

Turning Social Workers into Web Conferencing Technical Experts via an Intensive Online Institute: The Institute on Technical Skills for Online Event Production

Network for Social Work Management Forward Thinking Summit
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Krystal Folk, Matthea Marquart, Rebecca Yae-Eun Chung, Kristin Garay

Intro to the Columbia University School of Social Work's Online Campus

- [Fully online Master's of Science in Social Work](#)
 - Program options: 1) Clinical, 2) Generalist, 3) Management/Leadership/Entrepreneurship, 4) Policy
- Launched in Fall 2015; First graduates in May 2017
- Primary model: Weekly synchronous classes in Adobe Connect + asynchronous homework in Canvas
 - Each course is assigned a [Live Support Specialist](#) (LSS) as the member of the instructional team who manages the live class session technology for the full semester. LSS's are CSSW alumni who took at least one online course.
 - To become a LSS, candidates must pass our Institute on Technical Skills for Online Event Production.

Overview of CSSW Online Campus Faculty Development Overall

Successfully completed



SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED



Foundational training:

- 1) Institute on Pedagogy and Technology for Online Courses
- 2) **Institute on Technical Skills for Online Event Production**

Successfully completed



Successfully completed



Successfully completed



INTENSIVE WORKSHOP



Ongoing training:

- 1) Annual Online Faculty Development Series
- 2) Intensive Workshops

[Learn more about our Online Campus faculty development](#)

The Institute on Technical Skills for Online Event Production: Overview

The need	The solution: This institute	The results
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Turn CSSW alumni into technical experts, so that they can manage the production of weekly live online classes● As the Online Campus grows, recruit and train additional Live Support Specialists● Also: Offer ongoing professional development to CSSW online instructors, TAs, and administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Free for CSSW alumni● 15 hours of training:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 3 live class sessions○ Homework● Interactive, practical, and hands-on● Passing = 90% or higher and earns a digital badge● Originally created by Kristin Garay, now co-facilitated and co-led by Kristin Garay & Krystal Folk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Launched Summer 2017 & offered twice/year● 8 cohorts so far● 111 participants have passed so far; top participants are recruited for LSS openings● Average participant response to “How would you rate the overall quality of this Institute?” is 9.4/10● Won a 2020 International E-Learning Award

Why social workers for technical support?

How social work strengths lead to excellent technical support

- Social workers have unique skills that apply to technical support, including the clinical skills to defuse angry clients experiencing tech rage, the active listening and needs assessment skills to understand a problem, and the empathy and problem-solving skills to resolve a technical issue in a way that empowers the person experiencing the issue

Advantages for organizations

- Technical support opportunities inclusively empower social workers to use social work skills to use technology creatively and provide technical support empathetically
- Training social workers in web-conferencing technical skills benefits organizations because it leverages on their unique social work skills -- such as strengths-based support, needs-specific problem-solving, resource planning, and empathy -- to provide effective customer service as they resolve technical issues

From the perspective of the Institute creator -- Kristin Garay



“The social workers attending the institute already possess exceptional communication skills and those skills are the bedrock of all good technical support. This is one of the primary reasons social workers excel in the technical support expert role. However, the technical skill level of participants at the start of the Institute on Technical Skills for Online Event Production can vary greatly.

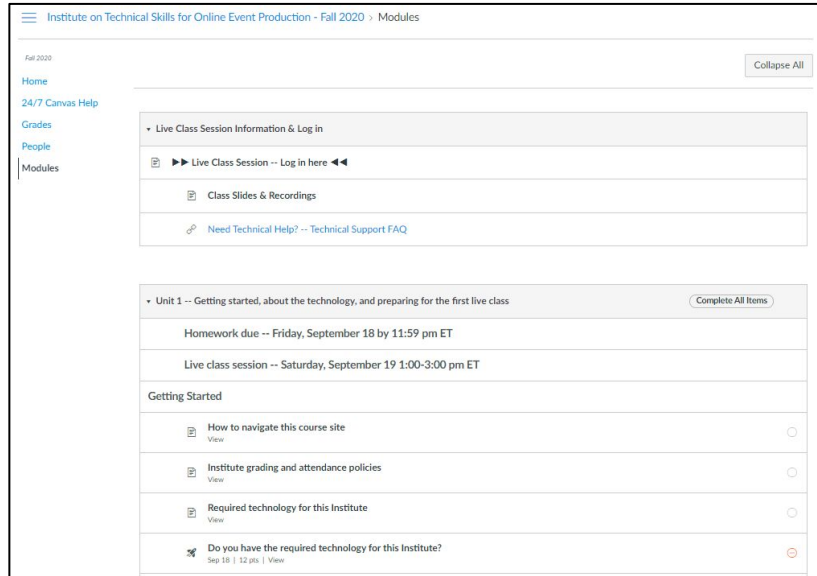
With this in mind, I made the conscious decision to design the institute in a way that supported growth. The institute’s early modules, composed of formative assessments, have a lower grade weight to allow for the important process of learning from mistakes. The final module, composed of summative assessments, is weighted the most heavily because the final assignments are where participants demonstrate the skills they’ve honed over the course of the institute.”

