certain job/position.
Unified Learning Platform (ULP)	Allows for teachers to work with the students and their parents as well as allowing full school

	staff to be employed. Usually used for k-12 learning.
Free Versus Open-Source Learning Content Management Systems (LCMS)	Free LCMS: A LCMS without cost Open-Source LCMS: A LCMS that allows anyone to access the source code.

Note: LMS, LCMS, SaaS and CMS definitions from “Learning Management System (LMS),” (n.d.), ULP definition from, Hammam (n.d.), Free Versus Open-Source LCMS definition from Forest (2017, April 10).

As the technology evolved it was paving the way for transformation in education, a better comprehension of e-Learning was developed (Garrison, 2011). The main success came in blended learning approaches (Table 1). It was noted that the blended learning approach did not suffer low retention rates.

Blended learning combines the best features of both face-to-face and e-Learning to deliver personalized differentiated instruction across a group of learners (Fetzer, Powell, Staley, Verma & Watson, 2015). Blended courses or hybrid courses can be used to “foster learning communities, extend training events, offer follow-up resources in a community of practice, access guest experts...present online lab or simulation activities and deliver pre-assessments or supplemental course materials” (Sahin, 2010). A study conducted in 2010 investigated whether blended learning can contribute to student performance in the job-related education of footwear design students. “The study group consisted of 56 students, 28 of whom are of a control group and the other 28 students are of an experimental group,” (Sahin, 2010). In this study, the experimental group was the group that trained using the blended program. The study presented that the group that was taught using the blended training method scored an extra 12% higher than the control group in the final tests.

This study is an indication that blended training can positively influence the performances of learners in a job-related training program, producing higher success rates (Sahin, 2010, p. 98). Another meta-analysis of comparative studies between online and in-person learning also

confirmed that e-Learning was at least as effective as in-person learning, and that blended learning approaches are significantly more beneficial than one or other used exclusively (Means, Toyama, Murphey, Bakia, & Jones, 2010).

Some advantages of e-Learning include:

- increased accessibility for trainees
- ability to review materials at the learner's pace as many times as needed
- options to include supplemental or prerequisite materials
- tailors to multiple learning styles

The disadvantages of online training cannot be ignored. Some disadvantages include:

- lack of computer skills among trainees
- trainees may feel a sense of isolation
- may lack human interaction

(C. Keller, personal communication, January 16, 2018)

2.2.2 Online Training in Non-profit Organizations

Some of the motives that drive people to volunteer include: values (to show regard for altruistic affairs); social (to fortify social relationships); understanding (to develop new skills and gain new experiences); career (to acquire job related skills); enhancement (to better one's self regard) (Do Paço, Agostinho & Nave, 2013). "At the end, the volunteers' satisfaction will be related to the extent to which these expectations and motivations were satisfied within the organization" (Do Paço, Agostinho & Nave, 2013). For these reasons, the quality of the volunteer training plays an important role in volunteer satisfaction and volunteer retention rates.

In this age of rapid technological advancements, non-profit organizations are integrating technology into their volunteer training programs. The use of technology is intended to increase

recruitment through accessibility, volunteer retention rates through the ability to review materials and value of training programs. Non-profit organizations face complexities that do not usually arise in for companies or corporations. Fiscal constraints are a major contributing factor. Non-profit organizations receive funding from government stipends, receiving grants, and hosting fundraising events to acquire donations from local community members. Another issue that arises is that volunteers have diverse backgrounds and competencies that complicate the implementation of technology (le Dantec & Edwards, 2008).

To cater to these complexities, the balance of technology is key in a non-profit. Excessive use of technology dehumanizes their processes by automating a lot of their activities (Iverson & Burkart, 2007). In an organization that thrives on human interaction, dehumanizing the efforts can be detrimental to a non-profit organization. Hence, from background information in section 2.2.1, a blended training approach is more suited to non-profit organizations.

2.2.3 e-Learning platform Features & Specifications.

e-Learning platforms are defined and differentiated by one another through the features and specifications that they offer. Below are definitions of features and specifications that are commonly seen in this industry. Table 2 provides a detailed summary of salient comparison features and specifications.

Scalability	No cap on active users. No time limit. No limit to groups. No limit to the number of courses on the system.
Security	The ability to have usernames and passwords to access certain parts of the courses.
Native Web Hosting	The software is hosted on-site and accessed by clients via the cloud. AKA: Cloud-based hosting
Onboarding	The client is trained by a team on how to setup, use, and access the features of the management system.
24/7 Tech Support	A person is readily available at all times to help the client in any case of technical failure or difficulty.
SCORM	Supports and is compatible with SCORM packages.

Administration	A number separate accounts available with more permissions for teachers and administrators.
Built-in Collaborative Tools	Elements used to engage students in sharing course materials. I.e. blogs, wiki
Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) Integration	Supports different LTI software to enhance the users' experience.
Intuitive Design	Easy-to-use interface and easy to navigate, including the ability to view videos and documents easily.
Optimal Tools & Building Blocks	"Pay as you go" Pay for the features that you are using.
Built-in Course Content Authoring Tools	Allows the client to create and author courses using a variety of tools at their disposal.
Responsive Design	Allows the reader to view and read the content with the minimal maneuvering of the page through scrolling or zooming.
Built-in Assessment and Testing Tools	Online exam system with a variety of tools available for testing.
Adaptive Release	Being able to control specific deadlines for specific people.
Google Apps Integration	Supports Google Apps, allowing YouTube videos to be embedded and Google docs to be used in the learning experience.
Single Sign-on	Allows the user to log in once and utilize the option of not having to re-input the username and password every time after that.

Note: Definitions from "All Features Overview," (n.d.), "Talentlms," (n.d.), "LMS Glossary," (n.d.), "LMS Investigation," (n.d.).

2.2.4 e-Learning Gaps.

When implementing an e-Learning program it is difficult to address both the faculties' and learners' needs. Not all information can be taught in the same fashion online as it would be taught in-person; the information needs to be presented in a way that is engaging and interactive. Some course material cannot be taught online effectively as it requires face-to-face interaction. Another gap is how technically inclined the users are. If the instructors and users do not know how to navigate and use the system a technological gap will be created limiting the effectiveness of the training program. (C. Keller, personal communication, January 16, 2018).

2.3 The CASA Project Previously Incorporated Solutions.

The CASA Project has previously changed their training program in the attempt to increase their volunteer recruitment. One attempted solution was to use the blended training program provided by the National CASA. Another was to increase the accessibility to the in-person training program. The CASA Project concluded that these methods were not a perfect fit for their organization.

2.3.1 National CASA Organization Flex Training.

The CASA Project attempted to increase their volunteer recruitment through the use of Flex Training. “The initial purpose behind the development and launch of the *Flex Learning* curriculum was to integrate technology with training and introduce the CASA/GAL network to a plethora of e-Learning tools. However, that purpose soon expanded, as programs embraced the new curriculum as a way to cope with shrinking training budgets and the increasing need for trained, competent, CASA/GAL volunteers” (“Flex Learning Training Curriculum Update,” n.d.). At the close of 2013, over 2,200 volunteers were trained with the Flex Learning curriculum (“Flex Learning Training Curriculum Update,” n.d.). Flex Training did not work for The CASA Project because it was a complicated system that allowed for little control. The program is run by the national organization and leaves the local organizations no way to evaluate the program, (L. Tesconi, personal communication, January 16, 2018).

2.3.2 In-Person Training Accessibility Options.

The CASA Project attempted to increase volunteer recruitment by making their training program more accessible. One way to make their training more available was through offering 8-hour training sessions on Saturdays. These sessions could provide prospective volunteers with

weekday jobs a better opportunity to complete the training. According to The CASA Project Associate Director, Lynn Tesconi, not enough instructors or special guest speakers could make it on Saturdays to instruct the course materials (L. Tesconi, personal communication, January 16, 2018).

2.4 Conclusion

The CASA Project is an organization looking to help abused and neglected children in foster care. The CASA Project has grown over the years but needs more volunteers to ultimately provide every child in foster care with an advocate. e-Learning platforms are a possible way to make the training more accessible to potential volunteers. These platforms have features and specifications that can benefit The CASA Project but at the cost of the social interaction that the current in-person training provides. In the past, The CASA Project attempted to recruit more volunteers by implementing the National CASA's Flex Training and making their program more accessible.

3.0 Methodology

3.0.1 Introduction

The goal of this project was to assess the current CASA training program and recommend e-Learning platforms to The CASA Project. The primary objectives were:

1. To Analyze Current CASA Organization Training Programs.
2. To Analyze e-Learning platforms.

In this chapter the group discusses the methods used by the team to gain data to provide the sponsor with the following deliverables:

- An assessment report including an analysis of the current CASA training program.
- An assessment report including e-Learning platform recommendations.

3.1 Analyze Current CASA Organization Training Programs.

The team analyzed the current CASA organizations' training program to determine which portions of the current training course can be taught through the use of an e-Learning platform. The team analyzed the current CASA training programs to answer the following major questions:

- Which portions of Worcester CASA's current in-person training program have provided the greatest value to new volunteers?
- What training materials are recommended to remain in-person?
- What are course materials recommended to be instructed through an e-learning platform?

We used three methods to address these questions. First, we observed a portion of the training program sessions. Second, we developed and administered a questionnaire for prospective trainees

focused on the frequency of use of technology and their perspective on moving training materials online. We also analyzed The CASA Project's course evaluations. This gave a different data set from the same population for analysis. Thirdly, we interviewed CASA staff to understand the training program and what materials could be moved online versus what materials should remain in-person.

3.1.1. Direct Field Observations.

The team attended two of the Worcester CASA's training sessions. During these sessions, the group recorded qualitative observations to gain knowledge on the following:

- Engagements involving entire classroom discussions and questions based on previously provided course materials.
- Critical thinking solutions to demographically and situationally specific issues in small group atmospheres.
- Instructional methods that could/couldn't be conveyed through an e-Learning platform.

The group took the role of a complete observer. The researcher is present in the interview or focus group but does not integrate themselves into the research or interact with insiders to any great extent. Researchers only listen, observe, and record pertinent data. One particular advantage of becoming a complete and unobtrusive observer is that the researchers can fully remain detached from the group. (Baker, 2006).

The team obtained an understanding of the complexities throughout the CASA training programs and how course materials can be equally conveyed through an e-Learning platform. The CASA Project team sought out this information to provide a basis of knowledge on the training

program; this could then be compared to the opinions of the training instructors, supervisors, and trainees.

3.1.2. Questionnaire and Evaluations.

The feedback from the questionnaires and evaluations was crucial to understanding the value and impact of the current in-person training. The Director of training, Sue Meagher attached the questionnaire to the class evaluations and distributed them to the training program attendees during their last session. The team compiled a list of five short answer questions in to survey the same population. The questionnaire was estimated to take approximately three to five minutes to complete. The questions focused on the trainees' opinions about moving the training program online, and which parts would enhance and/or diminish the value of the program for the prospective volunteers. The questions asked are in appendix A.

“This method of research is commonly used for the purposes of gaining insight into the attitudes, thoughts, and opinions of populations,” (Brewer, Torrisi-Steele, Wang, 2014). The team wanted to understand the trainee's opinions of the training program they just completed and a questionnaire provides a quick means to obtain this opinions. Similar results could have been obtained through interviews or focus groups, but due to time constraints, these methods were undesirable.

3.1.3. Interviews.

The team interviewed the trainers and supervisors at The CASA Project to understand their opinions regarding what training materials could be moved online versus what materials should remain in-person. The group interviewed Sue Meagher, the Training Director at The CASA Project, to gain insight on training and continuing education programs that The CASA Project

requires of their volunteers. The team also sought to learn about the gaps that she foresaw possibly occurring during:

- The course content developmentation
- The implementation of the training materials from in-person delivery to online.

