

Pioneering Online Lesson Supplement for Carpentries Instructor Training:

Increasing Instructor Participation and Certification Numbers in Africa

The Carpentries is an organisation whose primary goal is to teach introductory concepts to best practices in handling data and basics in coding¹. Instructors who teach these courses are required to complete the two day curriculum of instructor training and complete three tasks as part of the checkout process². By February 2018 already more than 100 people in Africa had participated in the African instructor training workshops but significantly less than half of these participants were teaching in workshops, either because of not completing the checkout process or lack of opportunity and confidence to teach at workshops.

The Carpentries' African Task Force³ set out to remedy this in 2018 by focusing on mentoring initiatives to increase the turnover of instructor trainee to active instructor. One such initiative is the online lesson supplement which was offering six weekly 90min sessions to those who had participated in instructor training but were not yet teaching at Carpentry workshops⁴. The online sessions covered a core part of the data carpentry curriculum and would allow participants the opportunity to learn some of the curriculum they had not yet been exposed to in person and/or the opportunity to be coached by those who were actively teaching on how to teach carpentry lessons in order to build confidence.

The online sessions ran from 20 March 2018 to 24 April 2018 and limited to five participants with one instructor, one assistant instructor, one admin support and one technical support person. Feedback was gathered after each session as well as a dedicated feedback session after the final lesson.

We describe the approach we took to this online supplement to instructor training, how the process evolved in the face of the challenges we experienced over the course of the sessions, the feedback from participants and effect it has had on turnover to fully active African instructors. We will talk about the plans we have, based on the feedback from these session, for the next online instructor training supplement in 2018.

¹ <https://carpentries.org/>

² <https://software-carpentry.org/join/>

³ https://docs.carpentries.org/topic_folders/regional_communities/african_task_force.html

⁴ <https://tenet-rccpii.github.io/rccpii-2018/carpentries/online-mentorship/>

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