Article about this Institute coming soon

Folk, K., Marquart, M., Florio, M. B., & Garay, K. Developing Technical Expertise to Support Synchronous Online Classes: The Columbia University School of Social Work Institute on Technical Skills for Online Event Production.

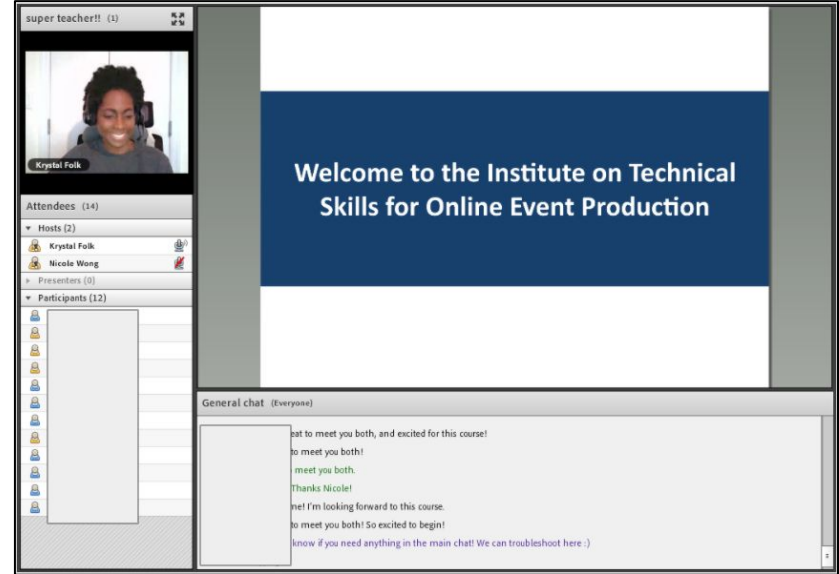
Accepted for publication by the [*International Journal of Advanced Corporate Learning*](#) (will be open access)

The Institute on Technical Skills for Online Event Production: Anatomy



The screenshot shows a Canvas LMS course page. The breadcrumb trail is 'Institute on Technical Skills for Online Event Production - Fall 2020 > Modules'. The left sidebar contains navigation links: Home, 24/7 Canvas Help, Grades, People, and Modules. The main content area is divided into sections. The first section is 'Live Class Session Information & Log in', containing a 'Live Class Session -- Log In here' link, 'Class Slides & Recordings', and a 'Need Technical Help? -- Technical Support FAQ' link. The second section is 'Unit 1 -- Getting started, about the technology, and preparing for the first live class', with a 'Complete All Items' button. It lists 'Homework due -- Friday, September 18 by 11:59 pm ET' and 'Live class session -- Saturday, September 19 1:00-3:00 pm ET'. Below this is a 'Getting Started' section with links to 'How to navigate this course site', 'Institute grading and attendance policies', 'Required technology for this Institute', and 'Do you have the required technology for this Institute?'.