The group interviewed Ms. Meagher to gain a more in-depth knowledge on the classroom topics she teaches and what she believes would be best instructed in-person to increase the value of the volunteer experience, confidence, and preparedness in the field. The team obtained this information to assist in providing a more comprehensive assessment to the sponsor regarding their current training program.

The team also interviewed three CASA case supervisors: Ray Austin, Jim Steele, and Fernanda Suggs. The group interviewed the supervisors to provide useful insight into the most effective delivery methods to provide the prospective volunteers with a valuable training experience. The interviews provided pertinent information to effectively analyze the current training program, specifically in regards to which specific portions of the in-person training have the greatest impact on the trainee's overall success.

Interviews are a method best chosen, "if you want to understand or explore finely shaded human issues if your question seems best answered in prose rather than with numbers, and if you want to explore a trend or an experience looking for themes," (Wilson, 2012). The team conducted semi-structured interviews, which is more flexible in nature than a structured interview. "They involve having a set of guiding questions that will keep the interview on track," (Wilson, 2012). The team chose this method to gain in-depth personalized information from the CASA organization staff members.

3.2 Analyze e-Learning platforms.

Our team assessed the pros and cons of designing, implementing, and sustaining an array of possible e-Learning options. The CASA Project was especially concerned about possible obstacles that may occur during the content development and implementation process of an online training program. Given budgetary constraints, we were also interested in examining what the best options were at different price points, and when and how The CASA Project might scale up their e-Learning platform or online training over time, as monies become available. Major research questions answered in this section are:

- What should key features of e-learning platforms be kept in mind when researching vendors?
- What are possible obstacles that could be faced when developing and implementing an e-Learning platform?
- How can in-person training best be implemented online?
- What are the price points of e-Learning platforms?
- What alternatives to e-Learning platform can the sponsor utilize?

To address these questions, we utilized several methods. First, we conducted interviews with experts on e-Learning platforms and the implementation process. Secondly, the team talked to vendors as prospective clients to learn what features their platforms have to offer and how these features could benefit The CASA Project. As part of our analysis, we created a decision matrix (a chart made up of rows and columns that present data visually and divides the data amongst the variables) to compare and contrast the e-Learning platform vendors.

From the collected observations and data, the group created a decision matrix to compare and contrast the e-Learning platform vendors. The team chose expert interviews because of the

ability to gain in-depth knowledge on the subject of e-Learning platforms. A focus group or survey would not be able to provide this personalized knowledge.

3.2.1 Expert Interviews.

Our team gained expert advice by conducting interviews about e-Learning platforms recommendations, e-Learning course content development, and the e-learning platform implementation process. The team interviewed experts at Worcester Polytechnic Institute’s Academic Technology Center including:

- Kate Beverage - Director, Technology for Teaching & Learning
- Lindsey Van Gieson - Instructional Technology System Specialist
- Caitlin Keller - Instructional Designer
- Debra Dexter - Content, Training & Communications Coordinator of the Information Technology Department at WPI

The team also interviewed Michelle McGinnis, web development contractor for The CASA Project, to provide the team with information regarding how Texas CASA implemented their training program. She also gave information about the capabilities of the website that she will be designing for The CASA Project.

The interview questions can be found in Appendix C

The following table illustrates the conducted interviews in relation to the research questions that were answered.

Table 4: Interviews organized by research questions			
	e-Learning platforms Implementation	e-Learning platforms Features & Specs	Add-Ons & In Class-Tech
<i>Michelle McGinnis</i>	✓		
<i>Kate Beverage</i>	✓	✓	

<i>Lindsey Van Gieson</i>	✓	✓	
<i>Debra Dexter</i>	✓	✓	
<i>Caitlin Keller</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Jess Baer</i>		✓	✓
<i>Jennifer deWinter</i>		✓	✓

The team intended to use the experts’ knowledge and experiences with online training implementation to make recommendations to the sponsors. A set back to this method was the time constraint of the project. Scheduling interviews with experts were difficult with our short timeframe and their busy schedules.

3.2.2 Conduct Interviews to Gain Insight Into the Different Specifications and Features of e-Learning platforms.

To make recommendations to The CASA Project the group sought to understand the important features that e-Learning platforms must possess in order to fit within the organization's goals. To understand these features, the team interviewed experts that have implemented a similar training using e-Learning platforms. Questions asked can be found in Appendix C. Experts interviewed include: Jess Baer, Kate Beverage, Lindsey Van Gieson, Jennifer deWinter, and Caitlin Keller

These interviews were conducted to provide a clear picture of the features the e-Learning platform the team recommends should possess. This method was limited because a lot of the experts interviewed are employees of Worcester Polytechnic Institute and their experiences are not exactly relatable to non-profit organizations.

3.2.3 Conduct Interviews to Learn About How In-Class Tech Can Enhance an e-Learning platform.

In order to optimize an e-Learning platform, there are some tools that need to be utilized in class and integrated with the platform. See Appendix E for additional multimedia tools. These are low-cost tools that can improve the overall learner experience. To understand what tools could be used the group interviewed Joe Cotnoir and James Monaco. The interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

3.2.4 Created Decision Matrices.

The group contacted vendors to discuss features, specifications, and costs of the e-Learning platforms they provide. We also requested recordings of the demos for the sponsor's use. From the interviews and secondary research, the team formed a list of 20 e-Learning platforms that could benefit The CASA Project. The team created a decision matrix in order to compare the platforms based on 18 key features obtained from interviews and secondary research. A decision matrix shows relationships between two or more variables in a grid format. The decision matrix used to compare the platforms can be found in Appendix D. Each individual platform is listed and evaluated against the different features and specifications offered. The matrix was used in conjunction with a pricing matrix to create an in-depth matrix of the top five corporate platforms and the top five free platforms. The top 20 matrix was narrowed down to ten based on the features and specifications that the platforms exhibited. The cost of the ten platforms was evaluated in the cost matrix to further narrow down to the top five platforms. The top five platforms were then put against detailed specifications and features, in order to provide The CASA Project with easy means to compare the platforms.

4.0 Results & Analysis

4.0.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we analyzed the results and analysis of our findings. These include:

1. Field Notes from Observation: The analysis from the field notes and conclusions the group made to direct our research can be found in section 4.1.
2. Training Program Recommendations: Using charts and graphs from our evaluations, questions, and interviews the training program recommendations are analyzed in section 4.2.
3. Moving the Training Online: Section 4.3 discusses the opinions of experts about moving the training program online.
4. Online Training Program Options: Details on management system options for The CASA Project can be found in section 4.4.

Each of these categories will be explained in more detail below.

4.1 Observations of Current Delivery Methods

From our observations of the current in-person training programs, we identified three key invaluable components of the training program: mediated class discussions, guest speakers, and role-playing. We detail each of these components below.

4.1.1 Observations of Instructor Mediated Class Discussions.

Discussion periods with the instructors involved the reinforcement of best practices in specific portions of a case such as case report writing, actual case study analyses, and interviewing

skills. Question and answer sessions provided clarification to trainees on the difficult scenarios they will most likely encounter in the field. Instructor feedback furthered the value of the training contents by enabling trainees to openly discuss difficult scenarios in a group setting, while instructors maintained the focus of the conversation.

4.1.2 Observations of Guest Speakers.

The special guest speakers from local government organizations such as The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families presented the trainees with their professional experiences and knowledge. Group discussions followed the speaker's instructional period which provided the trainees with the opportunity to gain additional information. This open-ended discussion period reinforced the CASA Project training course contents by tying the previously learned materials to real life experiences. The team discovered that this supplemental information provided by guest speakers increased the overall value of the training experience.

4.1.3 Role Playing Observations.

Role-playing engaged the trainees by breaking them up into teams to simulate case interactions. Observations of the in-class interactions showed the impact of role-playing on confidence development and understanding of interview tactics. The role-playing scenarios created an emotional atmosphere conveyed through body language, tone/volume of voice, and speech to prepare the trainees for fieldwork. Learners actively responded to the simulated situation on the spot, allowing for a more realistic insight into the person's true personality and revealing any possible 'red flags'.

4.2 Training Program Recommendations

From our interviews, questionnaire, and analysis of evaluations, we noted six components of the training program that can be improved upon instructional information, program accessibility, guest speakers, in-class technology and multimedia, program assessments, and role-playing. We detail and provide recommendations for each of these components below.

4.2.1 Instructional Information.

Results from the class evaluations (Appendix A) presented the need for additional information on the following topics: report writing, interview strategies, and full case walkthroughs. Results expressed that the amount of information taught was too much to learn in a 30-hour program. They suggested the hours be extended to give them more time to understand the course information.

4.2.2 Training Program Accessibility.

While the majority of trainees were pleased with the training program, the evaluation results revealed that the program needs to be more accessible. The data expressed the desire for a four week, 8-hour session option versus the current 5 days, 3.5-hour sessions offered both during the week and on weekends. Trainees also suggested more sessions to review materials related to interviewing skills through role-playing only sessions, report writing, and general review sessions. Another suggestion made was to solicit local bus companies to provide free transportation to sessions. See Appendices A and B for the questionnaire and course evaluation results.

4.2.3 Guest Speakers Analysis.

Results revealed the guest speaker discussions were highly beneficial to the trainees. The trainees requested additional guest speakers to provide an in-depth analysis of the instructional

materials and insight into the various roles and job duties of a CASA volunteer (Appendix A & B). Guest speakers provided trainees with personal experiences and knowledge that supplemented the CASA materials.

4.2.4 In-class technology and multimedia.

The results from the questionnaires and class evaluations presented a demand for the integration of more technology and interactive multimedia (videos, powerpoints, etc.). The team found that the case supervisors also want more multimedia use within the classroom (Table 4). The integration of more multimedia can allow the training to cater to various types of learners and provide them with a more engaging experience. Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) experts suggested improvements to the current training program (Table 4). Experts noted various software that could be implemented including Voicethread, Trello, Skype, Adobe Connect, etc. These programs can be used to engage the trainees both inside and outside of class. Trainees can partake in discussions with one another and work on group projects through these programs, which can provide more interactivity for the trainees, as well as a way for the trainees to be assessed.

Interviewee	Quotes
<i>Raymond Austin - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	<p>“I would like to see the use of powerpoints that can be made available to volunteers after training”</p> <p>“Training can be a lot more organized in regards to materials, PowerPoints, and organization of the manual”</p>
<i>Fernanda Suggs- The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	<p>“I know some people check out after too much talking, so having visuals i.e. videos or powerpoints would help to keep people more engaged.”</p>
<i>Jess Baer - Instruct Technology Specialist</i>	<p>“Voicethread can be beneficial as it allows people to become part of a large online discussion”</p> <p>“For project work, there are numerous software programs such</p>

	as Trello, When2Meet or Doodle, and Zoom”
<i>Joe Cotnoir - Instructional Tech Specialist</i>	“Software including Skype, Google Hangout, Adobe Connect, and Bluejeans”

4.2.5 Training Program Assessments.

The team found the necessity to incorporate trainee assessments into the training program, which the current program does not include. Assessments would provide rapid feedback to trainees and a progress report to instructors. The supervisors would benefit from knowing what information the trainees gained and what areas they may need more assistance to work in the field.

Table 6: Key Quotes Providing Evidence: Implementation of Assessments in the Training Program	
Interviewees	Quotes
<i>Raymond Austin - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	“Have some type of assessment but also encourage people to volunteer”
<i>Sue Meagher - The CASA Project Director of Training</i>	“Assessments could be helpful to know that everyone's needs are met, not just the people that like to talk a lot”
<i>Fernanda Suggs - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	“Assessments are key. Testing can encourage the trainees to maintain their attention span for longer periods of time. Report writing is especially important to test trainees on.”
<i>Jim Steele - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	“Assessing the knowledge of trainees is critical to a higher success rate of volunteers. The assessments should be timed.”
<i>Debra Dexter - Content, Training & Comm Coordinator</i>	“The addition of quizzes would be beneficial to the training program”
<i>Kate Beverage - Director, Tech for Teach & Learn</i>	“A quick check quiz could be done to make sure trainees are viewing the material”

4.2.6 Role Playing.

Questionnaire and course evaluation results indicated the role-playing interactions were what the trainees found to be the most valuable portion of the program (See Appendices A & B). Role-playing provided face-to-face interactions where they engaged with current CASA employees and volunteers. The data gained from interviews with the CASA Project’s three Case Supervisors and Director of Training interviews further supported the importance of role-playing. Table 6 below provides key quotes about the importance of role-playing.

