



Educators Learn How to Lead Online Courses Through PBS TeacherLine's New Professional Development Course

***PBS TeacherLine prepares educators for teaching in the 21st century as K-12
and higher education institutions rapidly expand e-learning opportunities for students***

ARLINGTON, Va. (March 14, 2007) – With the number of K-12 students taking online courses expected to reach 8 million in 2011, according to the America's Digital Schools 2006 Survey, teachers need to be trained to work in a virtual learning environment. To offer teachers the opportunity to gain skills in web-based instruction, PBS TeacherLine®, a trusted provider of online teacher professional development, today introduces *Online Facilitator Training I – Mastering the Skills of Online Teaching*.

Over the past five years, there has been explosive growth in online learning and virtual schooling. Already, more than 25 percent of K-12 schools offer some form of e-learning, according to the U.S. Department of Education. In higher education, reports by Eduventures show that 1.5 million college students are enrolled in an online course today.

Co-developed with the International Society for Technology Education (ISTE), PBS TeacherLine's *Online Facilitator Training* course uses a multimedia-based environment to immerse teachers in the same online learning model that their students will experience. "Unlike face-to-face instruction, online learning requires a different skill set and pedagogical approach to guide participants through a course and build a collaborative online learning community," said Mary Kadera, PBS vice president of education. "Through the expertise we've gained over several years of training online facilitators for PBS TeacherLine courses, we were able to develop a high-quality, research-based course for all teachers who wish to lead any type of web-based course."

The *Online Facilitator Training* course is intended for K-12 classroom teachers, university faculty and pre-service teachers who are preparing to facilitate online courses. Designed to help teachers become effective instructional leaders in a web-based learning environment, the course teaches educators:

- the philosophy and pedagogy of online learning
- techniques for deepening online discussion
- techniques for online, text-based communication
- strategies to foster online community building and collaborative learning
- strategies for delivering effective, formative online assessment
- strategies for evaluating Web-based resources

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Online facilitators take on many different managerial, technical, social, and pedagogical roles. Effective facilitators must know how to provide formative feedback, offer technical guidance, foster community, and communicate “from the side” in a way that encourages learners to construct knowledge together. PBS TeacherLine’s *Online Facilitator Training* course introduces educators to these roles and provides them with the opportunity to practice them, including participation in a simulation environment to hone specific facilitator skills. Through research-based articles and readings, discussions, collaborative projects, and other interactive experiences, educators have numerous opportunities to build and master online facilitation skills.

The 45-hour course will be offered for the first time this spring, scheduled to run March 28 through May 8, 2007. Teachers can learn more about the course or enroll at www.pbs.org/teacherline. The course costs \$525.

About PBS TeacherLine

PBS TeacherLine is committed to helping teachers acquire the skills they need to prepare students for a successful future. PBS TeacherLine provides high-quality, affordable professional development through facilitated, online courses, collaborative learning communities, and exemplary Internet-based resources. Currently, more than 90 courses across multiple subject areas are offered. Teachers can earn continuing education units, professional development points and graduate credits for course completion. The courses have been developed in conjunction with leading education organizations, including Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), Education Development Center (EDC), Concord Consortium, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and International Society for Technology Education. Created in 2000, PBS TeacherLine is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education for \$6,046,811. This represents approximately 85 percent of the total program funding. The remaining 15 percent is funded through in-kind support from PBS and through program income. For more information, visit www.pbs.org/teacherline.

About PBS

PBS is a media enterprise that serves 355 public noncommercial television stations and reaches over 75 million people each week through on-air and online content. Bringing diverse viewpoints to television and the Internet, PBS provides high-quality documentary and dramatic entertainment, and consistently dominates the most prestigious award competitions. PBS is a leading provider of educational materials for K-12 teachers, and offers a broad array of other educational services. PBS' premier kids' TV programming and Web site, PBS KIDS Online (www.pbskids.org), continue to be parents' and teachers' most trusted learning environments for children. More information about PBS is available at www.pbs.org one of the leading dot-org Web sites on the Internet.

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