Homework (graded using rubrics): self-guided preparation assignments that include quizzes, discussion forums, videos, and practice activities, to build tech skills & think critically about tech support that upholds social work values



The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. At the top left is a video thumbnail of a woman named 'Krystal Folk'. Below it is a list of attendees: 'Hosts (2)' including Krystal Folk and Nicole Wong; 'Presenters (0)'; and 'Participants (12)'. The main area displays a slide with the text 'Welcome to the Institute on Technical Skills for Online Event Production'. At the bottom is a 'General chat' window with the following messages: 'Great to meet you both, and excited for this course!', 'to meet you both!', 'meet you both.', 'Thanks Nicole!', 'me! I'm looking forward to this course.', 'to meet you both! So excited to begin!', and 'know if you need anything in the main chat! We can troubleshoot here.'.

Live class sessions: practice with web conferencing tools for interactive online classes -- including polls, status icons, webcam, microphone, chat, and breakout groups -- and discuss the technical support role and how to interact with & support students

From the perspective of an administrator -- Rebecca Y. Chung



“Social work skills make a tremendous difference in the quality and range of technical support that can be provided, and it's been so rewarding to see social workers take what they learn from the Tech Institute and make an immediate impact in online education.

From solving technical problems via an empathic and human-centered approach, to empowering and equipping students and faculty/staff to successfully use technology in our virtual classrooms, to ensuring that the online class is accessible for persons with disabilities, it's been a game changer to see social workers merge their social work code of ethics and technical skills in online spaces.”

**Resources to learn more about our
online faculty development**

	Academic Publications	Conference Presentations	Awards & Media
Institute on Pedagogy and Technology for Online Courses	Developing and Supporting Faculty Training for Online Social Work Education: The Columbia University School of Social Work Online Pedagogy Institute, <i>Journal of Teaching in Social Work</i> , 2019 & published as a chapter in <i>Online and Distance Social Work Education: Current Practice and Future Trends</i> , 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbia University Center for Teaching and Learning Celebration of Teaching and Learning Symposium, 2020 - poster • Council on Social Work Education, 2020 - slides • Network for Social Work Management, 2019 - poster • Social Work Distance Education Conference, 2019 - slides • UPCEA Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference, 2020 • UPCEA invited webinar, 2020 - slides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International E-Learning Award (IELA, 2018) • International Award for Excellence in Training (USDLA, 2019) • Faculty and Staff Development Award (UPCEA Mid-Atlantic, 2019) • Learning in Practice Award (Chief Learning Officer Magazine, 2020) • The Best Teachers are Also Amazing Learners, <i>USDLA Blog</i> • Reflections from the Summer 2019 Institute, <i>Teaching & Learning in Social Work Blog</i>
Institute on Technical Skills for Online Event Production	Developing Technical Expertise to Support Synchronous Online Classes: The Columbia University School of Social Work Institute on Technical Skills for Online Event Production, <i>International Journal of Advanced Corporate Learning</i> , 2021 (in press)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPCEA Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference, 2020 - slides • Network for Social Work Management, 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International E-Learning Award (IELA, 2020)
Annual Online Faculty Development Series	The Annual Online Faculty Development Series (in progress)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New School's Management & Social Justice Conversation Series, 2020 - slides • UPCEA Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference, 2020 - slides • Network for Social Work Management, 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty and Staff Development Award (UPCEA Mid-Atlantic, 2020)
Webinar Series for Educators Moving to Remote Teaching Due to COVID-19	Promoting Quality E-Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic via an Award-Winning Webinar Series for Faculty Transitioning to Teaching Online, <i>IEEE Xplore</i> , 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixth International Conference on e-Learning, 2020 - slides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International E-Learning Award (IELA, 2020) • Crisis Management Marketing Award (UPCEA, 2020) • During Pandemic, In-House Expertise Anchors Faculty New to Teaching Online, <i>CSSW News</i> • Teaching Teachers to Teach Online, <i>IELA Blog</i>

Connect with the Presenters



Krystal Folk, LMSW

Live Support Specialist, Online Campus

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/krystalfolk/>



Matthea Marquart, MSSW; Twitter @MattheaMarquart

Assistant Dean, Online Education; Adjunct Senior Lecturer

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/matthea-marquart/>, <http://www.mattheamarquart.com>



Rebecca Yae-Eun Chung, LMSW

Program Manager, Online Campus

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/rebeccaychung/>



Kristin Garay, MSW

Manager of Online Campus Technologies; Associate

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kristin-garay-msw-96468b125/>