Expert Interviewees	Quotations
<i>Raymond Austin - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	“If I could only keep one component of the training program in person it would be the role-playing”
<i>Jim Steele - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	“They [trainees] need to see a good role play with all the emotions which is real, and the volunteers will have to deal with.”
<i>Fernanda Suggs - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	“Role-playing throws curveballs at the trainees keeps the learner’s attention, and works for trainees of all learning styles.”
<i>Sue Meagher - The CASA Project Director of Training</i>	“Role-playing provides valuable interaction”

4.3 Expert Opinions of Moving The Training Program Online.

From our interviews with experts, we gained insight into opinions on the online implementation of the current training methods, knowledge on course material translational gaps, and opinions on the delivery method of role-playing. We detail the opinions and insight, as well as our recommendations for each of these components below.

4.3.1 Opinions on Online Implementation of the Current Training Methods.

Data results from the questionnaire (Appendix B) provided, the following three most popular answers to the question of, “What parts of the training do you think would not be successful if they were taught online?”:

- Role-playing
- Face-to-face interaction
- Everything would be unsuccessful

Volunteers value the active learning the current training program provides and are unsure if the same experience can be obtained through an online program. CASA supervisors and the director of training shared similar concerns about implementing online training.

When interviewing the CASA supervisors and the director of training, one focus was to gain their opinions on implementing an online training program. The interviewees believed that a management system could benefit the volunteer training, but some were skeptical of portions of the course material being effectively taught online. The results were conflicting (quotes are included in Table 7), but some felt these parts of the current training program should remain in person:

- Role-playing
- Group Discussion and Interaction
- Question and Answer sessions

During the interview with Jess Baer (Instruct Technology Specialist), she recommended that The CASA Project implement a training module tailored to teaching the volunteers how to utilize the online training tools, in addition to the current training material. Deb Dexter, who is a Content, Training & Communication Coordinator at WPI and a current CASA volunteer also

stated that adding a training module dedicated to training the volunteers to utilize the management system to the training content would be beneficial. Similarly, from interviewing the CASA case supervisors and the training coordinator, they expressed the importance of implementing a training module for the volunteers to learn how to use the recommended learning platform. CASA Case Supervisor Ray Austin said to have a way to teach the supervisors and administrators how to use the management system would be helpful.

Table 8: Key Quotes Providing Evidence: Opinions on Implementation	
Interviewees	Quotes
<i>Raymond Austin - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	<p>“I am totally for moving everything online since everything is currently moving in that direction”</p> <p>“The transition to online wouldn’t be too difficult”</p>
<i>Sue Meagher - The CASA Project Director of Training</i>	<p>“It is never going to go mostly online”</p>
<i>Fernanda Suggs - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	<p>“ The addition of an online training program option even have a greater impact on the trainees, believing that all of the current course material could be implemented online and.”</p>
<i>Jim Steele - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	<p>“People should be able to do an online training at any time, but there are certain parts that need to be done within a certain timeframe”</p>
<i>Debra Dexter - Content, Training & Comm Coordinator and Current CASA Volunteer</i>	<p>“The content is more important than delivery”</p> <p>“Sustainability should be an important goal for them”</p> <p>“I would have loved to do activities online in addition to my training”</p>
<i>Caitlin Keller - Instructional Designer</i>	<p>“The implementation of an online would provide the volunteers with a more accessible option, but at the cost of social interaction”</p> <p>“Online can make the training seem non-mandatory”</p>

	“Things that aren’t time bound can make it to where people find other things to be more important”
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4.3.2 Course Material Translational Gaps

Experts at WPI provided clarity about how to transfer in person course contents online. They also explained obstacles to anticipate during the implementation process to avoid or better manage the outcome. Important gaps to consider are described below, and key quotes are included in Table 8:

1. *Implementation Misconception:* Organizations tend to attempt a complete overhaul of their training delivery method too quickly. When an organization is first implementing an existing training program online, it is better to start with small, scalable implementations before investing large amounts of time and funding. Constant small changes could be made to the current style over time.

2. *Synchronous vs. Asynchronous Instructional Delivery Methods:* When first implementing an e-Learning option, many instructors focus on structuring the online course to be synchronous to the in-person sessions. But factors typically overlooked that play into an in-person training, such as pauses during lectures for class discussions and instructor-student interaction can reduce the actual content delivery time online. As a result, instructors add supplemental homework and/or readings they might not have done in a face-to-face class. The online course ends up being more work because of the additional activities that are designed to fill that extra time but are not necessarily a part of the final assessment. These factors do not come into play in an asynchronous environment or the more structured online environment.

3. *e-Learning Software Training*: All software platform users must be provided with an adequate orientation of the online training to enable the successful use of the course module features. The instructors or learners would not be able to navigate through the material if they do not understand the technology. For this reason, some time has to be put into designing a meta-training that would acquaint the users with the tools required to navigate the materials.
4. *Online Feasibility*: Instructors waste a lot of time trying to fit a course into an online format even though the course is not appropriate for this medium. There are certain skills that can not be taught or learned effectively online. For example, even though a doctor can perform surgeries in simulations to train, he can never be an expert unless he practices in real life. This example can be related to the interviewing and personal relation skills that every trainee must develop. Certain aspects of a course might be more effective if instructed in person than if delivered online. It loses the value of group interaction.
5. *Training Module Content Design*: Effectively designing the right online training content to suit or achieve the set objectives and keep trainees engaged is a challenge. In order to overcome this challenge, backward learning could be used during the course design process.

Table 9: Key Quotes Providing Evidence: Gaps in the Implementation of Online Training Program	
Interviewees	Quotes
<i>Caitlin Keller - Instructional Designer</i>	<p>“If the users are not trained to use the online tools, you are going to have a technical gap”</p> <p>“The need to find people to train and manage the users to utilize the online tools in a gap we experienced”</p>
<i>Jess Baer - Instruct Technology</i>	“Basic training. Getting the faculty that are managing the

<i>Specialist</i>	<p>backend of an online course to get comfortable doing it is usually a challenge”</p> <p>“Troubleshooting existing courses and building new courses online is difficult”</p>
<i>Lindsey Van Gieson - Instructional Tech System Specialist</i>	<p>“Getting faculty trained to use canvas was an obstacle we faced”</p>
<i>Kate Beverage - Director, Tech for Teach & Learn</i>	<p>“Start small. Make minor shifts in how the training is conducted”</p> <p>“When converting anything to online, most instructors/trainers try to think about how long their in-person equivalent class met and to try and put the same amount of time fillers into an online environment”</p> <p>“You need not align 1:1 six hours of in-class activities to six hours of video”</p> <p>“If either the trainers or trainees struggle with the technology and aren’t given an orientation of sorts, they may not understand how to navigate through the material”</p> <p>“Instructors/trainers spend so much time trying to fit something into an online format that simply isn’t appropriate for an online format”</p>

4.3.3. Opinions on Role Playing Delivery Method.

Findings revealed that in addition to the current in-person training, an online implementation of role-playing could be successful through video recordings and dialogue tree style gaming (Table 9). The addition of online role-playing can provide supplemental reinforcement, while still allowing for the impromptu situations that an in-person session would provide. The interview data exemplifies the necessity of role-playing, but represent conflicting opinions regarding the method of delivery: in person only, blended or online-only. The data

gained from the CASA Project’s three Case Supervisors and Director of Training interviews concurred with the team’s direct field observations data in terms of the importance of role-playing in-person. On top of this, the interviewees noted their personal experiences with role-playing and how they believe it should be delivered. Table 10 below provides key quotes and evidence about the importance of role-playing and the delivery method.

Table 10: Key Quotes Providing Evidence: Role Playing Importance & Delivery Method	
Expert Interviewees	Quotations
<i>Raymond Austin - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	<p>“Role-playing experience would be extremely difficult to duplicate online”</p> <p>“Most of the things that come from volunteers is very impromptu and it would be very hard to duplicate online”</p> <p>“If I could only keep one component of the training program in person it would be the role-playing”</p>
<i>Jim Steele - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	<p>“They need to see a good role play with all the emotions which is real, and the volunteers will have to deal with.”</p> <p>“Have one day of the training dedicated to role-playing.”</p>
<i>Fernanda Suggs - The CASA Project Case Supervisor</i>	<p>“The role-playing aspect of the in-person training would be more successful and would have a greater on the impact of the volunteers if it was implemented online.”</p> <p>“A gamification option would allow for curveballs which could help eliminate ‘red flags’.”</p>
<i>Sue Meagher - The CASA Project Director of Training</i>	<p>“Never going to go mostly online”...“Need to see the interaction”...“Role-playing needs to remain in person to identify ‘red flags’.”</p>
<i>Jennifer deWinter - Associate Professor - Interactive Media & Game Department Office at WPI</i>	<p>“Role-playing would be easily and fairly cheaply moved online with gamification. This allows for social rehearsal, individual socialized pattern building and empathy building using Twine, an open source software.”</p>

4.4 Options for Moving the Training Program Online

The team interviewed experts to understand management systems in order to provide The CASA Project with a recommendation. The knowledge from the experts provided critical information to produce a decision matrix in order to effectively compare the various management systems.

4.4.1 Important Features and Specifications of e-Learning platforms.

The interviews with online training experts at WPI provided the team with insight on what features and specifications to look for when recommending an e-Learning software. Some important features include discussion boards, assessments & grading, user interface, whitewashing, live streaming, SCORM compliance, scalability, et cetera. These features not only improve the experience of the users but allow for administrators to obtain statistical data to help them evaluate the effectiveness of the training program.

Expert Interviewees	Quotations
<i>Kate Beverage - Director, Tech for Teach & Learn</i>	“Some important features include built-in student and faculty collaborative tools - discussion board, compatibility with other external resources, ability to embed videos, assessments & grading, user interface, and experience (ease of use)...”
<i>Lindsey Van Gieson - Instructional Tech System Specialist</i>	“...consider features and specifications like Whitewashing, Live streaming, cloud storage, Integrated Course Authoring Software, SCORM compliance, Scalability”

4.4.2 Free/open source e-Learning Platform Options.

Alternatives to corporate e-Learning platforms that could be implemented to fulfill The CASA Project’s short term and potentially long-term needs include:

- *Google Classroom*: A free, open-source Content Management System that can be scaled into an LMS-lite with pay-as-you-use features.
- *Wordpress*: An open-source Content Management platform with little scalability and features. Google Apps can provide further functionality.
- *Canvas Free For Teachers*: Create (and host) your own online courses. Always free, but these accounts do not contain all features available to institutional users of Canvas.

We noted that Texas CASA that already implemented an online training program, is in the process of switching from Absorb LMS to Wordpress. According to Michelle McGinnis, the Texas CASA web designer, they are making this switch because the LMS was too costly and it had too many features that were being underutilized (M. McGinnis, personal communication, February 6, 2018). This is important to note because although e-Learning Systems come with many desirable features, they can only be useful if they are properly utilized. This emphasizes the importance of proper course content design; so as to know what features are required and what features are not in order to make accurate decisions of e-Learning platforms for your organization.

Interviewee	Quotations
<i>Caitlin Keller - Instructional Designer</i>	<p>“Google Classroom would be a good free option that can get really interactive with add-ons”</p> <p>“Amazon Web Services can be used but is more backend”</p>
<i>Lindsey Van Gieson - Instructional Tech</i>	“I would recommend you look into Google

<i>System Specialist</i>	Classroom”
<i>Kate Beverage - Director, Tech for Teach & Learn</i>	“As a start, Google Classroom is a possible solution” “Wordpress will be a good recommendation to CASA to store their training content and make it available to volunteers”
<i>Michelle McGinnis - Web Consultant</i>	“Texas is switching from an LMS to Wordpress”

4.4.3 Decision Matrices.

The decision matrices found in Appendix D illustrates the corporate (paid) and free and/or open-source e-Learning platforms. All have, at a minimum, basic features and specifications required by The CASA Project. The free platforms have minimized features and specifications, but many free and low-cost add-ons or plugins are available. The free software platforms are not scalable nor SCORM compliant. They also have a time limitation on hosting content materials on the system. Without SCORM compliance, the contents cannot be easily downloaded and re-uploaded.

All of the corporate e-Learning platforms are scalable. Lack of scalability would be problematic for The CASA Project, especially considering their expected growth over the next couple of years. The CASA Project noted they need a cloud-based platform. Hosting anything on their servers would require additional purchases of expensive hardware and installation fees. All 25 e-Learning systems analyzed have Native web hosting (cloud-based). Canvas Free for Teachers had storage limitation. Cloud storage allows for only 250 MB/course & 50 MB/user/group (assignment submissions don't count). The free e-Learning platforms do not feature onboarding, which provides assistance to The CASA Project in the transition and development from in-person to online. All corporate platforms analyzed are SCORM Compliant except UpAbility, who claims

to be within the fiscal quarter. Google Classroom and WordPress are Content Management Platforms that do not have a built-in assessment and testing tools, but this can easily be incorporated into the addition of Google Apps for Education. The matrix illustrated that e-Learning platforms had all of the features and specifications needed by CASA:

Docebo, Litmos, Saba, UpAbility, Thought Industries, PiiQ, Absorb, 360Learning, Schoology, and CABEM Industries.

The findings from the cost comparison chart seen in Appendix D illustrated hidden costs of upfront, non-recurring fees. While hidden fees are common in both corporate and free e-Learning platforms, they differ. In the corporate e-Learning programs installation, implementation and maintenance fees are common. However, free e-Learning platforms typically have annual or one-time fees to incorporate add-ons and plugins to emulate the look and feel of a more robust e-Learning system.

5.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

5.0.1 Introduction

Based on the observations questionnaire, evaluations, and interviews the team recommends that the role-playing component of the training remain in-person. We also recommend that the in-class technology and multimedia be upgraded to provide trainees with a better experience. We recommend that the training program be more accessible to prospective volunteers by increasing the number of available sessions and having the sessions more frequently. The trainees want additional information on report writing, interview strategies, and full case walkthroughs; therefore we recommend that more time is allocated to these topics. Guest speakers provide invaluable experience and knowledge to trainees, therefore the group recommends that more guest speakers be implemented into the program. The current training program does not feature a way to assess the trainees, so the team recommends that The CASA Project implement assessments as a way to evaluate if volunteers are field ready. We recommend that The CASA Project hires an instructional designer to eliminate gaps in the translation from an in-person training to online. The team recommends that role-playing, group discussions/interactions, question and answer sessions, as well as guest speakers, remain in-person. While the group recommends these components remain in-person, we also recommend that they are implemented online as supplemental material. The group recommends The CASA Project use WordPress, a free management system to host their online training. We recommend The CASA Project request grant money and funding to allow for a more advanced management system to be implemented. We recommend that The CASA Project implement a management system slowly and request another project team to assist in designing and implementing the online course materials.

5.1 Training Program Recommendations

Through observation, as well as the questionnaire and evaluation data the team determined recommendations on the current training methods. These changes will help improve the current in-person training offered and provide a basis for transitioning the training online.

5.1.1 Role Playing.

Observations of the training program made the importance of role-playing evident to the team. The questionnaire and evaluations are given out agree. Trainees noted role-playing as the most valuable component of the training, which was furthered by the CASA Case Supervisors and Director of Training. In order to provide a more valuable experience to the trainees, the team recommends that The CASA Project add an additional day of training dedicated to role-playing.

5.1.2 In-class technology and multimedia.

Observations showed that there is minimal use of in-class technology during the current training session. Further analysis shows that the use of in-class tech and multimedia could be beneficial to the trainers and trainees. Interviews revealed that these tools could help keep volunteers engaged thereby improving the impact of the training program. In order to include in-class technology and multimedia tools to the training program, our team recommends the following:

- Powerpoint Presentations: A way to combine texts, graphics, and multimedia to support a training session and encourage engagement
- Voicethread: A teaching app which enables both students and teachers to upload photographs, images, clip art, scans, their own drawings, or even PowerPoint slides. It is a collaborative tool that helps trainers track trainees' progress.

- Trello: A project management tool that engages students, especially those which prefer visuals. The app also facilitates communication between trainers and trainees, which can help them receive feedback on their progress and assignments.

There are other tools that could be utilized, but for brevity, the team is limiting it to these three tools in this chapter. See Appendix E for additional tools.

5.1.3 Training Program Accessibility.

Findings from the questionnaires and evaluations show that trainees would like the training program to be more accessible. Therefore, the team recommends that The CASA Project offers additional training sessions. These training sessions should meet more often or at times that are more available to those busy during the weekdays. The group also recommends the inclusion of weekend sessions to provide people with weekday jobs a better opportunity to complete the training. Another recommendation is to work with local bus companies to provide trainees with free transportation to and from training sessions.

5.1.4 Instructional Information.

The team recommends that The CASA Project provides additional information to the trainees on the following topics: report writing, interview strategies, and full case walkthroughs. Evaluation results exemplified the trainee's desire for additional information. Trainees feel as though too much information is taught in the 30-hour course and that to be effective advocates they require additional information on key topics.

5.1.5 Guest Speakers Analysis.

Based on questionnaire and evaluation results, the group recommends more guest speakers be implemented into the current training program. The volunteers benefited from the invaluable

knowledge and experiences that guest speaker provides. Providing additional guest speakers can improve the overall experience that trainees have with the training program.

5.1.6 Training Program Assessments.

Interview results presented a common theme that the trainees should be assessed. These assessments would be used to better prepare trainees for their work as volunteer advocates. The team recommends that The CASA Project implements assessments into the training program. Assessments could be included in the following ways:

- Short quizzes are given at the end of each session.
- Project for the trainees to complete that requires the knowledge taught throughout the program.
- An exit exam where trainees are tested on key concepts and skills.

The implementation of assessments can provide The CASA Project with more successful advocates. As well as a way to ensure that everyone's needs are being met.

5.2 Recommendations For Moving The Training Program Online.

The transition from an in-person training program to an online program is not easy. The team provides recommendations on how to deal with translational gaps that may occur. The team also provides recommendations to the online implementation of the current methods and the delivery method of the role-playing component of the training. The group provides a recommendation for The CASA Project to move their training program online.

5.2.1 Course Material Translational Gaps.

From interviews with experts, the team found that the process of transferring an in-person training program online is complex and can result in numerous translational gaps which were

mentioned in the previous chapter. In order to reduce these gaps, the group recommends the following:

- *Slow Implementation:* Small Portions of the current program could be moved online and as time goes on, more parts could be transferred online. Volunteers should constantly evaluate these changes to know what areas work and vice versa. This will allow the trainers to feel more comfortable delivering the training, which will benefit the trainees.
- *Asynchronous Delivery Method:* When creating an online version of an in-person class, backwards design will be helpful. The backward design will ensure that the course contents, activities, and assessments are tailored towards the learning outcome of the class.
- *e-Learning Software Training:* The users of the software must be provided with adequate training in order to sufficiently utilize the features of the e-Learning platform. These training can be delivered in the form of competency tests or assessments, short video tutorials, workshops etc..
- *Online Feasibility:* From the interviews and questionnaire evaluations, the group recommended three aspects of the current training that is likely to be more successful if kept in person. This is discussed further in section 5.2.2.
- *Training Module Content Design:* Backwards learning should also be used.

The team recommends that The CASA Project hires an instructional designer to help eliminate translational gaps. An instructional designer can assist in the translation process, as well as evaluate a management system once it is implemented to determine where gaps exist.

5.2.2 Online Implementation of the Current Training Methods.

From what the group found through our interviews, most everyone is in support of implementing online training. However, there were slight conflicting opinions on what

components to keep in person and what to move online. The team recommends that the following components stay primarily in person:

- Role Playing
- Group Discussion and Interaction
- Question and Answer sessions

They also suggest that the guest speaker sessions (DCF workers etc.) remain in person to encourage more discussion. But these sessions could be recorded and made accessible to the volunteers online.

5.2.3 Role Playing Delivery Method.

Our findings demonstrated that role-playing is one of the most important aspects of the training program. Contradicting opinions arose as to whether it should be implemented online or kept in person. In order to address this problem, the team recommends that the role-playing aspect of the training program remain in person. However, supplemental materials should be made available online. Based on the interviews conducted, these supplemental materials could include:

- Recording or live streaming an in-class role-playing exercise.
- Dialogue tree style gaming that could be done outside of class.

These supplements could be largely beneficial to the volunteers as it makes it more accessible and prepares them more for their work in the field.

5.2.4 Recommendations for Moving The Training Program Online

Due to budgetary restrictions, the group is recommending that Worcester County CASA Organization use WordPress. Moreover, Texas CASA is moving away from their e-Learning software Absorb LMS. They found that Absorb offered more features than they needed and was

too expensive. Texas They decided to move to WordPress because it had all that they needed and was a much cheaper option. WordPress will provide The CASA Project with:

- Cloud-based
- Security (single sign-on)
- Pay-as-you-go add-ons and plugins
- Whitewash
- Adaptive release
- Google Apps Integration
- LTI Integration

It will act as a free e-Learning platform to hold their multimedia elements of the training program such as PowerPoint presentations and videos. Other e-Learning platforms that could be within their budget in the near future are Docebo, UpAbility, Saba, Litmos and PiiQ by Cornerstone.

5.3 Future Recommendations.

The team recommends that The CASA Project slowly integrates e-Learning platforms into their training program when it fits within their budget. The group also recommends that they do pilot studies of various platforms to gain a better understanding of the platforms. We recommend that The CASA Project works with another IQP team to help them design their online course. e-Learning requires course materials to be presented in a different manner than in-person and this translation is often difficult. An IQP team could help The CASA Project design the online course in a manner that is interactive

5.4 Limitations.

Our methods have some limitations that come with it either due to the nature of the method or the time frame that was given. We will discuss the factors that limit our methods of observation, questionnaire and evaluations, interviews and decision matrix.

5.4.1 Observation

Limitations that occurred during our observational periods included:

- Ability to attend only 7 out of 30 hours of the training sessions due to time constraints.
- Inability to participate in the role-playing due to lack of course materials prior to the active learning experience.
- Self-bias is difficult to completely eliminate which could easily skew the data. Each member of the team took separate field notes to compare later and help eliminate bias, but completely removing biases is challenging.

5.4.2 Questionnaire and Evaluation

A limitation of this data is the number of survey responses the team received from the new trainees. The team received less than the total number of those that completed this round of the training. Another limitation is that while the trainees think the training is good, they might not have any other experience to base their judgment.

5.4.3 Interviews

Due to time constraints, the team was unable to interview all seven of the CASA Case Supervisors, Staff Members and Executive Board Members to gain their opinions. Lack of

interviewees resulted in a limited pool to pull statistical data from, creating a likely more biased result.

One conflict with the implementation of assessments is that it could scare off potential volunteers. Testing here needs to be a balance to assess the trainees without compromising their desire to volunteer.

5.4.4 Decision Matrices.

The decision matrices have their limitations, as they were judged based off of the features that The CASA Project requested. Moreover, they are limited by the e-Learning platforms that the group picked to be represented from research and interviews. The cost matrix is limited to a portion of the e-Learning platforms require a phone call to the vendors for quotes. The prices for these systems could not be found and due to time constraints, the team was not able to contact them for quotes. The decision matrices can be found in Appendix D.

5.5 Conclusion

The CASA Project is a growing non-profit organization and is in the process of overhauling their training program. Over the next 3-5 years, they plan to double their volunteer base. Through the research conducted over the period of 14 weeks, the team affirmed the need for The CASA Project to integrate more technology into their current training program. The group also laid out a list of e-Learning platforms that would be beneficial to assist with their goal of moving their current in-person training online. From January 10 - March 2, 2018, the team conducted several interviews and evaluated questionnaires to help validate our findings.

During the term, our team was tasked with recommending the best e-Learning platform for the implementation of an online training program. The group narrowed down 20 platforms based

on cost, features, and specifications that we found desirable. From the 20 platforms, we recommended 5 corporate platforms based on feasibility, budget constraints and projected end goal of The CASA Project. The team recommends WordPress to be implemented currently until there is a budget large enough to transition to a more advanced system. With our recommendations, The CASA Project has the potential to reach their goal of doubling their volunteer base within the next 3-5 years. This increase will bring them closer achieving their mission of being a voice to every abused and neglected child in the Worcester County area.

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Appendix A: Class Evaluation & Results

CASA/GAL Volunteer Training Class Evaluation

Training Class Date: _____ Time: _____

The <i>Presenters</i> were well prepared and engaging.				
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
The Training met my expectations Yes/No				
The <i>activities and the exercises</i> were useful in providing me with a sense of the CASA role.				
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
How was the <i>pace</i> of this training class?				
Too Slow				Too Fast
1	2	3	4	5

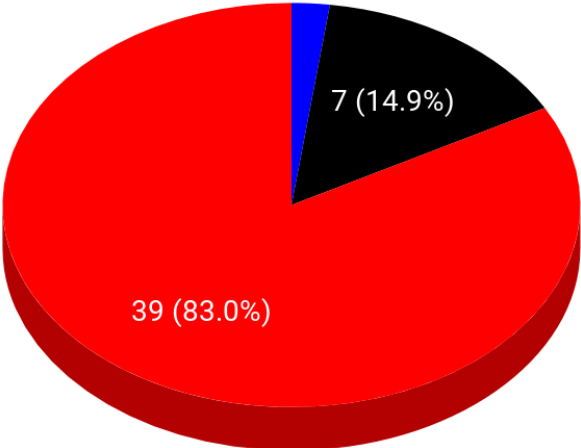
What I liked most.....

What I liked least

Suggestions or Questions?

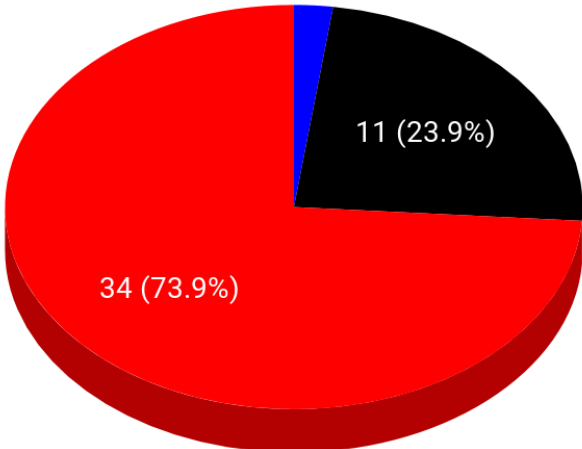
Question 1: The Training Staff was well prepared, engaging, and enhanced my knowledge of CASA.

- Strongly Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree



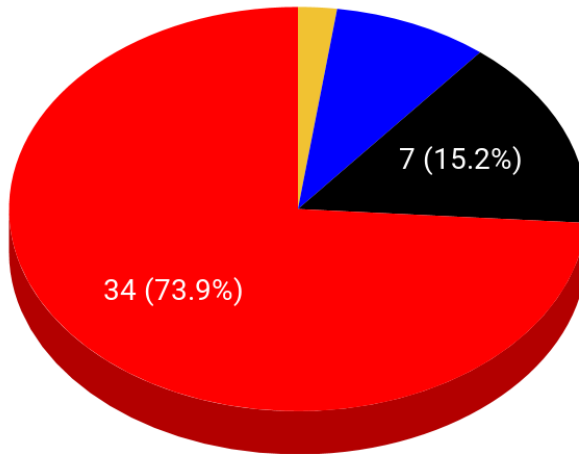
Question 2: The Training facilitated my learning experience and met my expectations.

- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree



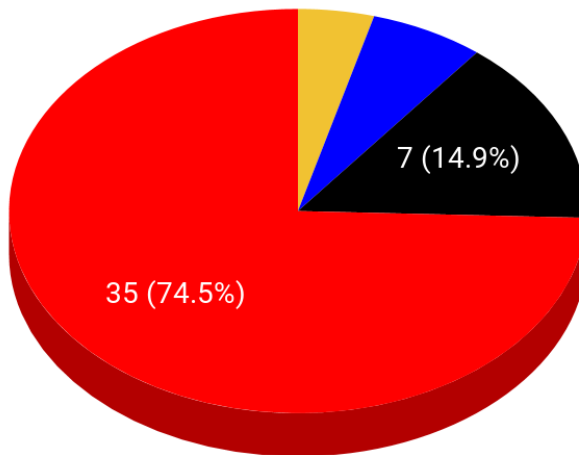
Question 3: The Text and other required readings were informative and useful.

- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

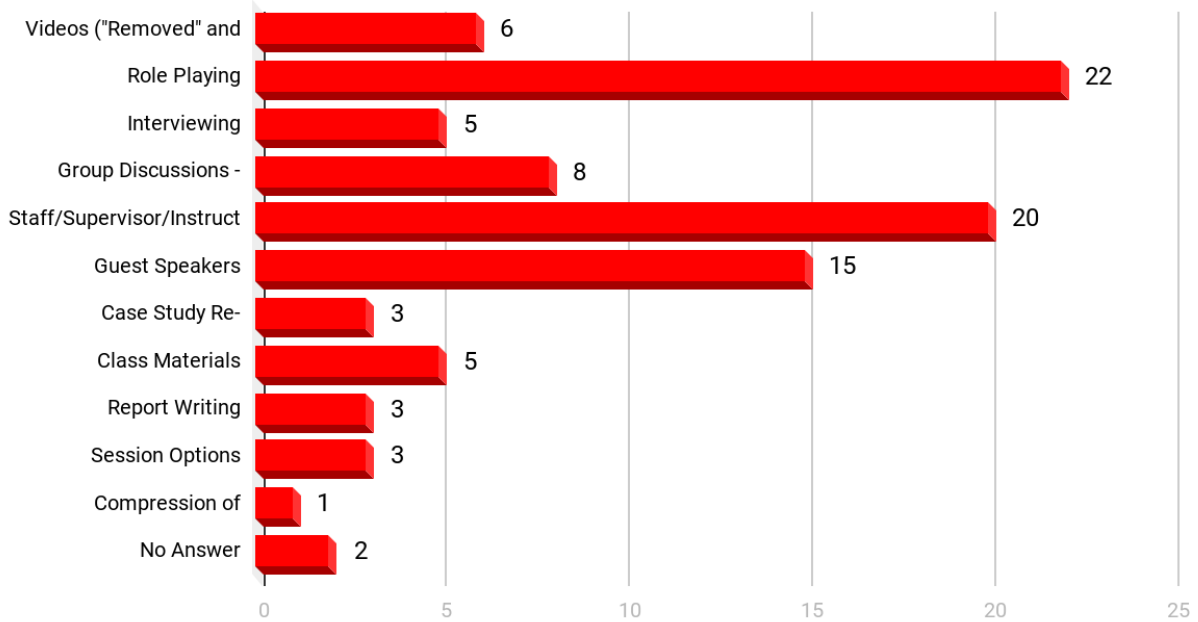


Question 4: The Role Playing/Interviewing provided me with a realistic sense of the CASA role.

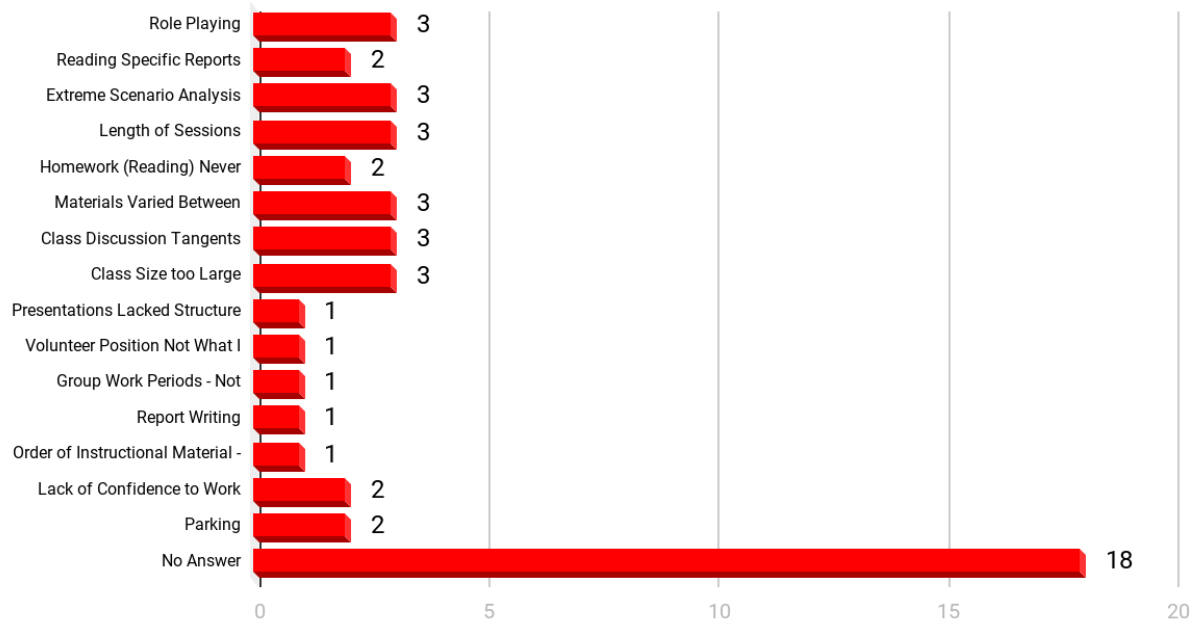
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree



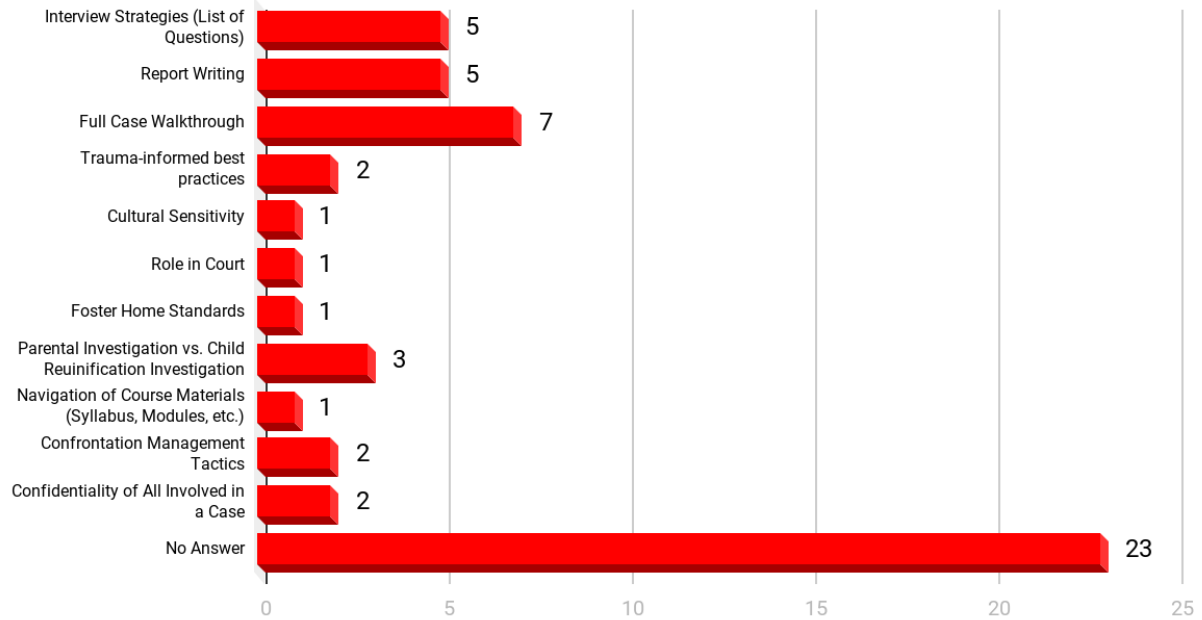
Question 5: What I liked most was



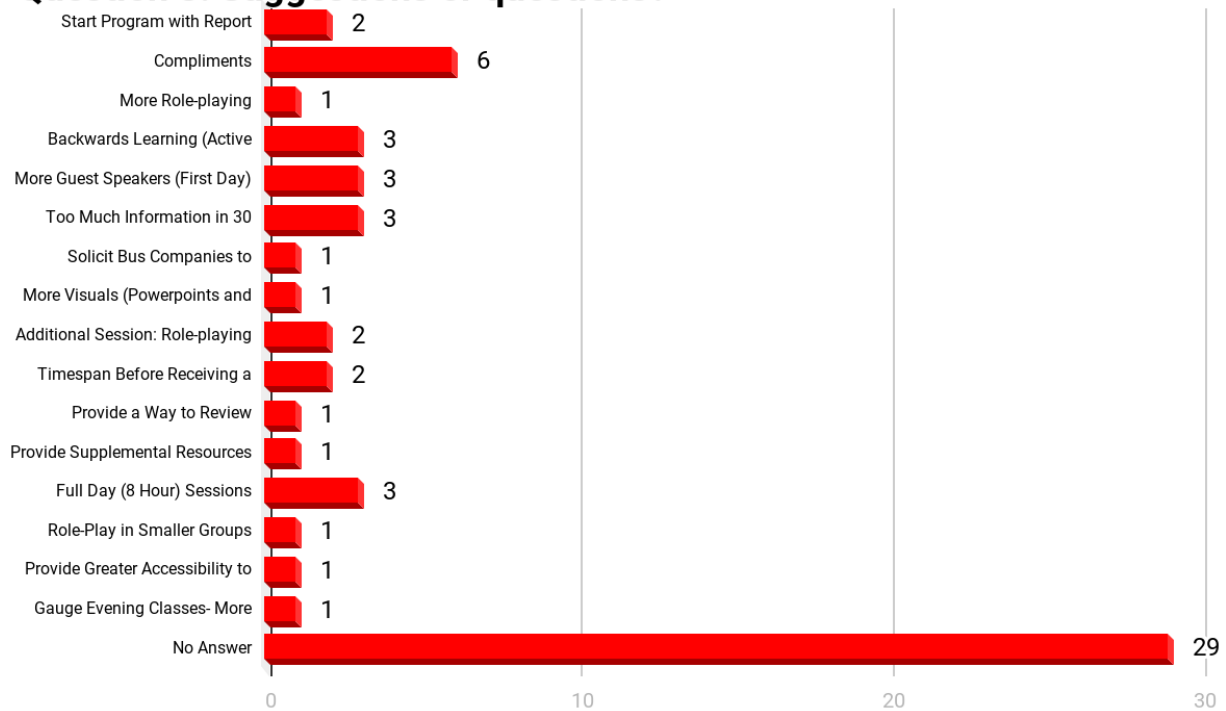
Question 6: What I liked least was



Question 7: I wish I had received more information on



Question 8: Suggestions or questions?



Appendix B: Questionnaire & Results

Questionnaire

We greatly appreciate your participation!

This questionnaire is completely voluntary and will take 2-5 minutes to complete.

All responses will be kept confidential and be used to assess the current CASA Project training program. Comments or questions? Contact the WPI CASA Project Team: wpc18-casa@wpi.edu, or the project advisors: Chick Kasouf (chick@wpi.edu) or Elizabeth Long Lingo (ellingo@wpi.edu).

1. What are a few things you found extremely valuable from the training sessions?

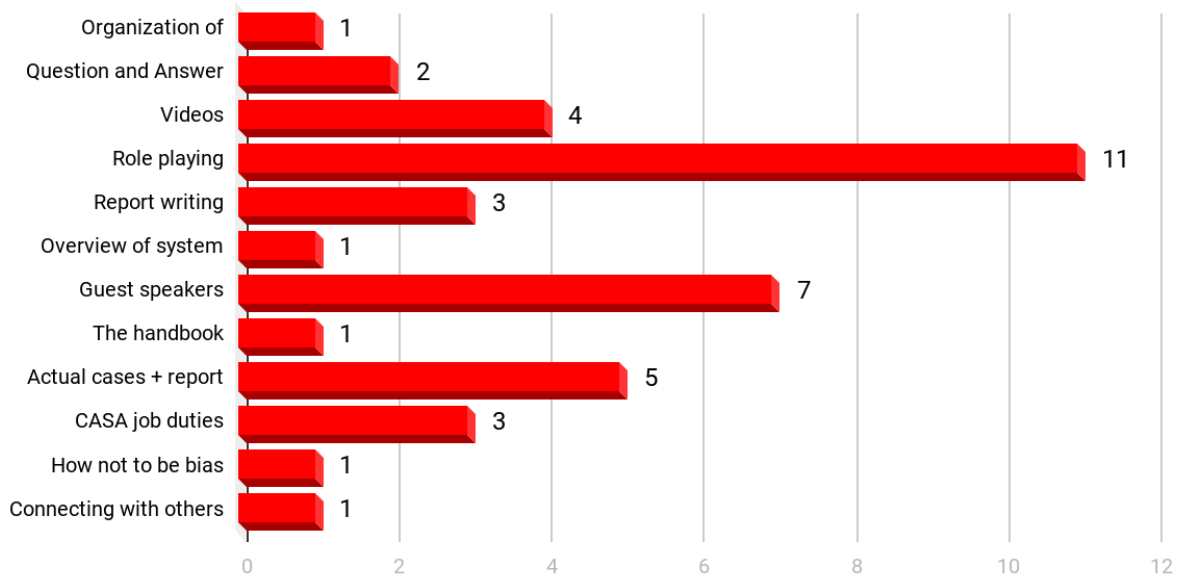
2. What is a recommendation (materials, instruction methods, etc.) you would give to improve the training?

3. What parts of the training do you think would not be successful (or as successful) if they were taught online?

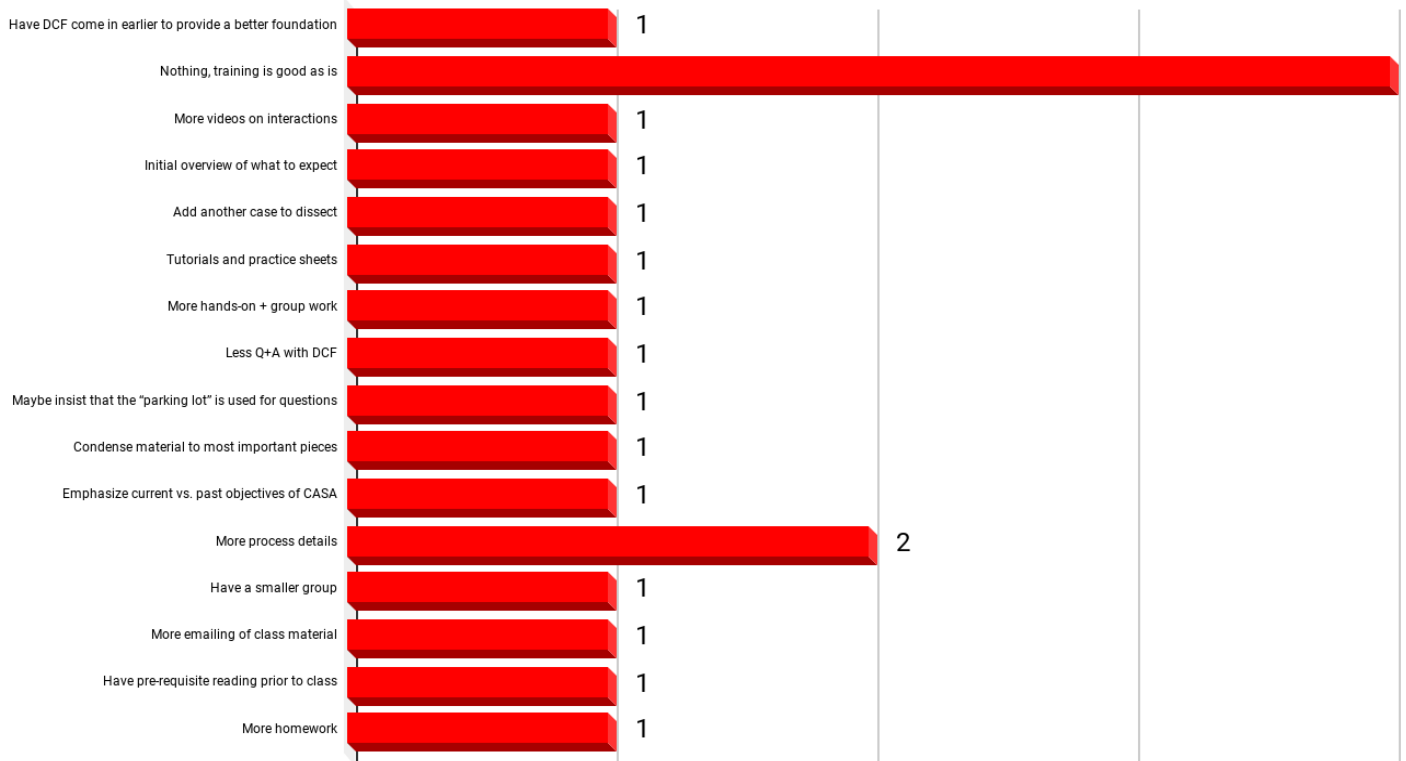
4. When using the internet, what is your preferred device?

5. How often do you find yourself accessing the internet (email, web surfing, research, games, phone apps, etc.) daily?

Q1. What are a few things you found extremely valuable from the training sessions?

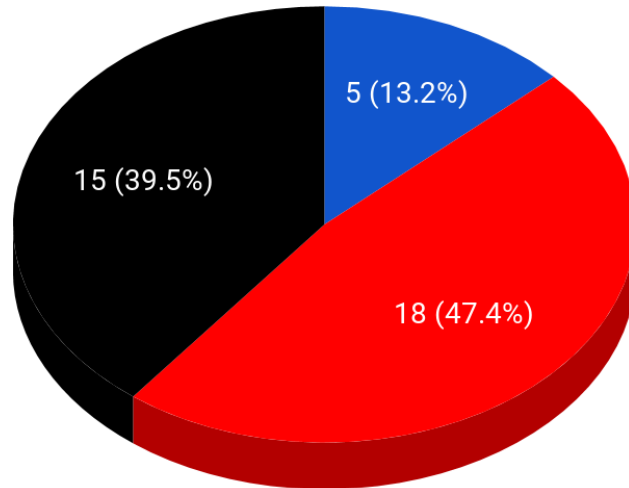


Q2. What is a recommendation (materials, instruction methods, etc.) you would give to improve the training?



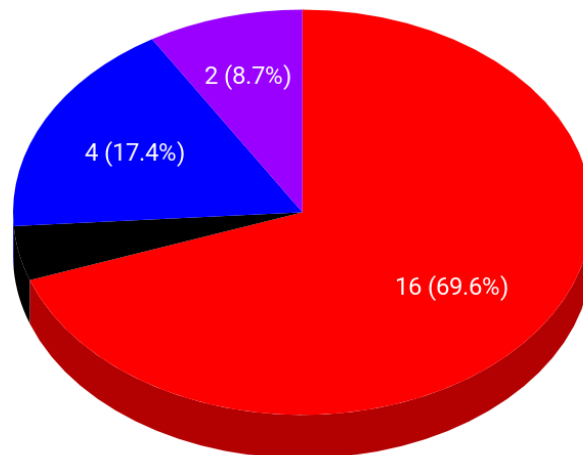
Q3. When using the internet, what is your preferred device?

- Ipad/Tablet
- Computer/Laptop
- Cellphone



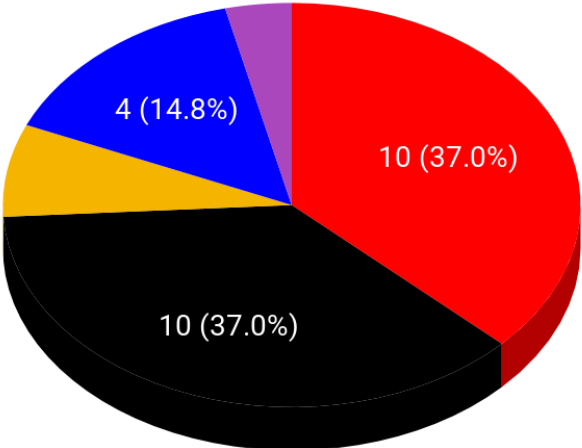
Q4. How often do you find yourself accessing the internet (email, web surfing, research, games, phone apps, etc) daily?

- All the time
- 0-1 hrs
- 1-4 hrs
- 10-15 hrs



Q5. What parts of the training do you think would not be successful (or as successful) if they were taught online?

- The role playing
- Face-to-Face interaction
- Experienced speakers
- Everything would be unsuccessful
- Last 4 days (1)



Appendix C: Interview Questions

CASA Supervisors

Thank you for meeting with us today, your responses will greatly assist us in this project.

Current Volunteer Training Questions:

- From your personal experience with the in-person training, what components do you feel cannot adequately be conveyed/instructed online?
- What topics have you found to have the greatest impact on volunteers and yourself?
- Where do you see the need for improvement in the training materials based on new volunteer competencies?
 - Instructor's instructional style?
 - Material delivery methods?
 - Videos, Powerpoints, role-playing, discussions, etc.
- How/is there a current method of assessment to gauge if the trainee is ready to start taking cases, or if they are a good fit to be a special advocate volunteer?
 - Other than observing warning signals that the individual should not be an advocate.
- What is the hardest part of the training?

Case Supervisor Training Requirements:

- Did you do the same training program as prospective volunteers?
- What, if any, additional training were you required to complete?
 - What are the requirements: how many hours, what type of material, how intensive, homework?
 - Was there an assessment of your obtained knowledge?

Current Monthly Re-education Training:

- Is every CASA team member required to participate in monthly training/ re-education?
- Is it the same training material for every team member?
 - If not, how does it differ?
 - What are the requirements: how many hours, what type of material, how intensive, homework?
 - Was there an assessment of your obtained knowledge?

Online Training Program Implementation:

- If you were going to participate in the training programs online, how would you want to be able to interact with the contents?
 - Videos, quizzes, discussion boards with other trainees and/or instructors,
- What is your opinion on the addition of online training program(s)?
- What portions of the current training do you think could increase the value of the material to the trainees if offered online?
 - Decrease?
- Do you think role-playing could be simulated online through live-stream video chat?
 - Or through a virtual dialog tree game?

Involvement With Volunteers

- How do you analyze when a new volunteer is ready to take a case?
 - Will you indefinitely keep attending court with volunteers until you determine they are ready to work in the field on their own?

Jess Baer

e-Learning platforms:

- Have you been involved in development and implementation of online learning software?
 - If so, what aspects were you involved with?
- How are you involved with the support of WPI's LMS?
- In your opinion, what LMS features are the most impactful on the students' success?
- What instructional and learning challenges have you encountered, especially when a new LMS is being implemented?
- What "gaps" have you observed that occur when transferring material from in-person instruction to online delivery?
 - How have you developed solutions to address these "gaps"?
- What aspects and/or features of an LMS can address teaching and learning challenges?
- What have you found to be the most difficult aspect for instructors moving in-person courses to an online learning management system? How did you help?
- Do you have experience with other e-learning management systems?
 - CMSs - WordPress; Competency managers, Classroom Managers...
 - Do you have experience with Google Classroom or Canvas- Free for Teachers?
- Have you heard of/ do you have experience with:
 - Saba LMS
 - Thought Industries
 - Litmos
 - Docebo LMS

- UpAbility
- Do you have recommendations for important questions to ask Vendors?
 - Or important aspects of an LMS to consider?

In Class Technology:

- What technologies would you recommend to improve the value of the training when used in combination with online training?
 - Estimated cost?
 - LMS add-ons/ plugins/ features required?
- What technologies for project work do you promote?
- What technology could be incorporated to reduce the workload of instructors- in-person assessment responses automatically submitted to the LMS, attendance, classroom engagement, and discussions, etc.?
- Have you encountered technologies that improve the success rate for students of all (or most) learning styles?

Jennifer deWinter

- What experience do you have with incorporating interactive modules onto websites for learning and/or instructional purposes?
- How involved is incorporating a moderate to high amount of interactive learning onto an LMS?
 - Are there specific GUI requirements for certain levels of interactivity?
- How do you incorporate online games to teach concepts and skills?
 - Would you recommend online games in relation to our purpose?
- What type of multimedia services are most popular in the industry of online training?

- What experience do you have with learning management systems that allow for interactive multimedia modules and which would you recommend?
- How can we include gamification with CASA Training such as role-playing?
 - Cost involved?

Lindsey Van Gieson

- What features were looked for in the switch from Blackboard to Canvas?
- What issues did you experience with switching from Blackboard to Canvas?
- How did you train the Faculty to use Canvas?
- How can you limit the in-person training?
- Do you have any LMS recommendations for The CASA Project?

Kate Beverage & Deb Dexter

- Have you been involved in development and implementation of online learning software?
 - If so, what aspects were you involved with?
- What experience do you have with incorporating interactive modules onto websites for learning and/or instructional purposes?
- How involved is incorporating a moderate to high amount of interactive learning onto an LMS?
 - Are there specific GUI requirements for certain levels of interactivity?
- What type of multimedia services are most popular in the industry of online training?
- What experience do you have with learning management systems that allow for interactive multimedia modules and which would you recommend?
- How are you involved with the support of WPI's LMS?
- In your opinion, what LMS features are the most impactful on the students' success?

- Compatibility, Transferability, Feedback ability, assessments, ease of use,
- What instructional and learning challenges have you encountered, especially when a new LMS is being implemented?
- What “gaps” have you observed that occur when transferring material from in-person instruction to online delivery?
 - How have you developed solutions to address these “gaps”?
- What aspects and/or features of an LMS can address teaching and learning challenges?
- What have you found to be the most difficult aspect for instructors moving in-person courses to an online learning management system? How did you help?
- Do you have experience with other e-Learning platforms?
 - CMSs - WordPress; Competency managers, Classroom Managers...
 - Do you have experience with Google Classroom or Canvas- Free for Teachers?
- Have you heard of/ do you have experience with:
 - Saba LMS
 - Thought Industries
 - Litmos
 - Docebo LMS
 - UpAbility
- Do you have recommendations for important questions to ask Vendors?
 - Or important aspects of an LMS to consider?
- How can we train faculty/trainers to utilize LMS?

Michelle McGinnis

- When you developed TX CASA's website, what did they ask for?
 - What is the Worcester CASA asking you for?
- What obstacles arose in regards to enabling the website to host the LMS portal?
- What experience, if any, do you have with the implementation of learning management systems?
- About how much does it cost to redesign a website to be able to host a portal?
- How much could technical support be required by the Worcester CASA to host a portal for an LMS?
 - Is scalability an issue for this?
- Did you redesign the TX website in association with any other designers or other tech support groups?
- Did you design the website for individual branches in TX, or the State-wide website?
- Do you perform maintenance and/or upkeep for the TX CASA website? If so, cost?
- Were you involved in any aspect of the implementation or development of their LMS?
 - What obstacles arose throughout the implementation of the LMS?
 - How did you overcome these obstacles?
 - Do you know what LMS the Texas CASA currently uses?
 - What LMSs were considered for The TX CASA?
 - Do they implement assessments into the online program and if so how?
 - With The CASA Project having a budget of \$6000 do you know of any LMSs that can adequately provide the necessary features such as Cloud service, password

protected portal, hosting the portal through the redesigned website, highly user-friendly, etc.?

- Do you think it is more worthwhile to wait for more funding to implement a more advanced LMS system?
- Has there been an increase in the number of volunteers since the implementation of the LMS?
 - How have volunteers reacted to the online program?
 - What have they liked and disliked?

Online Learning Platforms Features & Specifications Comparison Chart

Corporate Online Learning Platforms

Key:	Corporate Online Learning Platforms									
	* = Yes									
** = Yes, With Limitation (See Notes Column)										
** = No										
	Docebo	Litmos	UnAbility	Saba	Thought Industries	CABENI Industries	PhIQ (By Cornerstone On Demand)	Properity LMS (By Zivra)	Élan Enterprise LMS (By Brainer)	
Scalability (Optional Hybrid Solution)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Security (delivered servers through secure web hosting)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Native Web Hosting (Cloud Based)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outsourcing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
24/7 Technical Support	✓	✓	*	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	*	*
SCORM Compliance (Importation of existing, packaged course - important for scalability and learning from one LMS to a new LMS)	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Administration (Ready Create Custom Role/Groups)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Build-in Collaborative Tools (Discussion Boards of All Types)	✓	✓	*	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
LTI Integration (Tools to Lectures Capturing Web Conferencing Live Streaming, etc.)	✓	✓	*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Intuitive Interface (Guided drag & drop functionality)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Optional Tools & Building Blocks (Pay-as-you-go feature/object add-on)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Build-in Course Content Authoring Tools (Eliminates need for hiring IT group. Eliminates need to know how to write and implement code.)	✓	✓	*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Responsive Design (Works on every device)	✓	✓	*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Build-in Assessment and Testing Tools	✓	✓	*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Adaptive Release (Set assignment and test exceptions - dates and times)	✓	✓	*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Google Apps Integration	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
Single Sign-on (SSO - Property of server control of multiple related, yet independent, software systems)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓

Features & Specifications

Online Learning Platforms Features & Specifications Comparison Chart

Corporate Online Learning Platforms						Free & Open-source Online Learning Platforms					Notes
TalentLMS	Stolera ULP	Absorb LMS	360Learning LMS	Schoology	Brightspace (By D2L)	Google Classroom	Canvas Free for Teachers	Prosperity LMS Free (By Zaira)	Schoology Free	WordPress	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	✓	✓	✓	Canvas Free allows 250 MB course & 50 MB user group (no submissions don't count).
✓	*	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	-	*	*	*	All paid * MSs have support online, and during business hours. Wordpress support would be provided by Michelle McGinnis. Free only supplies a guideline for support.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	*	*	-	Google can create groups, not custom roles. Canvas Free allows groups: Student, teacher, TA, Designer, Observer.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	*	✓	✓	*	Google has chat functions within each file. WordPress would not allow.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	✓	✓	✓	*	Google and Wordpress would require an add-on. Canvas Free Roll Call Attendance (over 1000) (over 1000) as a P.O.L.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	-	✓	✓	-	Google allows a file to be dragged and dropped onto the page without.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	Wordpress can be viewed on any device, but may not be from correctly.
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	Google & Canvas F-IT require add-ons (LMSV-COST \$75, W requires the Google Apps plugin, then an add-on through Google Apps.
-	*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	✓	✓	*	Wordpress needs a plugin for Google Apps. Stolera has not the full integration of Google Apps, but will this year.
✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	Wordpress needs an add-on for SSO Service.

Online Learning Platforms Price Points & Quotes Comp

		Docebo		Litmos (By Callidus Cloud)			UpAbility		
General	Product	Advanced	Enterprise	PRO	PRO + COURSES	SALESFORCE	Bronze	Silver	Gold
	Model	SaaS LMS	Enterprise LMS	LMS	LMS + Litmos Heroes	LMS + Salesforce Integration	Microlearning Corporate LMS Software & E-Commerce		
Installation (Implementation & Deployment)	Either organization's own IT Staff, or the software vendor may charge a fee to install the software to get the system up and running.	\$1,500		N/A****	N/A****	N/A****			N/A****
Maintenance & Support	Either organization's own IT Staff, or the software vendor may charge a fee to maintain and update the software as well as provide technical support.	N/A*		N/A*	N/A*				N/A*
TOTAL	Up-front, non-recurring costs	\$7,500		N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*		
Annual Subscription Costs	Charged on a subscription basis. Lower up-front costs, but over time the cost is comparable to perpetual	\$950.00/month or \$9,500.00 (Under 300 Active Users/Month)	Starts at \$29,940.00 (Up to 500 Active Users/Month)	\$44/Moath (151-500 Users)*** \$31/Moath (501-1,000 Users)*** \$21/Moath (1,001-1M Users)***	\$91/Moath (50-150 Users)*** \$61/Moath (151-500 Users)*** \$51/Moath (501-1,000 Users)*** \$21/Moath (1,001-1M Users)***	\$61/Moath (151-500 Users)*** \$51/Moath (501-1,000 Users)*** \$21/Moath (1,001-1M Users)***	\$375/Moath (0-100 Active Users) \$825/Moath (101-250 Active Users)* \$1500/Moath (251-500 Active Users)*		
Active Users per Month Overage Fees	For every single active user over the contracted amount, the fee is applied.	\$250.00/Moath	\$250.00/Moath	\$5.00/Active User/Moath	\$10.00/Active User/Moath	N/A*	\$3.50/Active User/Moath		
Non-Profit Organization Discount	Can typically negotiate with the sales executives and get a higher discount.	10% -15% Discount*		25% Discount			10% Discount		
TOTAL: NPV of Recurring Costs (Years 2-10)	<i>Net Present Value (NPV):</i> the future costs of each solution over the next 9 years. Calculated by summing Annual Subscription and Maintenance & Support Annual Costs, then multiplying by 9 years.	\$85,500	\$269,460	\$113,400	\$170,100	\$170,100	\$36,450	\$106,920	\$145,800

Comparison Chart

Corporate Online Learning Platform Vendors

Ability	Saba		Thought Industries	CABEM Industries				PiiQ (By Cornerstone On Demand)			
	Silver	Gold		Learning Licenses	Extended Enterprise	Competency Manager	Workplace Trainer	Workload Manager	Test Report Manager	Performance	Learning
Corporate LMS Software & E-commerce		Talent Management Platform LMS	Multiple Tiers Corporate LMS Software	Competency Management System				Performance & SaaS Learning Manager			
N/A****		\$19,000 - \$27,000 Estimated Range (Further Scoping Required)*	N/A****	Included in Annual Subscription Cost				N/A****	N/A****	N/A****	
N/A*		\$19,000 - \$27,000 Estimated Range (Further Scoping Required)**	N/A*	Included in Annual Subscription Cost				N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	
N/A+		\$19,000 - \$27,000	N/A+	\$0				N/A+			
150/Month (251-500 Active Users)*	\$1500/Month	\$5,670/Yr (350 Active Users)*	\$5,040/Yr (350 Active Users)*	\$18,000/Yr (Up to 750 Active Users)	\$8,400/Yr - \$12,600 (Estimated for 350 Active Users)	\$8/Month (1-49 Users)*** \$7/Month (50-99 Users)*** \$6/Month (100-249 Users)*** Custom (250+ Users)***	\$4/Month (1-49 Users)*** \$3.50/Month (50-99 Users)*** \$3/Month (100-249 Users)*** Custom (250+ Users)***	\$10/Month (1-49 Users)*** \$8.75/Month (50-99 Users)*** \$7.50/Month (100-249 Users)*** Custom (250+ Users)***			
Active User/Month		\$5.00/Active User/Month	N/A*	No Overage Fees \$0		\$5.00/Active User/Month	\$10.00/Active User/Month	N/A*			
Discount		15% Discount	10% - 15% Discount*	10% - 15% Discount			10% - 15% Discount				
06,920	\$145,800	\$188,725.50 - \$249,925.50	\$183,906 - \$245,106	\$145,800	\$68,040 - \$120,060	\$145,216.80	\$72,608.40	\$181,521			

<i>Free or Open-source Online Learning Platforms</i>						
Google Classroom	Canvas Free for Teachers	Prosperity LMS Free (By Zivva)	Schoology Free	WordPress		Notes
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Learning Content Management System	Learning Content Management System	Learning Content Management System	Learning Content Management System	Learning Content Management System	Learning Content Management System	
\$0***	\$0***	\$0***	\$0***	\$0***	\$0***	*All platforms with N/A* require contacting the vendor for costs. **Sabs Pricing only valid until April 30, 2018. ***Michelle McGinnis would perform this role for The CASA Project. ****Must contact Linnos for installation fees for SALESFORCE LMS. *****All platforms with N/A***** require contacting the vendor for costs.
\$0***	\$0***	\$0***	\$0***	\$0***	\$0***	**Sabs Pricing only valid until April 30, 2018. ***Michelle McGinnis would perform this role for The CASA Project
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	*Must Contact Vendors for pricing.
\$0**	\$0**	\$0**	\$0**	\$0**	\$0**	*UpAbility & PIRQ accept monthly payments; 10%-15% Surcharge. The customer can acquire the software free of cost without having to incur any upfront license fee. As a customer, you're solely responsible for the ongoing maintenance, upgrading, customization, and troubleshooting of the application to meet your specific needs. You are on your own for providing end-user support, since you are not locked in with a vendor-supplied software solution. **Michelle McGinnis would perform this role for The CASA Project. ***Linnos PRO and SALESFORCE LMS require a minimum of 150 users. All Price quotes are \$/User/Month. All calculations based on 350 active users/month, or the red text represents the value used to calculate the WYP Cost using the high end of active users. ****Must contact Platform for price quotes. *****Must contact Platform for price quotes.
\$0**	\$0**	\$0**	\$0**	\$0**	\$0**	*Must contact Platform for price quotes. **Michelle McGinnis would perform this role for The CASA Project. ***Must contact platforms for average fees for SALESFORCE LMS.
No	No	No	No	No	No	*Docubo & Thought Industries price quotes include the 10%-15% Non profit discount.
N/A**	N/A**	N/A**	N/A**	N/A**	N/A**	All Price Quotes do not include coverage fees. They also factor in the non profit discount. If there is a range of percentages for the discount, the lower value was used in the calculation. * Sholens: "Quotation is per student as annual license with installments. All other actors on the platform (HoDs, teachers, admin, and parents) are free without any limits." ("Sholens Pricing" n.d.).

Copy of Newest Similar Solution Matrix and Cost 12.xlsx

Top 5 Chart

Key:		Docebo	Litmos	Saba	PiiQ (By	UpAbility	Notes
"√" = Yes							
"- " = No							
"*" = Yes, With Limitations (See Notes Column)							
Graphical User Interface	Allows User to Export/Import Courses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Allows for Searchable Content	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Allows for Moderated Discussion Forms	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	UbAbility currently doesn't have discussion forms but is currently working on adding this feature and said it should be implemented in around 6 months.
	Has Drag & Drop Features	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Active Announcements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Allows Captioning	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	Supports Use of Screen/Document Readers	✓	✓	-	✓	-	
	Allows Text-to-Speech	✓	✓	-	✓	-	
	Allows Mobile Devices to Access Course Content	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Ability to Have Anonymous Postings	✓	-	-	✓	-	
	Integrates with Youtube	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Solution is Compliant with Learning Content Standards (Ex. SCORM)	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	Support for Alternative Languages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Graphical	Differentiated Delivery Methods	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Adaptive Release		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Shareable Content Between Courses		✓	✓	-	✓	-	
Import/Manage Content		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Re-usable Learning Objects		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
External Hyperlinking		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

	Create Course Templates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Individual/Group Course Template Ownership Assignments	✓	-	✓	-	-	
	Supports Third-party Courseware	✓	✓	-	✓	-	
	Maps Curricular Objectives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Maps Learning Outcomes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Maps Course Requirements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Whitewashing (Customization/Branding)	✓	✓	-	-	-	
"Tools"	Discussion Boards	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	Can Attach Docs in Discussion Boards	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	Can Embed Links in Discussion Boards	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	Enables Group Creation in Discussion Boards	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	Threaded Discussion Boards	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	Contents are Searchable	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	Private Chatrooms Unavailable to Admin.	✓	✓	-	-	-	
	Survey Capabilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Embeds Videos/Images	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Live Chat	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	Live Whiteboard	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	Embeds PowerPoints on Live Whiteboard	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	Built-in Assistive Tech.	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	Group Assignment Creator	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Linear Module Creation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Decision-tree Module Creation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Calendaring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Reoccurring Calendaring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Set Specific Time Frames for Calendar Events	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Asse	Has Evaluations, Testing, and Assessmet Engines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Has Centralized Grade Book	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

	<i>Allows Browser Lockdown Techniques to Ensure Assessment Security</i>	-	-	-	-	-	
	<i>Ability to Add Audio/Video Components to Quizzes or Exams</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	<i>Ability to Embed Videos Into Assessments</i>	✓	✓	-	-	-	
	<i>Ability for Students to See Their Grades</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<i>Ability to Support Statistical Analysis of Assessment Results</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<i>Has Skill Assessment and Management Capabilities and Competency Gaps</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
Administration	<i>Ability to Apply Institutional Branding</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	<i>Has Security Measures That Typically Include Passwords and Encryption</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<i>Ability to Support Single Sign On</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<i>Ability to Protect Sensitive Confidential Data</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
	<i>Ability to Define Roles</i>	✓	✓	✓	-	-	
	<i>Detailed Student Tracking is Available For Each Course Tool (Ex. number of discussion posts read, time spent on each quiz question, etc)</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	
Business	<i>Ability to Scale for Increased Usage</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	
	<i>Flexible and Expandable Storage Parameters</i>	-	✓	✓	✓	-	
	<i>Limit on Maximum Active Users</i>	-	-	✓	✓	-	
	<i>Minimum Active Users Requirement</i>	-	-	✓	✓	-	
	<i>Cloud Based Storage</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<i>Limited Amount Of Data</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<i>Data Usage Overage Fees</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<i>Onboarding Provided</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

<i>Training is Offered for Institutional Support Staff</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>24/7 Tech Support Services</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Training Materials are Available at No Extra Cost</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Includes Embedded, Prerecorded, Online Training Materials</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>Award Winning MS</i>	✓	✓	✓			

[Copy of Top 5 Chart.xlsx](#)

Appendix E: Additional Multimedia Tools

- Canvas: A simple tool to create beautiful and engaging presentations.
- Animoto: Use for creating video presentations
- Socrative: Used for gauging how well trainees grasp a training concept
- Top Hat: Use for creating interactive presentations aimed at promoting collaboration among trainees.